

## **Taskforce on Faculty Roles, Responsibilities, and Rewards**

### **Faculty Responsibilities Workgroup: Expanded Draft Recommendations**

#### **Addressing the relationship of individual faculty to the academic enterprise at USF**

The observations and recommendations in this report are based primarily on responses provided by 33 Department Chairs within USF Academic Affairs to a survey conducted in January-February 2009, and Workgroup members' discussion of those responses. A blank copy of the survey is attached as **Appendix A**. Summaries of survey responses by topic/question are provided in **Appendix B**.

**Part I** of the report focuses on five key aspects of the academic enterprise that are reflected in the Phase I AAU indicators, listed below. General principles that may be useful in guiding institutional policies related to one or more indicators are described first, followed by specific recommendations related to each indicator.

- 1) research funding
- 2) research and scholarly productivity
- 3) prestigious faculty awards, fellowships and memberships
- 4) number and quality of PhDs awarded
- 5) number of postdoctoral trainees

**Part II** of the report addresses four specific questions that were posed by the Provost in his original charge to the Task Force.

- 1) What form should an effective post-tenure review take?
- 2) How should tenure and promotion processes encourage community engagement and global research?
- 3) Should instructors take part in the annual evaluations of tenure-track faculty?
- 4) Are there institutional strategies for supporting effective faculty recruitment?

#### **Part I: Key aspects of the academic enterprise related to key AAU indicators**

##### **A. Guiding principles**

- USF should take a strategic approach to achieving long term goals that are identified in the USF strategic plan, but should not focus on “chasing the numbers” associated with AAU indices.
- USF policies and institutional practices must facilitate, and not unintentionally hinder, faculty productivity.
- Faculty time is a valuable resource that should be allocated to critical academic tasks, and not drained by excessive service requirements or tasks that are better allocated to support staff.
- Faculty productivity depends on ready access to human (staff and student) and material (infrastructure and financial) resources.
- Faculty productivity is best sustained through recognition and reward.

##### **B. Specific recommendations**

###### **1. Strategies to increase research funding**

*Survey responses indicated variations in the approaches taken by different departments with helpful strategies in one unit being identified as barriers in another. The range of recommendations for desirable changes in institutional practices centered on improved pre- and post-award operations,*

*adequate recognition and rewards for faculty, and strategic planning for enhanced infrastructure (both human and material).*

a) Identify recurring funds to:

- reward research-active faculty who vigorously pursue and successfully obtain external grant funding by providing salary increments, additions to summer salary while grants are active, reductions in teaching load, travel awards, etc.
- provide graduate student fellowships for entering students that are competitive with those at other universities
- provide higher levels of support, including summer stipends, to continuing graduate students

b) Facilitate the pre-award phase at USF through:

- funded summer research appointments for grant-writing, particularly for junior faculty
- faculty seed grants that support pilot studies and interdisciplinary explorations needed for larger grant submissions
- grant-writing workshops provided by representatives of Federal funding agencies who have knowledge of national funding priorities
- enhanced mentoring of junior faculty by grant-active senior faculty, resulting in team submissions of grant proposals to secure external funding with increased probability of success
- funding for faculty (especially junior faculty) to attend national research conferences and workshops
- increased staff support for grant writing within Colleges
- identification and communication of grant opportunities to relevant faculty
- facilitation of collaborative research and grant submissions across departments and colleges, including grant initiatives between sciences and humanities
- awarding of supplemental stipends to recipients of USF internal grants who submit larger applications within one year of the internal grant award

c) Facilitate the post-award phase at USF by:

- reorganizing the post-award process to achieve efficient grant management and avoid unproductive use of faculty time
- providing support for grant management within Colleges to reduce burdens on faculty time
- insuring that faculty researchers receive sufficient support from the overhead monies generated by their grants

d) Institute University-wide policies to support interdisciplinary collaborative research (indirect cost-sharing among units, credit for multiple-PI projects, etc.)

e) Coordinate strategic planning between Unit Heads and the Provost for the development and maintenance of shared infrastructure.

f) Insure that the research-infrastructure needs of PI's are adequately served by the overhead monies that they generate.

## **2. Strategies to enhance research and scholarly productivity**

*Survey responses demonstrated significant overlap with recommendations for increasing research funding.*

- a) Provide adjunct faculty funding to support reductions in teaching loads by research faculty engaged in scholarly activity.
- b) Provide specific rewards for interdisciplinary interaction.
- c) Use a “rolling” multi-year (3-year?) evaluation procedure, based on identified scholarly metrics, to better assess, recognize and reward research and scholarship whose timing is not coincident with sporadically available financial incentives.
- d) Use merit-based salary raises to incentivize and reward faculty productivity.
- e) Provide 12-month (calendar year) salaries for research-active faculty who do not have grant-supported summer salary.
- f) Provide travel funds for research-active faculty to present research papers.
- g) Support colloquia in units where such activity is a vital part of the research endeavor.
- h) Aim for more and higher-quality faculty hires, incorporating planning for associated higher costs and research space. Focus on more hires at the Associate, or Full Professor level, especially in doctoral degree granting departments.
- i) Provide more competitive start-up funds for new faculty.
- j) Develop a plan for legislative requests to build additional research space at USF.
- k) Aggressively seek legislative approval to create several research centers at USF in areas of interdisciplinary strength.

### **3. Strategies to increase prestigious faculty awards, fellowships and memberships**

*Survey responses suggested a number of different approaches, ranging from better publicity about the awards and recognition for award winners, to more incentives for applicants and their departments.*

- a) Increase faculty awareness of awards for which they may be eligible.
- b) Provide incentives for recruiting and retaining faculty who have already won such awards.
- c) Continue and expand summer workshops which provide faculty with a stipend for submitting a fellowship application.
- d) Develop mechanisms for paying the portion of a faculty member’s salary that is not covered by a fellowship, so that the faculty member and department are not deterred from pursuing these awards.

### **4. Strategies to increase the number and quality of PhDs awarded**

*Survey responses indicated two major barriers to increasing the number of PhD's awarded for existing PhD programs: (1) the number and dollar-amount of stipends available to departments for supporting PhD students, and (2) the availability of mid- and senior-level faculty to mentor these students.*

- a) Given the limited funding available for PhD students and finite faculty resources for mentoring those students, it is recommended that the Provost in conjunction with the Deans and Dept. Chairs set individual goals for existing PhD programs relative to (1) the number of enrolled PhD students (and full time vs. part time status), (2) the quality of PhD students enrolled and (3) the time-to-completion of degree.
- b) Although the AAU metric emphasizes the *number* of degrees, there may be long-term benefit to USF in emphasizing the *quality* of PhD students over the absolute number.

- c) Competition for high-quality PhD candidates depends strongly on the availability of competitive levels of funding and is enhanced by the ability to guarantee several years of funding at the time of admission. Current policies regarding the allocation of TA and GA funding impede the ability of individual programs to attract the best students. It is recommended that new policies be considered that would allow Dept. Chairs to have more control over the distribution of monies allocated to PhD-student support, (1) giving them latitude to increase stipend amounts to attract highly qualified students, and (2) providing them with greater stability of funding from year to year.
- d) The responsibility for mentoring PhD students falls more heavily on senior faculty than on junior faculty. Thus, the accomplishment of goals related to PhD education requires an appropriate mix of junior and senior-level faculty with each Department.
- e) The number of Presidential Doctoral Fellowships should be increased to a number appropriate for USF's size and goals. The number of fellowships could be increased by adding a teaching requirement to the middle years (years 2,3,4) of the fellowship.
- f) The Development Office could focus on gifts/endowments that would specifically fund fellowships, with individual fellowships potentially carrying names of benefactors.
- g) PhD student travel should be exempted from intermittent travel freezes if students are traveling to make presentations at conferences, as such presentations have large benefits relative to cost.

## 5. Strategies to increase the number of postdoctoral trainees

*Survey responses reflected a wide range of experience with postdoc training. Some departments indicated that postdoc training is not typical in their field, many expressed interest in establishing a postdoc training program, and a few described active postdoc programs.*

- a) Facilitate increases in the number of postdocs by allowing departments to have flexibility in the mechanisms used to fund such positions.
- b) Provide start-up or matching funds to departments who demonstrate the potential for long-term postdoc funding on research or training grants.
- c) Provide incentives to faculty members and/or departments who have been successful in funding postdoctoral fellows on research grants, for example through a matching program that funds an additional postdoc for every postdoc supported on external funds. This would increase the critical mass of the research enterprise and lead to more grants which support even more postdocs.

## Part II: Questions posed by the Provost

### 1. What form should an effective post-tenure review take?

*Survey responses tended to cluster around two options: i) a full review, similar to a mid-tenure review, every 5 to 7 years; ii) some procedure that follows the annual review in the event that a faculty member receives unsatisfactory marks for 2-3 years in a row.*

- a) Given that it would be difficult to imagine a situation in which the post-tenure review could be negative after many years of positive annual evaluations, the two poles could be combined into one: robust annual reviews plus more intense reviews every 4-5 years.
- b) Faculty members who receive strong evaluations during post-tenure review should be rewarded with a salary increase; those who receive satisfactory evaluations should retain their current salary; and those who receive unsatisfactory evaluations should be subject to salary reduction.

- c) A related issue concerns faculty members who successfully navigate tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, but then fail to progress from Associate Professor to Full Professor. Mid-level faculty have the greatest potential to increase the national reputation and impact of the university as they progress in their careers; thus, it is important to monitor and support them during this process.

## **2. How should tenure and promotion processes encourage community engagement and global research?**

*There was little consensus in the survey responses to this question. Responses ran the gamut from excluding these criteria completely, to including them in the criteria for the research evaluation. Approximately one-third of responding chairs indicated that neither factor should be considered explicitly in the T&P process.*

These decisions are best made at the local (department ) level, since the relevance of community engagement and global research varies according to academic area and program. Higher level reviews of T&P applications (by the College, Provost, etc.) must respect the local criteria.

## **3. Should instructors take part in the Annual evaluations of tenure/tenure-track faculty?**

*Responses indicated that instructors participate in the annual evaluations of tenure-track faculty in approximately 1/3 of departments, and do not participate in the remaining 2/3. We did not solicit comments to explain these differences, but there may be department-specific reasons to include instructors in the evaluation committee in some departments.*

## **4. Are there institutional strategies for supporting effective faculty recruitment?**

*Survey responses focused primarily on three issues: (i) salary and benefits, (ii) initial support for research, and (iii) policies that facilitate the hiring process itself. Some responses also indicated a need for better-equipped physical space and summer support for research activities . Finally, several department chairs commented on the need to maintain sufficient numbers of faculty lines in their departments and provide replacement lines for departed faculty.*

- a) High-quality candidates should be targeted, including established scholars at the Associate and Full Professor levels.
- b) Because starting salaries appear to be less of an issue than benefits , it may be helpful to focus on increasing benefits by including a moving allowance and providing tuition credits that extend to the faculty member's family.
- c) Enhance initial research support by providing increased start-up funds, reduced teaching loads during the first year, university-funded graduate research assistants, and increasing travel funds.
- d) If a department loses a tenure-track faculty member due to early departure and/or denial of tenure, the faculty line should automatically be returned to the unit.
- e) The search process should be improved by:
  - Approving searches earlier in the academic year, or giving permission to initiate a search prior to receipt of full approval (with the understanding that the search may need to be cancelled ).
  - Establishing a mechanism for expedited hiring for outstanding candidates.
  - Distributing start-up funds more equitably.
  - Re-establishing an official spousal-hiring policy.