

MEMORANDUM

TO: Professor Ezra Zubrow, chair, Faculty Senate Executive Committee  
FROM: Elaine Davis, chair, ad hoc committee on decanal evaluation  
DATE: May 29, 2014

Attached please find the final report of the ad hoc committee on decanal evaluation, as well as a recommended policy and procedure document for decanal evaluation and a proposed timeline for the evaluation process.

The committee was formed in response to a motion brought to the FSEC on April 18th, 2012 "to create a committee to review and evaluate the University's decanal review policy." The committee was constituted in May of 2013, with representation from each decanal unit (see below).

The final report and recommended policy and procedures represent a culmination of this work, and is presented to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for its review.

Respectfully submitted by



Elaine Davis, chair  
Ad hoc decanal evaluation committee

**Ad hoc Decanal Evaluation Committee Members**

Elaine Davis, School of Dental Medicine (chair)  
Piero Bianco, School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences  
Kathleen Boje, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Gregory Fabiano, Graduate School of Education  
Alan Hutson, School of Public Health and Health Professions  
James Jensen, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences  
Robert Keefe, School of Social Work  
Lynn Mather, School of Law  
Davina Porock, School of Nursing  
G. Lawrence Sanders, School of Management  
Korydon Smith, School of Architecture and Planning  
Kari Winter, College of Arts and Sciences

Final Report to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee  
Ad hoc Decanal Evaluation Committee  
May 29, 2014

### **Committee Charge**

The committee charge was based on the following motion made by Senator Suzanne Miller (GSE) and passed by the FSEC on April 18, 2012:

Moved that the FSEC request that the current UB Decanal Review Procedures be revised to create a UB Decanal Review Policy that includes

- a) regularly scheduled reviews of each Dean every five years (or sooner for new Deans) with administrative, clerical and other support;
- b) consistent procedures for comprising each Decanal Review Committee
- c) codified processes for review that specify opportunity for confidential interviews with faculty
- d) a professionally constructed and disseminated survey to be used in each review, with space for decanal-specific questions;
- e) Decanal Review Committee access to central administration information (e.g., student entrance scores, tenure rates, grants, publications, etc., hiring and retention, diversity, and the COACHE survey of faculty satisfaction, specific data relevant to diversity, and results of exit interviews- especially of women and underrepresented minorities);
- f) A clearly specified post-review process for the Decanal Committee, and for feedback to faculty of the review findings, including a public version of the report for members of the school.

The motion included an appendix listing the following questions and issues:

#### **Appendix 1: UB Decanal Review Faculty Senate Executive Committee**

The following questions and issues have been raised by faculty in several UB units. With a bit of research, it became clear that

- (A) the FSEC has taken up the issue of UB Decanal Review in the past;
- (B) Decanal Review policies are codified by AAU and by AAU institutions;
- (C) UB Decanal Review policies appear to be missing important components.

Issues and questions raised by faculty:

- 1) Procedures for Decanal Review at UB vary according to the Decanal Review Committee Chair selected. Other SUNY centers have policies about the decanal review that codify the process (e.g., Binghamton) and other AAU institutions (e.g., Indiana University, UCLA) post these policies on the university website. What body would be most appropriate to take up the creation/revision of such policies to systematize this process? Is this something that could begin in the Faculty Senate Executive committee?
- 2) How can the Decanal Review Committee have access to data collected by UB, SUNY, or other sources outside the Decanal unit (e.g., student entrance scores, tenure rates, grants, publications, etc., hiring and retention, diversity, and the COACHE survey of faculty satisfaction), rather than relying only on sources of information internal to the school?
- 3) Recent decanal reviews surfaced strong concerns about confidentiality of the interviews and surveys. In what ways might Decanal Committees do their work without raising such concerns about confidentiality?

- 4) Communicating the specific procedures of the review to inform faculty and staff at the beginning of the process would encourage participation and assuage fears about participating.
- 5) If surveys of the decanal unit are to be done, would it be possible to create an instrument that would regularly be used, with core survey questions and room for flexibility to add school-specific questions?
- 6) After a process of providing comments in writing and interview, faculty and staff at UB receive no feedback at all on the general findings of the Decanal Review. What ways might be found to provide some public version of the review to those who participated and to faculty in the Decanal unit and perhaps to other stakeholders? What models do other universities use to increase transparency and accountability in the Decanal review processes?
- 7) What is UB's policy for determining the timing of Decanal reviews, and how does that compare to policies at other SUNY branches, to AAU peers, and to best practices? If UB does not have such a policy, should UB have a regular review procedure consistently applied to all Deans, to encourage accountability and excellence in leadership and to allow for faculty involvement? The SUNY Faculty Senate found in a 2005 report that most SUNY campuses have a policy of reviewing Deans every 3 to 5 years, but raised concerns that this is not sufficient to ensure excellence and that an initial one-year review would be consistent with faculty review policies.
- 8) How could the work of Decanal Review committees be better supported and streamlined to improve efficiency in faculty time as well as improve professionalism in the evaluating committees? For example, could administrative and clerical functions be done by support staff assigned to work regularly with such committees, and could an ongoing body or persons be charged with developing expertise, maintaining files, organizing data, researching best practices, and consulting with committees or resolving concerns?
- 9) How can the Decanal review procedures provide for meaningful follow-up to the review process so that the actions the Dean and higher administration plan in response are transparent to the faculty? One possible barrier to effective reviews and to faculty participation is the lack of understanding of the outcomes of these reviews and doubt about their value, and the lack of faculty participation in follow up to the review. The AAUP guidelines and North Carolina State example provide mechanisms for such follow-up, such as a requirement for the Provost to discuss with faculty the final report and outcome of the review; the review committee's participation in discussions with the Dean about the Dean's plans to respond to suggestions for improvement; and subsequent reporting to this committee from the Dean and Provost about following through with these plans.
- 10) What was the result of previous Faculty Senate efforts to clarifying and improving the Decanal review process, and what can we learn from these past efforts?

Submitted to the FSEC by Martha McClusky and Suzanne Miller

## **Process**

As any recommendations must ultimately be presented to the Provost for implementation, the committee chair and the FSEC chair met with Provost Zukoski to discuss parameters of the review. The committee chair also spoke with two individuals who had chaired recent decanal reviews, to get their perspective on the process. Both the Faculty Senate and the Provost provided documents to be used in our discussions.

The committee as a whole met three times over the course of the academic year. The major work was done by three working groups focused on recommendations for content

and process, as well as development of a preamble meant to serve as overarching guiding principles. The committee referred to the charge as well as the supporting questions and issues and other materials supplied to us, and conducted research to determine best practices in the area of decanal evaluation.

## **Summary**

The committee was told that a five-year review process is currently in place, but the review typically occurs in the sixth year, not the fifth. The Committee believes that this process both emphasizes and ensures confidentiality. However, much of the current policy and procedure is not public, and the process itself is neither codified nor uniform.

The committee's major tasks were to flesh out a standard policy and procedure document that both provides transparency and addresses the major concerns outlined in our charge and related questions/issues. Each of the major points of the charge has been addressed, with the exception of point e (and question/issue #2)- access to central administration information. We believe that this is outside the purview of our charge, as this is information that the Provost has at his or her disposal to use in addition to the review by the Decanal Review Committee.

The committee believes that an initial review is an important element in the evaluation process, and has incorporated this into the proposed policy. We also strongly urge that the recommended review process and content outlined in Appendices A and B be adopted. The review process allows for administrative support and a streamlined method to improve efficiency in faculty time by making use of the university's offices of Human Resources and Institutional Analysis for data collection. Both offices have been involved in the review, and have offered their support for the process. The recommended content is an established survey consisting of items related to seven validated dimensions of leadership effectiveness.

Finally, the committee found the lack of consistent procedures and codified review processes to be the most glaring deficiencies in the current decanal review process. In addition, very little information on the process was publicly available. Therefore, the Decanal Review Policy and Procedures document, in whatever form it is approved, must be made publicly available to the university community (i.e., posted on the university/Provost's website).

# **University at Buffalo Decanal Review Policy and Procedures (proposed, May 2014)**

## **Preamble**

The University at Buffalo is committed to fostering the success of its deans and enhancing their effectiveness. Formal, systematic reviews provide a means of supporting this commitment, by assessing both developmental and evaluative outcomes as well as the broad goals of leadership excellence and accountability. The decanal review procedures provide a systematic, consistent process with the dual goals of guiding deans in their professional development and aiding the President in determining whether the continued service of an incumbent dean is in the best interests of his or her unit and the University.

As in any productive evaluation of job performance, the decanal review process is an opportunity for the dean to reflect upon and assess his or her own progress toward defined academic and strategic goals. The process assists the dean in understanding his or her strengths, and will highlight areas in which improvement may be made. This will allow him or her to develop specific plans to address any concerns that may have emerged from the review process.

The decanal review process also provides supportive documentation for the dean's continued appointment, if it occurs. The policy and procedures set forth below seek to ensure that faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders have meaningful input into the systematic review of deans. This process examines the effectiveness of the dean not only in meeting stated academic missions, goals, and strategic objectives, but also in providing leadership within the unit and the larger community. Such reviews are to be done in a consistent manner, inviting broad-based participation, and maintaining confidentiality of participants. At the conclusion of the review process, appropriate feedback shall be provided to the faculty in the decanal unit.

## **Review Process**

### **Full Review**

In the year prior to completion of a dean's fifth year of service, and every fifth year thereafter, the Provost shall begin the process of full review of the dean's effectiveness. Decanal Review Committees shall normally be established early in the fall or spring semester, and the review process shall normally be completed within that semester. The Provost shall seek nominations to serve on the committee from the leadership of the Faculty and Professional Staff Senates. Nominees must be senior ranking faculty or staff members and not from the dean's academic unit. The Provost shall appoint from the resulting list of nominees, but may select other members as well. A chair and a maximum of nine members shall be appointed. The Provost shall meet with the chair to present the committee charge, after which the Provost absents himself or herself from the procedures except for consultation, as needed, by the chair.

The Chair of the Decanal Review Committee shall ask for the unit's organizational chart and list of key individuals from the office of the dean. The Committee shall meet to review the charge, identify potential survey questions, and to develop a strategy. The recommended method of gathering information is a confidential survey to be sent to all unit members and others, as appropriate, with each respondent offered the option to meet privately and confidentially with members of the Decanal Review Committee if he or she so chooses. A suggested review process is included as Appendix A, and recommended survey content is included as Appendix B.

Following data collection and compilation, the Decanal Review Committee shall prepare a confidential report to the Provost based on its findings, together with its recommendations. The Chair of the Decanal Review Committee shall then present the report to the Provost for his or her consideration.

## **Initial Review**

In addition to the standard five-year review, an initial review shall occur for new deans at the beginning of their third year in office. This process shall follow the general procedures outlined above, but may be less extensive than the full review and need not involve constituents outside the decanal unit. The object of the initial review is to ensure that the dean is meeting his or her leadership responsibilities from the perspective of those within the decanal unit.

## **Content**

Deans shall be evaluated on seven established leadership domains:<sup>1</sup> vision and goal setting; management of the unit; interpersonal relationships; communication skills; quality of education in the unit; support for institutional diversity; and research, professional and community endeavors. Items from each of these domains are included in Appendix B. The Decanal Review Committee may also include items specific to the decanal unit if deemed appropriate. Responses shall be solicited from the dean's administrative team (associate deans, chairs) as well as all faculty, staff and students within the decanal unit. The Committee may also choose to survey peers and university-level administrators; alumni; and external constituencies (e.g., corporate or philanthropic partners). A list of such constituents shall be provided by the dean's office. Respondents may request a confidential meeting with members of the Decanal Review Committee in addition to, or in lieu of, survey completion. In addition, the Decanal Review Committee may seek interviews with selected members of the decanal unit in order to gather qualitative information to complement the survey results.

## **After the Review**

The Provost shall review the report, together with the dean's self-assessment of his or her leadership effectiveness and any additional information, and meet with the dean to discuss both strengths and areas for improvement. Following this meeting, the Provost shall issue a general statement of findings to the decanal unit, summarizing both the process and outcome. A summary statement of findings shall also be issued to the Decanal Review Committee. The specific content of these statements shall be left to the discretion of the Provost, due to the need for confidentiality. However, the principles of trust and good faith dictate that some form of feedback be provided to the members of the decanal unit at the end of the review process.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on research by VJ Rosser, LK Johnsrud and RH Heck: Administrative effectiveness in higher education: Improving assessment procedures, *Res in Higher Educ*, 41(6), 2000, 663-83; Academic deans and directors: assessing their effectiveness from individual and institutional perspectives, *J Higher Educ*, 74(1), 2003, 1-25.

## **APPENDIX A: Recommended Decanal Review Process**

Once the Decanal Review Committee has been appointed and charged by the Provost, the chair shall solicit the following information from the unit: organizational chart, governing bodies/leadership in the unit, department chairs, student representatives, alumni representatives, key external partners and key campus partners. The committee shall then meet to review the charge, identify potential survey questions (see Appendix B), and to develop a strategy. Committee tasks shall be divided among committee members as deemed appropriate.

The Decanal Review Committee shall provide the list of external reviewers, with contact information, to the Office of Human Resources, which shall send letters requesting evaluative comment related to the seven leadership dimensions, and any other areas identified by the committee. These letters shall include contact information for those wishing to talk confidentially with a member of the Decanal Review Committee. Responses shall be returned to the Office of Human Resources, which shall provide an unattributed compilation to the Office of Institutional Analysis for inclusion in the report to be submitted to the Decanal Review Committee Chair.

The Decanal Review Committee shall supply a list of items to be included in the web-based surveys of internal respondents (administration, faculty, staff and students) to the Office of Institutional Analysis, which will prepare the survey for distribution. Once prepared, the Office of Human Resources shall deliver an email with the link to the survey to all potential respondents. The email shall also include a link to the Decanal Review Policies and Procedures document, and contact information for those wishing to talk confidentially with a member of the Decanal Review Committee.

Survey results, together with external review results, shall be compiled by the Office of Institutional Analysis, which shall prepare a written report. This report, together with raw data that includes copies of the original letters, is forwarded to the Chair of the Decanal Review Committee.

The Decanal Review Committee shall meet to review surveys and interview results, and shall determine if further information is necessary. Once the Committee has determined that it has adequate information, it shall draft a brief (maximum five page) review. The draft shall be circulated among the committee, which will collaborate to produce the final review. The Chair of the Decanal Review Committee shall present the final review to the Provost for his or her consideration.

The timing of the decanal review is critical; in most cases it shall be undertaken only during the academic year. Participants should be given a deadline of no more than three weeks to respond to the survey or return letters of evaluation.

The decanal review process is to take no more than one (1) semester (refer to proposed timeline). This allows for:

- (a) the Provost and Decanal Review Committee to identify internal and external participants,
- (b) the Decanal Review Committee to generate any additional questions for inclusion in the web-based survey for internal reviewers or the standardized letter of evaluation for external reviewers,
- (c) sufficient lead time for the Office of Institutional Analysis to prepare for web delivery of the survey,
- (d) responses to be gathered, analyzed and compiled
- (e) the Decanal Review Committee to assimilate results into its final report and recommendations and to communicate these in writing to the Provost

## APPENDIX B: Leadership Domains and Recommended Items for Decanal Evaluation<sup>2</sup>

Key to constituent respondent abbreviations:

AT = Administrative Team  
 F = Faculty  
 S = Staff  
 ST = Students

PA = Peers and Administrators  
 A = Alumni  
 EX = External Constituencies

Items scored on 5-point Likert-type scale with anchors of 1 (unsatisfactory) and 5 (outstanding). N/A (not applicable or not observed) and DK (don't know) options also included.

Area of Review	respondents
<b>1) Vision and Goal Setting. The dean...</b>	
articulates clearly the strategic goals of the unit	AT, F, S, PA
encourages ideas and creativity	AT, F, S
creates an atmosphere conducive to high faculty and staff performance	F, S
demonstrates vision and long-range planning	AT, F, S, PA
has articulated his/her vision for teaching excellence	AT, F
has articulated his vision for research excellence	AT, F
has articulated his vision for service excellence	AT, F
effectively advocates for resources needed by the unit	AT, F, S, PA
encourages faculty and staff development	AT, F, S
encourages curriculum/program development	AT, F
provides leadership for unit/subunit level initiatives	AT, F, S
Overall rating of Vision and Goal Setting	AT, F, S, PA
<b>2) Management of the Unit. The dean...</b>	
insures that fair and equitable administrative procedures are followed	AT, F, S
exercises fair and reasonable judgment in allocation of unit resources	AT, F, S
effectively manages change within the unit	AT, F, S
delegates work effectively	AT
handles administrative tasks in a timely manner	AT
has effective problem-solving skills	AT, F, S
is knowledgeable about the unit's departments and programs	AT, F, S
maintains an effective and efficient staff	AT, F, S
Overall rating of Management skills	AT, F, S
<b>3) Interpersonal Relationships. The dean...</b>	
responds effectively to the needs and concerns of faculty and staff	AT, F, S
treats individuals fairly and with respect	AT, F, S
maintains positive and productive relationships within the unit	AT, F, S
maintains positive and productive relationships outside the unit	AT, A, EX
demonstrates awareness of the quality of professional work of unit members	AT, F, S
demonstrates sensitivity to career and mentoring needs of unit members	AT, F, S
is accessible to the faculty and staff within the unit	AT, F, S
demonstrates understanding of the needs and concerns of students	AT, F, S, ST, A
is accessible to students	AT, F, S, ST, A
Overall rating of Interpersonal Relationship skills	ALL

<sup>2</sup> Based on research by VJ Rosser, LK Johnsrud and RH Heck: Administrative effectiveness in higher education: improving assessment procedures, *Res in Higher Educ*, 41(6), 2000, 663-83; Academic deans and directors: assessing their effectiveness from individual and institutional perspectives, *J Higher Educ*, 74(1), 2003, 1-25.



**APPENDIX B: Leadership Domains and Recommended Items for Decanal Evaluation (cont.)**

Key to constituent respondent abbreviations:

AT = Administrative Team  
 F = Faculty  
 S = Staff  
 ST = Students

PA = Peers and Administrators  
 A = Alumni  
 EX = External Constituencies

<b>Area of Review</b>	<b>respondents</b>
<b>4) Communication Skills. The dean...</b>	
listens to and communicates well with unit members	AT, F, S
listens to and communicates well with external constituents	AT, A, EX
effectively represents the unit and its members to the rest of the university	AT, F, S, PA
effectively communicates the unit's priorities to the upper level administration	AT, PA
effectively communicates the upper level administration priorities to the chairs	AT
effectively represents the unit and its members to the rest of the university	AT, F, S
produces clear reports and correspondence	ALL
Overall rating of Communication Skills	ALL
<b>5) Quality of Education in the Unit. The dean...</b>	
advances the unit's undergraduate programs effectively	AT, F, ST, A
advances the unit's graduate programs effectively	AT, F, ST, A
advocates for appropriate curriculum offerings	AT, F, ST, A
handles external accreditation reviews effectively	AT, F
recruits personnel and/or promotes recruitment effectively	AT, F, S
fosters a fair and equitable tenure and promotion process	AT, F, S
Overall rating of Quality of Education	AT, F, ST, A
<b>6) Support for Institutional Diversity. The dean...</b>	
demonstrates commitment to advancing and supporting equal employment opportunities	AT, F, S
demonstrates commitment to mentoring of women and faculty from underrepresented groups	AT, F, S
provides reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities	AT, F, S
ensures that all faculty and staff are educated in EEO/AA concerns	AT, F, S
Overall rating of Support for Institutional Diversity	AT, F, S
<b>7) Research/Professional/Community/Campus Endeavors. The dean...</b>	
maintains an active research/scholarly agenda	AT, F, PA
pursues professional growth opportunities	AT, F, PA
engages in effective teaching	AT, F, ST
contributes his/her services to professional organizations	AT, F, EX
contributes his/her services to community and campus projects	AT, F, PA, EX
Overall rating of Endeavors	AT, F, PA, EX

**Proposed Timeline for Decanal Review Process**

<p><b>Step 1:</b> <i>(July 1 every year)</i></p>	<p><b>Office of Human Resources (HR)</b> notifies the provost that three-year (new dean) or five-year (continuing dean) reviews should take place within their respective areas during the academic year. The provost solicits faculty and professional staff members from within the university to participate as committee members in the evaluation process. These committee members cannot be from within the Dean's academic unit.</p>
<p><b>Step 2:</b> <i>Week 1</i></p>	<p><b>HR, working with the selected committee, reviews list of faculty and staff who are a part of the dean's unit and provides needed information to the Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA).</b></p>
<p><b>Step 3:</b> <i>Week 4</i></p>	<p><b>HR, on behalf of the Provost, requests participation in the on-campus web-based survey and sends letters requesting evaluative comment from external reviewers.</b></p>
<p><b>Step 4:</b> <i>Weeks 5-7</i></p>	<p><b>Office of Institutional Analysis</b> collects data from survey responses. A designated person within HR collects responses from external reviewers.</p>
<p><b>Step 5:</b> <i>Week 8</i></p>	<p><b>OIA</b> summarizes the data collected from the web-based survey and conducts analysis of the survey data. HR compiles the responses from external reviewers and forwards the compilation to OIA, which prepares a written report addressing results from both internal and external reviewers. This report, <i>along with raw data</i> that includes copies of the original letters, is forwarded to: (i) The chair of the Decanal Review Committee, and (ii) a designated person within HR. If information received by OIA includes allegations of serious misconduct or illegal action, this information will be conveyed to the responsible administrator.</p>
<p><b>Step 6:</b> <i>Weeks 9-10</i></p>	<p><b>The Decanal Review Committee</b> meets to discuss results of the survey, evaluates the internal and external reviewer comments and summaries from OIA, and determines if any further data analysis is needed. If additional information is needed, the request for such information will be made to OIA. If anyone in the decanal unit would like to meet with the committee on an individual or small group basis, or if the committee would like to meet with any individuals, these individuals will now be invited to do so.</p>
<p><b>Step 7:</b> <i>Weeks 11-12</i></p>	<p><b>The Decanal Review Committee</b> drafts a brief (maximum five page) review and circulates for revision as needed.</p>
<p><b>Step 8:</b> <i>Week 13</i></p>	<p><b>The Chair of the Decanal Review Committee</b> presents the final review to the Provost for his or her consideration.</p>

**Contacts:**

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