

Policy on Periodic Multi-Year Review of Faculty (PMYR)  
Amherst campus

PREAMBLE

The practice of regular annual review of faculty performance based upon an annual faculty report (AFR) and involving peer review by departmental personnel committees and administrative review by chairs and deans is well established on the Amherst campus. The AFR serves as the primary basis for the award of merit monies when they are available and is intended to be a mandatory yearly review of faculty performance even in the absence of merit. Because faculty members continue to review their professional activity every year of their careers at the University, including after tenure and promotion, the AFR must be a principal ingredient of any process of post-tenure review.

In addition, significant multi-year reviews of faculty performance are conducted at the time of major personnel actions: appointment through the tenure decision year, tenure, and promotion to full professor. These reviews evaluate the performance of the faculty member in the three mandatory categories of teaching, research, and service in regard to established standards for the personnel actions, including the expectation of continued professional development and performance.

A multi-year review of all faculty, which is distinct from the annual and major personnel action reviews, serves a number of internal purposes. First, such a review expands the narrow time window of the annual reviews into an overview of a faculty member's interests, capabilities, and performance that will both inform evaluations and rewards and aid academic planning. Second, such periodic overviews make possible timely consultation, intervention, and assistance that will stimulate and encourage professional development, new initiatives, and/or changes in direction that will benefit both the faculty member and the institution. The multi-year review will also effectively account for faculty members' professional activity.

In adopting a PMYR policy, the university and the tenured faculty, represented by the Massachusetts Society of Professors, MTA/NEA, address the external concern for accountability, while upholding the integrity of tenure and academic freedom. PMYR addresses accountability by fostering continued professional development.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of Periodic Multi-Year Review (PMYR) is to assist tenured faculty in their continuing professional development. A faculty member who has been awarded tenure has demonstrated excellent performance and represents a large investment on the part of the University. Tenure is awarded on the basis of an expectation that the faculty member will continue to develop professionally and demonstrate a continued high level of performance. PMYR evaluates performance over a number of years and assures that the talents of faculty members and their contributions to the University are maximized throughout their careers.

## PRINCIPLES

1. Our present review procedures encourage short-term assessment of individual accomplishment. PMYR should foster a longer-term view of an individual's performance and contributions to the University.
2. PMYR must assure the protection of the faculty member's academic freedom, and right to full and free inquiry, as prescribed in the contract.
3. PMYR is neither retenuing nor a major personnel action as defined in the collective bargaining agreement.
4. PMYR should be appropriately linked to the annual faculty reviews [AFRs] and should not involve the creation of additional unnecessary bureaucracy.
5. PMYR should include both self-assessment and internal peer review, as well as assessment by the department chair and dean.
6. Standards of evaluation in each department will be fair and consistent with departmental, college, and campus practice.
7. PMYR is intended to recognize that individual interests and abilities of faculty members may change over time, and that faculty members may meet their professional responsibilities to their department in varied and changing ways.

## TIMING OF PROCESS

1. PMYR is to be conducted every seven years for all tenured faculty members. Persons who have indicated, in writing, their intention to retire within a three-year period will not be subject to PMYR.
2. The first formal consideration of an associate professor for promotion to full professor may be substituted for the initial PMYR unless such promotion consideration is delayed beyond seven years past the promotion to associate professor. If a person is formally considered for promotion to full professor but not promoted and is not subsequently reconsidered for promotion in the interval before the next sabbatical, PMYR will take place two years before the scheduled year of that sabbatical.
3. The time of the PMYR may be altered, upon written agreement between the individual and the department chair, in the following circumstances:
  - a. When the faculty member is named to a full-time administrative appointment, the faculty member will have the option of delaying the review for up to three years following the return to normal faculty assignments.
  - b. When the faculty member is granted a leave without pay for an academic year. A leave of less than one academic year in duration shall not affect the time of the PMYR.
  - c. When the faculty member expresses in writing his or her intention to retire within three years of the time of the scheduled review, the review shall be canceled. If the intention to retire is rescinded, the faculty member shall undergo PMYR in the next annual cycle or during the annual cycle in which the faculty member had originally been scheduled to undergo PMYR, whichever is later.

- d. Upon request initiated by the faculty member and approved by the department chair and the dean.

## REVIEW MATERIALS

The foundation of the review will include a brief statement, typically between 1000-2000 and not to exceed 2500 words, submitted by the faculty member that summarizes and assesses his/her principal activities during the period since the last PMYR or promotion review, and his/her goals and approach to achieving such goals in the areas of teaching, research/scholarship, creative and/or professional activity and service in the coming years. If the individual's statement calls for a major new initiative or change in the direction of her/his work, the statement will include any requests for additional developmental support needed for that initiative or change in direction. In addition, the faculty member will submit a current curriculum vitae. The department chair will supply all evaluations of the faculty member's teaching performance carried out during the previous six years, and the annual faculty evaluation reports (AFRs) for the prior six years and the current year, including any supplemental materials that normally accompany AFRs.

## REVIEW PROCESS

The Departmental Personnel Committee or other elected committee [hereafter referred to as DPC] and the Department Chair will review the individual's AFRs, curriculum vitae, teaching evaluations, and the submitted statement. After review of the materials, the DPC and the Chair will each recommend that the statement submitted by the faculty member be either:

- (1) Accepted, with further comments or suggestions optional, or
- (2) Revised.

A recommendation to accept the submitted statement will be made when the individual's past performance and future goals, as documented in the materials submitted, indicates that no changes in the faculty member's work or plans are seen as required in order to promote the continued contribution to the University and professional progress of the faculty member. A recommendation to revise the submitted statement will be made when the individual's past performance and future goals, as documented in the materials submitted, suggests that a significant change in the faculty member's work or goals (one that is substantially different from that proposed by the faculty member) is indicated in order to promote the faculty member's continued effective contribution and professional progress.

In making either recommendation, the DPC and the Chair will also recommend whether or not to provide the resources for professional development requested in the faculty member's statement, whether it is an accepted or revised statement. In deciding whether to recommend development support, the DPC and Chair would typically consider such factors as:

- (i) whether the individual's past performance and future goals indicate that she/he is

- likely to be successful in achieving the goals if she/he is given the necessary support;
- (ii) whether the individual's statement involves a substantial change in the nature of the individual's work;
  - (iii) the extent to which the individual's statement represents a contribution to departmental, college, or campus directions and priorities.

If development support is recommended, the recommendation will be submitted to the dean who would consider the award of development funds from a college development fund established by a faculty-count pro-rata distribution of such funds from the provost. The dean will be aided in this activity by a three-person faculty committee elected from faculty in the college. If the funds available are inadequate to meet the demand, decisions will be based on a combination of need and merit so as to ensure that funds are available to both solve problems and stimulate new initiatives, as well as to respond to the most pressing needs. The college development funds will be an addition to and not a replacement or renaming of the professional development funds that have been provided for in the MSP contract.

If both the DPC and the Chair recommend "Statement accepted" and the dean concurs, then no further action will be taken, and the review will be concluded. If the dean does not concur, the statement along with specific comments from the dean explaining the nonconcurrence will be returned to the faculty member, personnel committee, and chair for revision.

If either the DPC or the Chair recommends "Statement revised," or the dean indicates nonconcurrence, the DPC and Chair both shall meet with the individual to discuss ways of optimizing the faculty member's professional contribution through a revised statement. The faculty member shall be allowed to present any supplemental documentation about his or her performance at this time. The intent of the revised statement is to support and encourage the faculty member's effective contribution and professional development, and it shall in no way impinge on the faculty member's academic freedom. Opportunities to develop professionally may include, but are not limited to, consultation with colleagues to assist in problem areas, a change in department assignments to facilitate improvement in teaching, research or service, the design of a sabbatical leave which is crafted to address the identified needs, and referral to the Center for Teaching, if appropriate.

If a revised statement agreeable to the faculty member, the DPC and the chair cannot be achieved, the situation will be referred to a five-person college level appeal committee, two members of which are to be nominated and elected by the members of the faculty member's college to serve for a staggered period of two years, two members of which are to be appointed by the dean to serve for a staggered period of two years, and one member of which will be selected by the faculty member to serve as his or her representative. In smaller colleges (Education, Engineering, Management, Nursing, and Public Health and Health Sciences), the committee will include one member elected by the faculty of the college, one appointed by the dean, and one selected by the faculty member. The faculty member shall have the right to remove any committee members (up to six) whose participation he or she deems inappropriate. The committee including the faculty member's representative will draft a statement in consultation with the chair, the

DPC and the faculty member. This will be the revised statement when adopted by majority vote of the committee.

The revised statement will address the issues identified, will include a timetable and criteria for a follow-up review to take place in three years, and will be signed by the faculty member, the department chair and the dean to signify that all parties have received copies. The revised statement may include a reallocation of the faculty member's effort and such reallocation will itself not diminish the faculty member's entitlement to merit funds; nor shall it impinge on his/her academic freedom. Any proposed reallocation of duties should not be designed, intended or used for the purposes of controlling, restricting or redirecting the nature of the faculty member's research or scholarship in his/her field. The revised statement also will indicate what resources or other support will be devoted to promoting the success of the revised statement.

Participation in the PMYR process as described above is required of all tenured faculty members.

During the three-year period after development of a revised statement, the DPC and the chair will consult as needed with the faculty member, and at least annually will comment in writing on the faculty member's progress toward the goals set forth in the revised statement. The dean will review these comments and may comment as well. At the end of this three-year period, the DPC, the chair, and the dean each will evaluate in writing the extent to which the goals of the revised statement have been achieved. If the parties concur that the goals have been achieved, the recommendation will be that a subsequent PMYR will take place in four years, restoring the seven-year cycle. If they do not concur, other possibilities may be discussed. The dean may determine that no further efforts at faculty development are warranted and may refer the matter to the provost for disciplinary action or dismissal, consistent with the requirements of the Union contract.

The fact of a faculty member's refusal to accept or to implement the revised statement shall not be a basis for discipline, and no aspect of the PMYR process, including but not limited to informal discussion, written recommendations, or the fact or details of any revised statements generated as part of the process shall be considered as an initial stage in any disciplinary process or be introduced as evidence or otherwise referred to in any later disciplinary procedures. This exclusion does not apply to any document or record originally intended for a use other than the PMYR, e.g. the AFR, nor to any aspect of a faculty member's performance that may have been considered in the PMYR process and may be separately considered in a subsequent disciplinary process. Nothing in this policy changes the "just cause" standard set forth in the collective bargaining agreement under which a faculty member may be considered for dismissal.

## ASSESSMENT

Each dean will prepare an annual report to the Provost on the PMYR process in his/her college. This report, which will be reviewed by the Provost to ensure that the PMYR process is being appropriately and consistently carried out across the campus, will include a summary of the number of PMYRs conducted and their results and relevant details about all instances in which a revised plan was developed.

Periodically after implementation of PMYR, the parties will jointly evaluate and report to the campus on how the policy is working.