Faculty leaders developing two options for post-tenure review policy at Auburn

Faculty leaders are developing two options for a post-tenure review policy in response to a goal set by interim AU President Ed Richardson in June. Senate Chair Conner Bailey told a session of the University Faculty last week that one approach would involve periodic review of all tenured faculty members and the other option would be limited to faculty who are identified as low performers on evaluations by their department heads in two of the previous six years.

The University Senate will discuss drafts of both policies on Nov. 8, and Bailey said Senate officers will call a special meeting of the University Faculty near the end of this semester or early in spring semester for further discussion and a vote.

Bailey said faculty could choose either policy or reject both. But he noted that Richardson has made adoption of a post-tenure review policy a priority for AU this year. If the faculty do not develop a proposal, the administration could move forward with a policy without faculty input, he added.

Bailey said the two proposals draw upon policies in effect at peer institutions and differ from one another primarily in the number of faculty who would undergo review.

Both proposals and related materials are posted on the Web at www.auburn.edu/administration/governance/senate/ptr.html. The broader policy document states that it was conceived as an extension of annual performance reviews and would recognize faculty achievement as well as low performance. The document cites post-tenure review plans at 11 peer institutions, including Penn State, Oregon State and the University of Georgia.

In addition to annual performance reviews by department heads, the broader plan would provide for review of one-sixth of AU’s approximately 900 tenured faculty each year by a committee of faculty elected by their peers in each college and school. That committee would advise its dean, identifying both high achievers and those needing improvement. The college or school would designate high achievers for monetary rewards, and department heads would work with low achievers to identify and correct deficiencies.

Appeals would go to a Senate committee, which would advise the provost. Senate documents state that the “Everybody
Post-tenure review

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The majority of faculty speaking at the sparsely attended meeting on Tuesday expressed concerns about possible misuse of a post-tenure review policy by administrators to punish or fire professors who are outspoken or uncomfortable in the upper echelons of the university.

Bald said faculty leaders share those concerns and have tried to draft policies that protect the institution of tenure, which he called “bedrock of academic freedom.” He recommended that any plan go through a two-year trial phase before being made permanent.

Following a faculty vote on a post-tenure review policy this winter, the University Senate will submit a recommendation to Richardson, who will make a formal presentation of the policy to the Board of Trustees.

Correction

The announcement last week of the appointment of Andrew Weaver as acting associate dean for administration in the College of Education incorrectly stated that Weaver succeeds Robert Rowsey, who has retired.

Weaver is filling the position formerly held by Frances Kochan before she was named dean of the college. Susan Villaume is serving as interim associate dean for academic affairs, the position formerly held by Rowsey.

Rehabilitation program gets grant for doctoral studies

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded a $790,000 five-year grant to the AU College of Education to support doctoral studies in the Department of Rehabilitation and Special Education.

Doctoral students under the direction of faculty members David Martin and Randy McDaniel will use the funding for rehabilitation service activities and research involving cases of significant disability and employment, assessment in rehabilitation, independent living, multiculturalism and the influence of technology on rehabilitation.

Martin said the funding will strengthen the academic discipline while enabling doctoral students to gain experience as rehabilitation counselors and learn agency leadership from a consumer-oriented focus.

McDaniel noted that the grant is the latest of five totaling more than $3 million to the rehabilitation program. The grant brings Auburn’s program the distinction of being “one of only a few academic departments whose rehabilitation programs are funded at the bachelor’s, masters and doctoral levels,” he said.

Upcoming Events

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25

MEETING Staff Council, 9:30 a.m., Foy 217

SLIDE LECTURE “A Photographic Frame for Gee’s Bend: Complications in a Visual Documentary,” Kyes Stevens, director of Alabama Prison Arts Education Project, 4 p.m., JCS Museum

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26

FACULTY SEMINAR “Developing Rubrics to Assess Writing and Lecturing,” Isabelle Thompson and Sharon Roberts of Biggio Center, noon-1:30 p.m. (bring your lunch), Foy 202

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27

YORK LECTURE “Effective Responses to International Humanitarian Tragedies,” Catherine A. Bertini, former executive director of U.N. World Food Programme, 7 p.m., Dixon Conference Center

Friday, October 28

MEETING AU Board of Trustees, 4 p.m., committee sessions start at 1 p.m., Dixon Conference Center

PUMPKIN CARVE Festival, 4 p.m.-6 p.m., lighting of jack-o-lanterns, 6 p.m., courtyard, Dudley Hall

Monday, October 31

NEXT AU Report

Thursday, November 3

POETRY READING Chinese dissident Bei Dao, 7 p.m., Biggin Gallery

Monday, November 7

CHAMBER MUSIC Concert, Orpheus Music Trio, 7:30 p.m., Goodwin Recital Hall, tickets $20 at door; for season ticket information, call 887-9379

PUBLIC LECTURE “Comparative Literature as Comparative Politics: Indian Literary Histories and Some Utopian Possibilities,” Sheldon Pollock of Columbia University, 7:30 p.m., auditorium, Draughon Library

Tuesday, November 8

MEETING University Senate, 3 p.m., Broun Hall

AU Report Editor: Ray Summefield. Contributing editors and writers: Katie Hildard, AU Communications; Katie Cross, Education; and Jennifer Johnson, CADC Photography. Jeff Ehrhardt and Trice Megginson, Photographic Services. Assistant Vice President for Communications and Marketing: John Hachtel. Director of Communications: Danielle Deville.

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Spirit of Excellence Each month AU presents four Spirit of Excellence awards to employees in recognition of outstanding performance. Recipients for September were, from left, Selena Day of the School of Pharmacy, Seth Humphrey of the School of Nursing, Dar- ren Chambers of Student Affairs and Mindy Bowen of Landscape Services.

College’s students put creativity to test in pre-Halloween contest

A&T members vote to retain grievance policy in constitution

Administrative and professional staff at AU voted 56-17 Thursday to keep a grievance policy in the A&P Constitution rather than grant their elected assembly the authority to make changes.

The decision means that the 23-member A&P Assembly will continue to put future changes in the grievance policy to a vote of the membership. Although fewer than 100 attended Thursday’s meeting, the A&P Assembly represents 1,267 AU employees.

A&P Chair Harriette Huggins said the assembly will call another general meeting for a vote on specific changes in the grievance policy while keeping the policy in the constitution.

AU Human Resources personnel are working with the A&P Assembly and the Staff Council to standardize grievance policy and procedures for all staff employees. HR representatives will meet with the Staff Council at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday in Foy 217.
Initiatives in the Facilities Division over the past decade have resulted in $3 million per year in savings, say Facilities officials, who predict an additional $2 million per year in savings by the end of this decade.

The cost savings, which vary from documented budget items to estimates based on industry data, are projected to come from major projects, such as the addition of central heating and cooling systems for campus buildings, and projects as simple as conversion to more energy-efficient lighting in buildings. In between are such efforts as installing motion sensors to limit the use of lighting in unoccupied rooms, separate metering of water that does not go into the sewer system, bathroom fixtures that use less water, a stepped-up recycling program and purchasing a wood-chipper to convert fallen trees and limbs to mulch for campus landscaping.

John Mouton, special assistant to the president, said the Facilities Division is taking a broad view of cost savings, with conservation being considered in the context of long-term operating costs. “Conservation is much more of a factor for everyone involved in construction and maintenance planning than it was just a few years ago, and certainly more than when most of our existing buildings were constructed,” he said.

“You have to strike a balance between energy costs and maintenance costs, but the balance is shifting more toward energy efficiency…”

“Auburn is saving an additional $1.3 million per year in cooling costs due to conversion to more efficient equipment in the central plants instead of relying on air conditioning equipment in individual buildings. AU will continue to connect existing buildings to the new central system, which officials said will provide additional savings in energy, maintenance and long-term capital replacement cost. In another project, AU is saving $360,000 per year by installing variable speed controls for chilled water pumping and fan speed within the mechanical systems of campus buildings. Martin pointed to two projects that are expected to reduce electrical costs by $80,000 per year. One involves installing motion detectors in classrooms to control lighting during occupancy. The other project involves replacing lighting on campus with more efficient bulbs and fixtures.”

Mike Harris, manager of utilities, has developed a program that includes the metering of water that is dispensed through irrigation or evaporation. Since the water does not go into a sewer system, the university will save $330,000 per year in sewer fees. Other projected and current savings include expansion of the AU Recycling Program with potential savings of more than $100,000 per year and a centralized stockroom at Facilities for bulk purchasing and storage, resulting in savings of up to $800,000 per year. Mouton said the university must control costs because of the need to direct funds to academic areas in a time of rising costs for energy, construction and maintenance of campus facilities. “We are putting more square footage on campus to accommodate the educational needs of our students, so we have to be a lot smarter in how we handle those costs,” he said.

Agenda set for trustees session

The AU Board of Trustees will meet at Exxon Conference Center on Friday.

The board session, scheduled for 4 p.m., will be preceded by committee meetings which are scheduled to start at 1 p.m.

Agenda items include discussion of expanding student housing on campus, a review of plans for the student center complex, a progress report on the campus space management plan, a report on a compensation review policy and a report on the upcoming presidential search.

Interim President Ed Richardson also will update the board on the status of initiatives he outlined for AU in June.

How Auburn Stacks Up

Male-female ratio of students at AU from 1980 to 2005

Source: Institutional Research and Assessment

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