

STANDARD V: FACULTY

Description

Data on faculty demographics involve those faculty described in the *University Officers' Handbook* as Officers of Instruction, and thus include all persons with the titles of Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Instructor, and Lecturer. Both full- and part-time faculty are included, as well as persons who hold adjunct, clinical, and visiting appointments and receive direct compensation from the University.

During the fall 1997 semester, the faculty consisted of 872 full-time and 152 part-time individuals. Fifty-one percent of full-time faculty is tenured: 88 percent hold the Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree. UVM has been striving to achieve in its faculty greater diversity in gender and in ethnicity. Among full-time faculty in the 1997-98 academic year, 67 percent were male, and 33 percent were female. There were 71 full-time minority faculty members, representing 8 percent of the total full-time faculty. The minority faculty included 13 with African ancestry, 42 with Asian ancestry, 12 with Hispanic or Latino ancestry, and 4 with Native American ancestry.

There are 511 members of the faculty who are also members of the Graduate College, a separate unit with academic responsibility for all graduate programs other than the Doctor of Medicine.

The responsibilities of the faculty are described in the *University Officers' Handbook*, supplied to each member of the faculty on appointment and subsequently updated. The *Officers' Handbook* "is a collection of major established policies and procedures, provisions concerning welfare of personnel, and certain other information of University-wide effect and generally related to the academic programs of the University..."(p. 5) and serves as the contractual articulation of faculty employment policies. In addition to terms of appointment, employment, and review for Officers of Instruction, the *Officers' Handbook* outlines analogous processes for Officers of Research, Officers of Extension, Officers of Libraries, and Officers of Administration. There is no distinction in classification or employment status between academic support staff and the staff generally; staff terms of appointment, etc., are described in *The University of Vermont Staff Handbook*.

Specifics related to faculty duties and assignments are included in the initial appointment letter and in subsequent communication from Deans and Chairpersons. Typically, these describe broad categories such as the distribution of efforts between teaching, scholarship, and service. Teaching assignments (for example, courses being taught and student advising assignments) are a responsibility of the unit administration and are normally delegated to the department chair. These are usually the subject of negotiation between the chair and the faculty member, taking into account a variety of factors including individual expertise, department needs, student needs, and other demands on the faculty member's time. There is no specific institutional policy on faculty teaching loads, although the University has from time to time assigned targets, usually expressed as full-time student equivalents (FTSE) taught per faculty FTE, have been assigned to units. While the university averages around

14-15 student FTSE per faculty FTE, there is very substantial variation between colleges and within colleges in those ratios. For example, in some rapidly growing departments, student/faculty ratios can exceed 30:1; other departments (not including the College of Medicine) can be around 10:1 or lower. Consequently, while enrollments have changed and thus demands on faculty have increased, it is not clear that there have been adjustments of the distributions of faculty positions, operating dollars, or other institutional resources accordingly.

Regarding the use of part-time faculty and lecturers, the Faculty Senate is concerned that there is a national tendency toward increasing proportions of non-tenured and part-time faculty appointments and that this trend may undermine the quality of the professoriate, or the research or outreach missions of the university. Neither should it facilitate the exploitation of those individuals in terms of their conditions of employment. In 1987, there was a total of 120 part time faculty at UVM. In 1997, there were 152. Thus there has been a 25 percent growth in part time while the full time faculty ranks have grown approximately 10 percent. In some units part time faculty represent 20-25 percent of the total faculty. The Faculty Senate does not object in principle to these appointments, accepting that they may allow greater individual career flexibility among faculty and help departments be more flexible to changing enrollment patterns, the need for new courses, etc. Some steps have been made through the Faculty Senate in terms of appointment periods, and sabbatical leaves to bring the employment of part time faculty more closely into line with those of full time faculty.

Faculty are generally recruited through a competitive search process drawing from national and international applicant pools. In the search process, a request to fill a vacancy or create a new position usually originates at the departmental level and moves forward for approval to the unit dean and subsequently the Provost. Approval to recruit requires the establishment and approval of a search plan incorporating specific procedures to generate a diverse pool containing women and minority candidates. In most departments, a faculty search committee is convened to define the faculty position and to participate in the screening and selection of candidates; in some departments, a faculty personnel committee with rotating membership implements the search process. At each stage of the process (for example, approving candidates for interview and listing and ranking qualified candidates) attention is given to ensuring the process adheres to affirmative action guidelines.

Academic Freedom

Sections 211- 215 of the *Officers' Handbook* embrace the subject of academic freedom with a strong statement accepted by the Faculty Senate in 1954. "*Academic freedom is therefore not solely a right or privilege of the faculty but is the fulfillment of the obligation on the part of the university to provide an atmosphere in which intellectual growth may take place.*" The University of Vermont subscribes to the statement on academic freedom and responsibilities adopted by the American Association of University Professors. This section affirms the relationship between academic freedom and tenure in stating that "*tenure is an indispensable pre-condition for academic freedom.*"

Faculty Governance

Faculty have a critical role in determining University policy through the Faculty Senate. The Senate has the authority to review and establish policy on curricular matters including, but not limited to, establishment and dissolution of degree programs, teaching quality, academic regulations, the academic calendar, and the criteria for positions accorded academic rank. Additionally, the Senate can act upon any matters referred to it by the Board of Trustees. The Faculty Senate also has the power to recommend, review, or participate in policy matters relating to institutional policy, resource allocation, academic organization, faculty appointments, tenure, leaves and dismissals, admissions, financial aid, financial policy, intellectual property, honorary degrees, and the selection of academic and senior level administrators including the President and Provost. It has authority over all aspects of student affairs that affect academic achievement and education. Its most general charge is to provide a forum whereby matters of interest to the faculty pertaining to the University may be discussed and acted upon.

Faculty Senate actions are subject to the approval of the President of the University. If the President disapproves of an action, the Senate Chair must be informed within one month of the President receiving the action. The President may also return actions or legislation for further consideration. The Senate can appeal a presidential disapproval to the Board of Trustees if two-thirds of the faculty at a meeting or a majority by mail ballot vote to do so.

All persons both full- and part-time holding academic rank as officers of instruction, research, extension, or libraries are members of the Faculty Senate and have the right to attend and vote at all Senate meetings. These are normally held monthly during the academic year. They also have the right to serve as officers of the Senate and as members of Senate committees. Elected officials are the Chair, Vice Chair, and members-at-large of the Executive Council. Additional membership of the Executive Council consists of the chairs of the standing committees of the Senate. Each standing committee of the Senate has representation of at least one faculty member from each school or college. The standing committees and the other details concerning the operation of the Senate are included in its Constitution and Bylaws which is part of the *Officers' Handbook*.

Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure

Department chairpersons are required to review annually the performance of each faculty member in their departments based on goals and contributions as previously agreed upon, and recommend to the Dean reappointment, promotion, or tenure. The University of Vermont is strongly committed to the principle of tenure. Tenure can be attained upon an initial appointment to the rank of professor, upon promotion to the rank of associate professor, or upon reappointment following a probationary period. During the probationary period, the individual's record is evaluated in terms of teaching, scholarship, and service. The probationary period following an initial appointment as assistant professor is seven years, with a decision to grant tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor being made by the sixth year. Following an initial appointment as associate professor, the probationary period is four years, with a decision to grant tenure being made by the third year.

Procedures, timelines, and appeal mechanisms are clearly stipulated in the *Officers' Handbook* (Section 231).

A chairperson is not required to prepare formal documentation for annual reappointment or consideration for promotion unless the chair wishes to do so or it is requested by the faculty member. When an individual is being considered for tenure or promotion, the department chair is required to consult the advice of the probationary and tenured faculty and then make a recommendation. The chair informs the faculty member of the decision and forwards the documentation and recommendation to the dean. The faculty standards committee of the college or school reviews the material and makes a recommendation to the dean. The dean makes a decision. If the decision is negative, the dean informs the faculty member in writing. If it is positive, the file is forwarded to the provost, who seeks advice from the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Senate. Again the faculty member is notified in writing of a negative decision, while a positive recommendation goes forward to the President for approval. In any instance that a decision is negative, the faculty member has the right to ask the officer who made that decision (chair, dean, or provost) to reconsider, and then may appeal to the next level of administration.

In all cases, the criteria to determine suitability for reappointment, promotion, and tenure are the same — namely, teaching, scholarship, and service. However, types of teaching and scholarship differ between departments and units, hence the need for the primary evaluation of faculty to be based upon peer judgment in the discipline, within the institution, and beyond.

Appraisal

Comparing current numbers with the data provided in the 1988 Self Study Report, the numbers of faculty have increased slightly by 70 full-time and 32 part-time faculty to a total of 1024. There is a substantial increase in the percentage of female faculty from 24 percent in 1987 to 32.6 percent in 1997. This increase has been consistent across almost all academic units. It is a matter of concern, however, that recent data demonstrate that retention problems are proportionately greater for female and minority faculty than for male or non-minority faculty. This is shown by relatively slow progress in women and minority faculty attaining the rank of professor.

Various initiatives, such as providing departments with financial rewards and recruiting post-doctoral fellows, have been implemented to increase minority faculty but the results to date have been disappointing at the institutional level.

The 1988 Self-Study Report indicated that the institution has been successful at recruiting excellent faculty because of the "*the institution's reputation, environment, excellent fringe benefits, and reasonably competitive salaries.*" While we are still able to recruit excellent faculty, several searches have failed recently because of our inability to provide competitive salaries and "start-up" packages, particularly in the sciences. An even greater concern has been the general erosion of faculty salaries at UVM over the 1990s. We have gradually moved further and further behind our competitor institutions. This problem has been

repeatedly raised by the Faculty Senate and is now recognized by University administration and the Board of Trustees as an issue needing urgent attention.

The actions of deans and chairs have a major impact on faculty careers. Too often, talented and highly competent faculty without adequate training move into administrative roles in which they are required to make far-reaching personnel and budget decisions. To help professionalize administrative ranks, the University has recently introduced departmental training sessions on a voluntary basis. In addition, the Provost has introduced new annual evaluation mechanisms for chairs and deans.

There is concern among faculty leadership about reluctance on the part of many faculty to become involved in governance. This may relate to the growing pressures on faculty as their roles and responsibilities become more complex, to skepticism about the significance of faculty input into institutional decision making, or perhaps to concerns about the effectiveness of the "town meeting" Senate in a contemporary university. An ad hoc faculty committee has been established to look at the operation of the current governance structure and recommend possible changes.

Many universities, including the University of Vermont, are reexamining the nature of scholarship and its evaluation. Initiatives at the individual academic unit as well as in the faculty as a whole through the Faculty Senate have focussed on examining the changing nature and balance of scholarship, teaching, and outreach across disciplines, and across an individual faculty career. At UVM, this is a faculty-led activity which, when concluded, will probably lead to changes in the processes of reappointment, promotion, and tenure.

The impact of technology on faculty work and the academic enterprise is being addressed aggressively through the most recently constituted Senate committee, the Technologies Committee. Specifically, the impact of new technologies on teaching will be profound over the next ten years. While technology has the potential to provide the faculty with valuable tools, it also requires a substantial and continuing investment in hardware, support, and training. Information technology resources and expertise are unevenly distributed across campus units. These technologies also raise challenging issues such as those related to copyright ownership of course materials and procedures for access to and marketing of courses.

A new Center for Teaching and Learning, established in the Fall of 1998, has the potential to substantially help faculty explore new approaches to teaching in a supportive and exciting environment, and build upon the excellent reputation enjoyed by UVM for its quality of instruction. In addition to the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Training and Development conducts a variety of programs in support of faculty teaching each semester, including the Faculty Writing Project, Technology in Context Workshop, noontime Talks on Teaching, and other targeted support initiatives. Two annual institution-wide teaching awards recognize excellence in teaching: the Kroepsch-Maurice Teaching Awards are given to five faculty; the UVM Alumni Association gives the Kidder Award to an exceptional teacher each year. Furthermore, Instructional Incentive Grants (annual budget of

approximately \$40,000) administered through the Provost's Office provide summer stipends and development funds in support of innovation in teaching.

When graduate students are provided Graduate Teaching Fellowships and are, thus, expected to participate in undergraduate teaching, their training in teaching methods is generally provided by the department. In departments wherein many graduate students teach, such as English and Mathematics, special courses and mentoring systems have been established to provide assistance to new teachers.

Even a cursory examination of the University of Vermont budget illustrates the importance of undergraduate tuition as a revenue stream. However, the emphasis on undergraduate education sometimes appears to overshadow the importance of research and scholarship at UVM. While our traditional undergraduate population is unlikely to expand, it does seem that there are opportunities for growth in graduate education, non-traditional students, and non-credit education. Furthermore, federal research support is scheduled to increase over the next few years and the University of Vermont is well placed to capitalize on this trend, particularly in health, life, and environmental sciences. It is critical that we invest effectively and strategically to maintain not only a competitive faculty but also competitive facilities and research infrastructure. Doing so will also yield substantial benefits for undergraduate education and the state of Vermont as we pursue becoming an engaged community in which teaching, scholarship, and outreach are effectively integrated.

The University encourages faculty research primarily through its sabbatical leave program through which, after six years of service, a faculty member may be granted a sabbatical leave of one year at three-quarters salary or half a year at full pay. In addition, the University provides Summer Research Fellowships and Institutional Grants, administered through the Graduate College. Individual departments and deans' offices also provide varying amounts of travel funds for faculty professional development. International Incentive Grants are given for research and teaching projects that contribute to the global mission of the University.

Projection

The next ten years are going to see major changes in institutions of higher education. Economic pressures are unlikely to abate, and distance technology will present new paradigms and competitors. Many faculty will retire over the next ten years. While the loss of that experience and expertise will be difficult, it offers opportunities for realignment and funding of new initiatives. The University of Vermont faculty leadership is actively addressing issues such as becoming an effective learning organization, faculty recruitment and retention, diversifying the faculty, technology issues in program delivery, investment in our research infrastructure, the changing nature of faculty work and faculty involvement in and commitment to the concept of shared governance. We are confident the University is well placed to address these issues and strengthen its influence and its programs.