LETTER FROM THE PROVOST

From: Martha Pollack
Sent: April 2, 2015
Subject: Faculty Evaluation: Recognition of entrepreneurial, creative, and outreach activities

Dear Colleagues:

One of our most important responsibilities is the evaluation of faculty colleagues for tenure and promotion and as part of annual activity reporting. When carrying out this responsibility, I encourage you to give full recognition to the broad range of entrepreneurial, outreach, and creative activities in which faculty engage. These activities may enhance any of the criteria on which faculty are measured — teaching, research, and service. They may include involvement with other sectors including public and private organizations that have not traditionally been considered in faculty evaluations, or they may include creative activity that does not take the form of traditional scholarship.

Examples include:

- creating service learning and action-based learning opportunities for students,
- creating new instructional methods,
- engaging in community-based research,
- engaging in research funded by industrial, nonprofit, or other non-federal or foundation sources,
- creating a start-up company that enhances the broader scholarly, public service, or health care missions of the University,
- engaging in creative performance,
- creating new or enhanced practices, products, or services,
- working with to patent or license an invention,
- advising and instructing students in entrepreneurial and public service activities,
- developing collaborative approaches to solving complex world problems.

Activities like these strengthen the University and should be considered as contributions worthy of consideration, both at times of tenure and promotion and on an annual basis.

Sincerely,

Martha E. Pollack
Provost and Executive Vice President for
Academic Affairs

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

LEADERS AND BEST:

FACULTY AWARDS AND LEADERSHIP GUIDELINES

DEVELOPED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN STRIDE COMMITTEE
IN COLLABORATION WITH PARTICIPANTS AT THE FASTER WORKSHOP HELD IN MAY 2012

In May 2012, a small group of senior U-M faculty drawn from several different schools and colleges, including both members of the STRIDE and FASTER committees, met for two days to discuss both their own experiences with the selection of faculty for awards and leadership positions, and literature outlining best practices, pitfalls, and recommendations. They distilled their reading and discussion into the guidelines outlined here. We will use the term "awards" here to include internal awards, nominations for external awards, and selection of faculty for leadership positions of all types.

PRINCIPLES

Equity in access and opportunity for awards

Make sure the pool is as broad as possible. Without consideration of equity across groups, the "contenders" in the pool will likely be those at the top of the pyramid – mainly senior white men.

Inclusiveness

Distribute awards in ways that promote inclusiveness and broader consideration of accomplishments and their value.

Fairness

There should be a sense that both the outcome and process "feels" fair to all participants. Inclusiveness, equity of access, and review by those who take systematic steps to avoid the influence of implicit biases all contribute to fairness.

Awareness and education regarding potential for bias

Any institution that values its awards process should insist upon educating chairs and committee members to be conscious of potential biases in evaluation.

Service as a privilege

Evaluation of all employees, faculty included, requires many skills. Consider explicitly the characteristics that are needed in evaluators, and select evaluators with those qualities.

Accountability

The entities responsible for the award – the award selection and the nominating bodies – should be held accountable, and hold themselves accountable, both to the individuals being evaluated and to those to whom recommendations are being made.

PRACTICES

Awards committee chairs educated to recognize potential for bias should ensure the following practices are in place:

Appoint diverse selection committee members

Several recent studies demonstrated that more diverse groups with a greater breadth of perspectives make better decisions. In addition, diverse committees provide access to a wider set of networks for cultivating nominations. Do not expect committee members from underrepresented groups to advocate for diversity – it is everyone's responsibility.

Develop written criteria

Criteria should be developed prior to the beginning of any evaluation process. These criteria should be clearly stated, but not in terms of narrowlydefined evidence.

The awards criteria and process for nomination should be transparent

The steps to request nominations, all supporting documents needed for the nomination, the timeline for evaluation, and past winners should be communicated publicly and widely. The request for nominations, along with the criteria, should be prominently displayed, such as on the award website.

There should be multiple pathways to nomination

To maximize the likelihood of diverse nominations, opening procedures to multiple nominators (including self-nomination) may be critical.

The committee should discuss the process and criteria before reviewing nominations

This ensures use of the publicly communicated criteria for the award. Research has shown that implicit bias can enter via inadvertent shifting standards after nominees are discussed.

The selection process should be fair

All who are eligible for the award should be given equal consideration during the review process and discussion. Ensure that every committee member's voice is heard. Unconscious bias is lessened when committees have time for thoughtful reflection and discussion.

Promote equal discussion of each candidate

Use a systematic process and agreed upon criteria. Although this may be time consuming and dismissed by committees as not critical, this promotes a less biased, fair and inclusive process.

The selection process should be inclusive

The process should consider the historic tendency to draw awardees from a narrow demographic, and make provisions to avoid this. This includes expanding the demographic characteristics of the pool to be considered in the current round.

RESOURCES

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