

CCAS STATEMENT ON PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC DEANS

INTRODUCTION

The quality, character, and reputation of an academic institution are determined largely by the people (faculty, students, administrators, staff, and friends) brought together to realize its educational mission, and by the organizational success it enjoys in achieving that mission. Next to decisions about the hiring, tenure, and promotion of faculty, which give academic definition to an institution, the most important personnel actions taken in colleges and universities are those involving administrative leadership. The quality of academic life and the level of institutional effectiveness depend upon sound management by chairs, directors, deans, and vice presidents. It is, therefore, important for academic organizations to operate in a professional manner regarding the evaluation of academic administrators. This statement is directed at the evaluation of college deans; it offers advice on two basic elements of professional practice: establishment of policies and common courtesies.

POLICIES: A BASIC ELEMENT OF SOUND PRACTICE

Organizations establish policies to bring clarity and standardization to their internal practices. Sound policies ensure that principles rather than personalities are the basis for action, thereby eliminating *ad hoc* decision making on appointments, evaluation reviews, reappointments, extensions, nonrenewals, and dismissals for cause. Sound policies allow for change that is handled fairly and according to stated procedures and rules. The existence of sound policies brings order and predictability to, and builds confidence in, actions pertaining to administrative leadership. There are two aspects that are foundational to sound practice when it comes to the evaluation of administrators: the existence of an accurate position description and the reliance on standardized evaluation processes.

Position Description. At a minimum, institutional policy should include a generic written description for each academic administrative position. The description should include the duties and responsibilities of the position, the authority vested in or delegated to the individual holding the position, the appointment period, and the conditions for renewal or extension, including decision rules for cases in which formal voting is featured.

Standardized Evaluation Practices. There should be clarity and consistency on all aspects of the administrative evaluation or review of deans. An institution's policies on the review of academic administrators should be congruent with the following principles:

- (1) **The scope and mechanics of all evaluations of administrative performance should be known, codified, and exist as an aspect of institutional policy.** (CCAS recommends that evaluation policies feature provision for broad input from a variety of venues, rather than being limited to a single source and instrument.)
- (2) **Those individuals asked to provide input should be well informed about the requirements of the position and the job-related accomplishments (or lack thereof).**

- (3) **Reviews should occur on a known, regular cycle.** (Where possible, CCAS recommends a review period of no fewer than three years, with five years as the preferred period. This provides the time needed to begin to observe the changes and results of actions taken at the college level.)
- (4) **The collection, statistical treatment, and conclusions drawn from evaluative data should be handled with the same rigor and objectivity that would be viewed as sound practice in research.**
- (5) **Successful administrative evaluations feature an appropriate balance between (a) the right of the college's members to have input that is appropriately confidential and access to summary results that are disseminated in a timely way, and (b) the right of the dean being evaluated to receive appropriate summary data and to enjoy the same level of privacy normally associated with other related personnel actions in the institution.**

ADMINISTRATIVE COURTESIES

Academic officers to whom deans report should extend a number of basic courtesies when it comes to evaluation and the use of results as they pertain to the administrative appointment. The dean should expect that his/her supervising academic officer will:

- (1) start the evaluation process by alerting the dean about its nature, purpose, and timetable for completion;
- (2) use the evaluation results as a tool for providing constructive feedback and advice;
- (3) provide an opportunity for the dean to respond to the results of the evaluation;
- (4) give the dean reasonable time to deal with any deficiencies;
- (5) develop a final written evaluation statement that considers all appropriate forms of evidence and serves as the basis for decisions about salary adjustment, extension, or non-renewal;
- (6) provide appropriate conditions for a return to a faculty appointment (once the administrative term has been completed) that will facilitate the resumption of normal faculty life. Considerations here include administrative leave with pay, favorable action on a sabbatical leave request (where available), and a salary reversion tied to appropriate benchmarks; and
- (7) afford due process in any contested personnel action.

When an institution adheres to the guidelines described above it provides a sound foundation for constructive evaluation, and creates conditions under which the benefits of healthy administrative relationships can be realized. The Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences and its members endorse these guidelines for use in all institutions of higher education.