Faculty evaluation and counseling when carried out effectively can lead to departmental excellence. Conducted improperly, however, the procedure can, and often does, create anxieties and inhibit total team effort. The faculty evaluation, counseling, and reward system, to be effective, must stimulate progress toward departmental goals and objectives. If the reward system within the entire university is such as to disregard the assigned goals and missions of the department, then the process will likely be counterproductive.

A department is a unique institution within our society, and in particular within academia. It is typically established and held within defined parameters to form a manageable unit to accomplish specific objectives. If the unit becomes too large it may be divided. If it becomes too small, it may be combined with another small unit with a similar mission. Within Colleges of Agriculture, the departmental unit has responsibilities for a wide variety of activities including research, extension, resident instruction, and public service. Within a college structure the real action is at the departmental level and the success of a college is dependent upon the productivity of creative and innovative individual departmental programs. It is therefore imperative that the department be provided the tools and the reward system to manage and develop effective and productive programs.

Departments of Horticulture throughout the country have developed individual personalities, reputations, and philosophies. These departmental characteristics gradually emerge over the years and are strongly influenced by individual faculty members. The greater the stature of the individual, the greater will be his or her influence upon the departmental stature and reputation. It is the responsibility of the department chairman to create an environment that will allow the individual to grow professionally to the maximum potential of his or her abilities.

The image and overall impact of a department does not emerge or change rapidly. The growth and development of a department is largely the result of internal factors, teamwork, and the departmental environment. It is for this reason that the management of a department’s dominant resource—people—must rest close to the action rather than be dictated from above. If the yard-stick that is to be ultimately used to measure an individual faculty member does not appropriately recognize programs and contributions considered important within the department, individual faculty members have no alternative but to strive to concentrate on those activities that will enhance their progress toward promotion and tenure, whether they are fully consistent with departmental goals or not.

While we are often critical of the adoption of promotion and tenure criteria developed far from the action, perhaps this has taken place because of our inability or unwillingness to assume departmental responsibilities in this area. I would hope that as we improve our procedures we could reestablish confidence in departmental decisions.

The department chairman has a very critical role in guiding those activities that will influence the total “environment” within a department. The chairman as an individual can do very little, but through his or her influence upon the departmental faculty exciting results can be obtained. A department, either formally or informally, does have goals and objectives. The chairman, with significant inputs from the faculty, has two very important tools through which the direction and productivity of departmental programs can be guided. One is the identification and selection of persons to fill vacant positions. The other is use of the counseling and evaluation process to stimulate the development of strong, aggressive programs to move the department toward its determined goals. If the counseling and evaluation system is to be effective, the chairman and the faculty must be in the position to reward individual accomplishments toward determined goals. To be otherwise weakens the total effort.

Promotion criteria

When promotion and tenure criteria are established and decisions are made far above the departmental level there is the risk that the individual faculty member's professional growth and development may be inhibited by real or perceived requirements for promotion and tenure. Suppose an extension specialist is added to a departmental faculty to develop strong and aggressive educational programs designed to facilitate the growth of a particular statewide agricultural industry. If, to receive favorable promotion and tenure action, he or she must publish research findings in refereed journals, then the individual’s efforts will be directed toward doing what is necessary to become tenured at the expense of the major departmental role.

Naturally, departmental decisions concerning promotion and tenure and other mechanisms of evaluation must be defendable, and judgments and decisions backed up with factual documentation. Yet, the decision must be based upon progress toward determined objectives. If these goals and objectives are ill conceived, then it is the chairman that should be held responsible.

In my view, the entire process starts with the recruitment of new faculty. The chairman and the faculty involved must clearly define the role that the new member will be expected to assume. The candidate must become aware of what will be expected if he or she is to succeed. In this regard it is essential that the chairman and the department be in a firm position to reward accomplishment toward these defined objectives.

Once the new faculty member joins the team, the next stage of the process begins—that of counseling. Effective counseling is not easy. It will vary from one department to another, and will be influenced by the personality of the chairman and the confidence that the faculty have in their chairman.

Formal counseling should be carried out with each faculty member annually with informal counseling as the opportunity arises. The chairman must be accessible and have created an atmosphere of concern and openness toward the faculty.

It is important that appropriate preparation precede the formal annual counseling. One mechanism might well be for the faculty member to complete a short questionnaire which would be forwarded to the chairman a few days in advance of the counseling session. Such a questionnaire might include the request for such information as:

- A list of major accomplishments over the past year in order of importance as perceived by the faculty member.
- A listing of goals for the coming year in order of priority as identified by the faculty member.
- A list of any specific concerns that the faculty member may have.

Such information provides a focal point for discussion. Perhaps the faculty member's perception of accomplishments do not coincide with those of the chairman or of the department. The goals for the coming year might well provide an evaluation tool for future discussions. The listing of concerns provides the vehicle to clear up misconceptions before they become major problems or aggravations.

A written confidential summary of the matters discussed and mutual conclusions reached, forwarded to the faculty member by the chairman, may also prove to be very useful and provide a reference for future counseling.

Within a department each faculty member will have a different mix of responsibilities and, therefore, each must be evaluated in light of specific accomplishments toward the defined goals of his or her assignment. In most horticulture departments there are a wide variety of split appointments, and it is, therefore, important that this be given careful attention in the evaluation process.

Extension

It is often difficult to define specific extension accomplishments. I suspect that part of the problem rests with the fact that those far from the extension scene typically do not have an understanding of

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FACULTY EVALUATION: A DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN'S PERCEPTION

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the role and mission of the extension specialist. Perhaps it would help if, with the aid of the extension specialists of the department, a clear definition of what constitutes an effective extension program were developed and then efforts made to evaluate a specialist based upon the criteria defined. Wherever possible, accomplishments and excellence of programming should be quantified. Perhaps the specialist of the department could assist in the development of the yardstick to serve as a basis for evaluation of accomplishment. If such an effort is to be effective, such criteria should be shared and justified with those further from the scene who may have involvement in the evaluation process.

Resident instruction
It has frequently been considered difficult to accurately assess teaching quality and effectiveness. The two criteria that are most frequently used are student evaluation and peer evaluation. Student evaluation of teaching has become very important in many, if not most, universities. Interpreted cautiously student evaluations can be helpful in such areas as clarity of presentation, class preparation, accomplishment of course objectives, etc. Items that would reflect popularity must be viewed with caution. Where we often fall short is in the area of peer evaluation where such factors as course outlines, testing procedures, creativity, class notes, and degree of preparation for more advanced courses are treated too lightly. Faculty who have the reputation of excellence in the classroom can be of great help in assisting and evaluating less experienced faculty concerning teaching performance.

Research
Research accomplishments are often considered the easiest to evaluate: just count the number of publications in refereed journals. From this comes the over-used term: publish or perish. However if numbers of publications are to be used as the criterion, then faculty are encouraged to undertake research efforts that will quickly result in "papers" without serious concern as to the potential value of the findings. It would seem, particularly at the department level, that greater consideration should be given to the quality and the potential impact of the findings. It is important that research be carefully conceived, imaginative, and lead to the generation of information that will advance the research thrust of the department. Obviously, a research effort is not complete until the results are made known to those who need the information. But let's put greater emphasis on quality and the value of the findings rather than strictly on numbers.

Conclusion
In reviewing the total process, it becomes increasingly clear that we must strive to refine counseling and evaluation procedures and that we must be willing to make the critical decisions at the departmental level if we are to establish the confidence of higher administration and preserve the opportunity to reward those that are achieving departmental goals.

FACULTY EVALUATION: A PROFESSOR'S PERCEPTION

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To get the ideas of other faculty members concerning faculty evaluation, I contacted about 40 horticultural colleagues, at Kentucky and at other Land Grant Institutions. There were persons of all ranks, though most were "full" professors. I also had access to responses of our agriculture faculty to a Faculty Senate questionnaire on evaluation. Most thoughts or ideas presented here were suggested by respondents, although suggestions were not all included, particularly if the concern seemed to be related to a unique institutional situation. This topic seems important to faculty members, for response was good, and many responses showed evidence of much thought and effort. Thus, these comments are designed to reflect concerns of faculty - not from a single institution, but of horticultural faculty in general.

Faculty members almost universally desired department chairmen to have a greater role in faculty evaluation than they believe chairmen now have. As a corollary, they felt deans exert too much control, often without adequate knowledge, though they did not question the need to equalize departmental evaluations within the college or university.

Many faculty members feel that administrators fail to maintain objectivity and often favored or down-graded faculty for personal rather than performance reasons. These views seem quite serious because most horticulturists that responded are well regarded professionally and probably receive favorable evaluations. Prejudicial faculty evaluation is quite evident to faculty, hurts morale and decreases staff respect. Don't underestimate the perceptiveness of your faculty and subject them to other than factual information and/or explanation. Faculty members have a better idea of an administrator's fairness than you may suspect, just as administrators know more about faculty members than we suspect. There was not a plea for leniency on the part of faculty, just a plea for complete administrative integrity. It was apparent that most faculty dissatisfaction with evaluation was related to what was considered non-objective evaluation. We tend to lose sight of the truism "favoritism makes fewer friends than antagonists." Responses also make it quite apparent that no system currently in use insures objectivity, that has to be provided by the administrator.

Views on the desirability of evaluation varied. Some wanted stronger and more frequent evaluations. I sensed that others felt that a full professor was almost above evaluation. Apparently, the latter group felt all should get the same salary increase - a view I certainly do not share, for equal salary increases without regard to productivity are apt to equalize productivity downward instead of upward. One respondent, a former administrator, expressed the need for periodic evaluation of administrators. The idea has appeal to faculty since administrators often make or break faculty careers. The hard questions are: How is it done and who does it, particularly when their reappointment is concerned?

Few faculty believed peer evaluation should be an important part of the evaluation process, especially in institutions where administrators are rotated. There is understandable reluctance to evaluate someone critically this year only to have him as chairman next year with full access to the files. Experience suggests that we tend to be kind to our friends and working associates, especially during evaluation. Thus, I do not believe in routinely giving a lot of weight to peer judgment in the evaluation process, though it does have merit if it is wisely used. The principal factor in respondents' desire for strong peer evaluation seemed to be concern about favoritism by administrators. Perhaps a way of improving the value and fostering acceptance of peer evaluation is to select peers carefully, some by the faculty member and some by the chairman. The peers should then evaluate on the basis of material provided by the faculty member being evaluated. The latter may or may not be known by the peer evaluator(s). Despite these questions and obvious difficulties, there is need for meaningful faculty involvement in the process of evaluation of all levels of faculty and administration if we are to avoid its becoming a function of top administration only.

Activity vs. productivity
There is need for better understanding in the question of activity vs. productivity. Administrators need to decide which they want, then clarify in their own minds what belongs in each category and let