

Chancellors Elisabeth Zinser and James Holsinger, joined by Special Assistant to the President for Academic Affairs, Juanita Fleming, and University Counsel, Paul Van Booven, met with their Area Advisory Committee Chairs on January 20, 1998.

The purpose of the meeting was to continue discussions begun at the October 30, 1997 meeting of the University Area Committees and Lexington Campus Department Chairs/School Directors.

Roy Moore served as convener and facilitator of the meeting.

The main topics of conversation in the meeting were: (1) confidentiality, (2) the type and extent of advice needed by the Chancellors, (3) completeness of files, (4) the need for reason-giving in letters, (5) open records, (6) debriefing the committees, and (7) the Chancellors' advising by memo all who will participate in the tenure / promotion process.

1. Confidentiality: It was pointed out that there is sometimes much discussion of a candidate's case around campus which is not instigated by the candidate. No one was aware of any problem with confidentiality within the advisory committees. Rather, the problem has arisen with faculty and department chairs. It was agreed that the Chancellors, in their memos regarding the process each year (see 7, infra), will emphasize the need for maintaining confidentiality by *everyone* participating in a tenure / promotion review.

2. Type and extent of advice needed by the Chancellors: Chancellors Zinser and Holsinger indicated very strongly their need of clear advice from their committees, as well as clear accounts of why the committees are making their recommendations and the strength of the recommendations being made. Thus, for example, a committee might vote unanimously in favor of a candidate, but this does not entail that the committee sees the file as extraordinarily strong. If there are lingering reservations, these should be expressed in the letter to the Chancellor. Alternatively, a committee might vote unanimously against promoting or tenuring a candidate, but the members might be significantly ambivalent about this. This, too, should be expressed. In sum, the Chancellors indicated that they would be best served by letters from the committees which indicate clearly the strength or weakness of the recommendation as well as the reasons for the recommendation. The Chancellors also indicated that the committees should share with them any kind of relevant advice that committee members feel might be helpful to them.

3. Completeness of files: The question of completeness of files, which was one of the topics at the October 30 meeting, was raised again. There was (again) unanimous agreement among the committee chairs and Chancellors that committees will not make recommendations on incomplete files. It was also agreed that requests to departments or programs for missing documentation or information should be made through the relevant Chancellor's office rather than directly by a committee chair.

4. The need for reason-giving in all letters: Connected to the issue of completeness, it was also unanimously agreed that, with the single exception of junior faculty who might be writing in regard to senior faculty, *everyone* making a recommendation on a candidate must give clear reasons for that recommendation. Thus, for example, letters from senior faculty should not be accepted which merely indicate a vote. Any such letters should be returned by the chair or program director, instructing the recommender that it is necessary to justify a vote with reasons. University Counsel, Paul Van Booven emphasized that everyone connected with the process is well served when reasons for all judgments are fully and clearly articulated.

5. Open records: Dr. Fleming reminded the meeting participants that candidates for tenure and/or promotion have access to all letters in their files as soon as those letters become part of their files.

6. Debriefing the committees: The committee chairs all agreed that the Chancellors' standardly debriefing the advisory committees at the end of a tenure / promotion cycle (in the case of the Lexington Campus) or periodically (in the case of the Medical Center Campus) would be extremely helpful to the committee members. The Chancellors indicated their willingness to do this, and it was agreed that the committee chairs will assume responsibility for setting up these meetings with the Chancellors.

7. Chancellors' advice by memo: It was unanimously agreed by the committee chairs that extensive written instructions and advice from the Chancellors to all who will participate in the tenure / promotion process is enormously helpful. Thus, the Chancellors were urged to be sure that in addition to directing faculty, chairs, directors, and deans to the relevant academic regulations, they offer as much instruction and advice as possible in the memos they send out regarding the promotion / tenure process each year. Chancellor Zinser's September 1995 memoranda to her advisory committee chairs and to Lexington Campus deans, chairs, and program directors were taken as good examples of what is most helpful in this regard.