Faculty Governance Update to the Regents

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

October 2006

The faculty of the University of Michigan will soon be carrying out its third annual web-based evaluation of administrators, including a survey on a variety of general administration issues. The Administration Evaluation Committee (AEC) carrying out the survey was created in 2004 as a result of a grass-roots effort among faculty concerned that the performance of administrators did not receive adequate evaluation by the faculty and that policy decisions were being made without adequate consultation of the faculty.

The aims of the administrator evaluation are 1) to provide guidance to administrators on where they can improve their performance (much like student evaluations of instructors foster instructor self-improvement); and 2) to provide diagnostic information to the supervisors of those administrators, useful feedback that otherwise might not reach them. Administrators are offered the opportunity to provide written documents summarizing their achievements and their goals, just as individual faculty provide such statements yearly. Administrators may also provide questions they wish for responding faculty to consider. In fall 2005 more than 900 faculty on the Ann Arbor campus participated in the evaluation process. Dearborn faculty will join in fall 2006.

We hope that Deans will examine the evaluation results of Chairs in their colleges, that the Provost will examine the results for Deans, and that you will examine the results for the President and Provost (and for any lower administrators you wish). We also hope that you and all administrators will examine the results of the faculty survey on general administration issues. If you have not already done so, please feel free to examine the results from the 2004 and 2005 evaluations, which are publicly available at http://aec.umich.edu. Although the university administration has not yet formally endorsed the evaluation system, we were gratified that former Interim Provost Edward Gramlich stated in February 2006 that he found the AEC results on the performance of Deans to be useful and consistent with other information he had received. It should be noted that many faculty initially resisted the introduction of student evaluations of their teaching performance many years ago, but an overwhelming majority of us now recognize their value. We hope administrators too will come around to the same appreciation for evaluation.

The questions concerning administrator performance are quite stable now (for the sake of longitudinal tracking of performance). In contrast, the questions on general

administration issues tend to reflect topical issues for a given year. Questions under consideration by the AEC for inclusion this fall concern:

- Support for the proposed skybox addition to the Michigan stadium
- The need for faculty input in designing a web-based system for instructor evaluation
- Effectiveness of faculty grievance procedures
- Affirmative action in faculty hiring
- Faculty participation in administrative appointments
- Faculty participation in budgetary decisions
- Administrative efforts to curb undergraduate tuition increases
- Regental consultation of faculty in appointing Presidents

In regard to the last item, SACUA expressed its serious concern in a July 17 resolution about the procedure you followed in reappointing President Coleman. As we noted in our resolution, we feel it would be desirable to create a task force of Regents and faculty representatives to ensure appropriate faculty consultation in future Regental decisions of this nature.

Regents' Bylaw 4.04. The Senate Assembly shall serve as the legislative arm of the senate... The assembly shall have power to consider and advise regarding all matters within the jurisdiction of the University Senate which affect the functioning of the University as an institution of higher learning, which concern its obligations to the state and to the community at large, and which relate to its internal organization insofar as such matters of internal organization involve general questions of educational policy.