
Executive Summary

RIT Faculty Evaluation Systems: Satisfaction Ratings and Best Practice Recommendations

The overall purpose of this document is to provide data on RIT faculty satisfaction with current evaluation systems, describe why a transparent and fair faculty evaluation system is important, and outline recommendations for best practices from the literature. This, in turn, will provide a foundation for a discussion on best practices in place at RIT and potential improvements that could be made to faculty evaluation systems.

First, this document provides data on RIT satisfaction with the current evaluation system. It reports data from the 2012-2013 COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey. The survey results include mean ratings on items related to the faculty evaluation system, as well as a comparison with the mean ratings of five peer institutions and the overall cohort of 2012-2013 COACHE survey respondents. The results highlight concerns of men and women faculty, compared with men and women faculty at peer institutions and in the overall cohort. Results identify several areas of faculty concern with RIT's tenure and promotion systems, transparency of priorities, and level of equity in the evaluation process.

Second, this document briefly outlines research from the literature on why fairness and transparency in the evaluation process are important. Research has provided evidence that written guidelines reduce biases and support equity. Transparent and fair evaluation enhances faculty morale and performance, as well as faculty's sense of inclusiveness.

Third, this document outlines a number of recommendations from the literature for best practices in faculty evaluation. This includes recommendations for the third-year tenure review process, as well as for the tenure and promotion processes. Specific recommendations for best practices in the tenure and promotion processes are grouped by the following topical areas: training for committee members, mentoring programs, clarity of standards, consistency in the evaluation process, transparency of the evaluation process, flexibility in the tenure probationary period, special considerations, and feedback to candidates. Recommended best practices for senior faculty development include a mandatory review of full professors every seven years in rank. **Appendix A** of this document is a Faculty Annual Review Form template from the University of Michigan, which could serve as a model for standardizing the faculty annual review process at RIT. This document also outlines recommendations from the literature for improving faculty salary equity. Experts call for academic institutions to investigate bias in faculty salaries, with the goal of ensuring equity in faculty salaries. One resource, published by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), is a guide for conducting salary equity studies. Experts recommend instituting periodic salary reviews and rectifying salary inequities that arise from the compounded effect of subtle forms of evaluation bias. Furthermore, they state that it is important for the salary equity process to be transparent and to involve faculty in a meaningful way.

The information in this document will provide a foundation for discussions of how RIT is already achieving best practice and where RIT could improve its faculty evaluation system. By reporting on COACHE results that highlight areas of faculty concern with RIT's faculty evaluation system, it identifies the areas of greatest need for improvement from a faculty standpoint. By outlining key points from the literature, it emphasizes the importance of a fair and transparent review system in reducing bias and improving faculty morale. Improved faculty morale at RIT would likely have a positive impact upon the recruitment and retention of excellent faculty. **The recommendations for best practices for the tenure and promotion systems, faculty evaluation, senior faculty development, and salary equity will provide RIT leaders with clarity on where best practice is currently occurring and concrete recommendations to consider for improving RIT's faculty evaluation system.**

I. How Do Faculty Perceive the Faculty Evaluation System at RIT?

RIT’s COACHE Provost’s Report (2013) provides mean faculty ratings on a scale of 1-5 (with “1” being the worst and “5” being the best) from RIT’s COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey. It compares RIT faculty ratings with faculty ratings at RIT’s self-identified peer institutions (Purdue University, SUNY–Binghamton, SUNY–Buffalo, University of Rochester, and Virginia Tech) and with ratings of the overall cohort of COACHE’s participating institutions.

RIT’s COACHE Survey Results (2012-2013) reveal the following areas of concern:

- Tenure and promotion systems (see Table 1)
- Transparency of priorities (see Table 2)
- Equity in the evaluation process (see Table 2)

Table 1: RIT Faculty’s Mean Ratings on Tenure and Promotion Systems

Key: ↑ Results fall in top 30%, ↔ Results fall in middle 40%, ↓ Results fall in bottom 30%

	RIT Mean Rating	RIT Overall vs. Peers	RIT Overall vs. Cohort	RIT Men vs. Men Peers	RIT Men vs. Men in Cohort	RIT Women vs. Women Peers	RIT Women vs. Women in Cohort
Benchmark: Tenure policies	3.28	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Questions included: Clarity of tenure process; Clarity of tenure criteria; Clarity of tenure standards; Clarity of body of evidence for deciding tenure; Clarity of whether I will achieve tenure; Consistency of messages about tenure; Tenure decisions are performance-based							
Benchmark: Tenure clarity	3.29	↓	↓	↔	↔	↓	↓
Questions focused on clarity of expectations as a Scholar, Teacher, Advisor, Colleague, Campus citizen, Broader community (each asked separately)							
Benchmark: Tenure reasonableness	3.85	↓	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔
Questions focused on reasonable expectations as a Scholar, Teacher, Advisor, Colleague, Campus citizen, Broader community (each asked separately)							
Benchmark: Promotion	3.08	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Questions focused on reasonable expectations involving Promotion; Dept. culture encourages promotion; Clarity of promotion process; Clarity of promotion criteria; Clarity of promotion standards; Clarity of body of evidence for promotion; Clarity of time frame for promotion; Clarity of whether I will be promoted							

II. Why is a Transparent and Fair Faculty Evaluation System Important?

- Research provides evidence that written guidelines reduce bias and support equity (Fox, 1991).
- Transparent and fair faculty evaluation enhances faculty morale and performance (Promotion and Tenure ADVANCE Committee, Georgia Institute of Technology, 2003).
- When expectations and evaluation criteria are significantly modified without considering the time and support that faculty need in order to adapt, some faculty will view the changes as punitive (Chisholm et al., 2011).
- Perceived inequities in the expectations for promotion and in resource allocation (e.g., out-of-cycle merit raises and distribution of discretionary funds) lead to poor faculty morale (Roos, 2008).
- Lack of established institutional policies for filing complaints about gender bias in the review process and for addressing salary inequity is associated with poor faculty morale (Monroe et al., 2008).

- Salary equity is associated with a sense of inclusiveness among faculty and improved academic morale (Haignere, 2002).

Table 2: RIT Faculty’s Mean Ratings Related to Transparency and Equity in the Evaluation Process
Key: ↑ Results fall in top 30%, ↔ Results fall in middle 40%, ↓ Results fall in bottom 30%

	RIT Mean Rating	RIT Overall vs. Peers	RIT Overall vs. Cohort	RIT Men vs. Men Peers	RIT Men vs. Men in Cohort	RIT Women vs. Women Peers	RIT Women vs. Women Cohort
Pres: Stated priorities	3.09	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔
Pres: Communication of priorities	3.12	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔	↔
Dean: Stated priorities	3.13	↓	↓	↓	↔	↓	↓
Dean: Communication of priorities	3.22	↓	↔	↔	↔	↓	↔
Head/Chair: Stated priorities	3.49	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↔
Head/Chair: Communication of priorities	3.55	↓	↔	↓	↓	↑	↔
Head/Chair: Fairness in evaluating work	3.82	↔	↔	↓	↓	↑	↔
Changed priorities negatively affect my work*	2.56	↓	↓	↓	↔	↓	↓
Department addresses sub-standard performance	2.70	↔	↔	↔	↔	↑	↔
Salary	3.16	↔	↑	↔	↑	↓	↑

* This item was reverse-coded. Fifty-four percent of RIT faculty reported that institutional priorities have changed in ways that negatively affect their work.

III. Recommendations for Best Practices in the Faculty Evaluation Process

The recommendations outlined in this section have been combined from the following sources:

Promotion and Tenure ADVANCE Committee, Georgia Institute of Technology (2003)

Gender in Science and Engineering Subcommittee on Faculty Evaluation and Development, University of Michigan (2004)

American Council on Education, American Association of University Professors, and United Educators Insurance Risk Retention Group, Inc. (2000)

A. Tenure and Promotion

1. Training for Committee Members:

- Require faculty who serve on tenure or promotion committees to attend training on all aspects of the decision-making process, including biases that affect evaluation.
- Standardize exposure to both the conceptual tools and the systematic research evidence among individuals who make recommendations about tenure and promotion.

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- Use the Web-based ADEPT instrument in the evaluation process. This addresses bias and other issues related to the integrity of the evaluation process. See <http://www.adept.gatech.edu/>.
2. Mentoring Programs:
 - Academic departments should have a formal mentoring program available to all assistant professors.
 - Separate mentoring, as much as possible, from evaluation.
 3. Flexibility in the Tenure Probationary Period:
 - Tenure review may be conducted between years 6-9. Tenure standards should remain identical regardless of the timing of tenure review. Standards should be based on the norm of a review in year 6.
 4. Third-Year Review
 - Standardize some best practices at the unit level.
 - Avoid the use of external review letters.
 - Provide successful models of third-year review dossiers to pre-tenured faculty members.
 5. Clarity of Standards:
 - Constitute and operate the faculty tenure/promotion process on the basis of clear written guidelines.
 - The institution must promptly inform the candidate of any changes in the evaluation standards.
 - Tenure policy should include a comprehensive list of all major criteria used for evaluation and make sure that evaluators do not use any “unstated factors” in the evaluation process.
 - Tenure policy should indicate what steps the institution will take if a tenure candidate is charged with misconduct or if other negative events emerge during the evaluation.
 - The tenure application dossier should include all required materials and exclude materials that the institution has not used in the evaluation of other candidates.
 - Tenure rules should clearly explain whether evaluators will consider positive events that occur after the submission of the tenure application (e.g., acceptance of a manuscript for publication) in their evaluations.
 - Ensure that tenure decisions are consistent over time among candidates who have different personal, legally protected characteristics (such as race, gender, disability, ethnic origin, and religion).
 - The institution’s rules should address what weight, if any, decision makers should give to informal and unsolicited opinions they receive about tenure candidates and whether candidates should be informed about such communication.
 - Target specific information in letters of reference. For example, ask the reference providers to compare the candidate to the leaders, by name, in their field of creative contribution at a similar career stage.
 - Administrators should take special care, when reviewing candidates in their own disciplines, to carefully follow standard tenure processes.
 - All faculty members promoted to associate professor with tenure should receive a third-year review, which will result in a formal promotion plan.
 - The normal amount of time for a faculty member to remain at the associate professor level, before promotion, should be approximately 6 years. However, faculty can be reviewed earlier if appropriate.
 - Associate professors should receive annual reviews to determine whether they are ready to be reviewed for promotion to full professor.

6. Feedback to Candidates:

- If a candidate is denied tenure or promotion, the associated letter should contain clear guidance on how the candidate might redirect his or her efforts to achieve a successful outcome in future evaluations. The unit head must transmit this feedback to the candidate. It is the unit head's responsibility to review the recommendations and counsel the candidate appropriately. The candidate should be able to obtain useful and detailed feedback from all higher levels as well.
- If a candidate is denied promotion to full professor, the candidate and department should develop a new plan that allows the faculty member to be reviewed again in at most 3 years.

B. Faculty Evaluation

1. Consistency in the Evaluation Process:

- Collect annual review information from all faculty in a standardized manner. Make the weighting attached to each area of faculty activity for salary recommendations explicit to all faculty members in a given department. The purpose of this, in part, is to provide information to faculty about where they may be investing more or less energy and effort than is valued by their unit.
- Adopt a standard Faculty Annual Review Form such as the example from the University of Michigan. The goal of using this form is to improve the possibility of giving faculty a fair, consistent opportunity to speak to their accomplishments on an annual basis. (See **Appendix A** of this document for a copy of this form.)
- Apply criteria consistently from year to year and across all levels of review.
- Department heads should review a faculty member's prior evaluations before writing the next one. This will serve as a check on the expectations that were conveyed and the candidate's progress in meeting those expectations. The evaluations may be useful to include in the tenure application file.
- Ensure that the formal evaluations of non-tenured faculty and what they are told informally about the quality of their work are based on a consistent set of expectations.

2. Transparency of the Evaluation Process:

- Annual performance reviews will provide clear, substantive guidance for faculty development, as well as feedback from mentors and peers. If annual evaluations of a candidate are inconsistent with the unit head or committee letters in his or her reappointment, promotion, or tenure case, this may cast serious doubt on the credibility of annual evaluations.
- The institution's primary goal in the evaluation is to give the candidate a full understanding of his or her progress to date in meeting the requirements.
- The evaluation and feedback process should be clear and unambiguous for the faculty member. The tenure, promotion, or reappointment decision should not be a surprise to a candidate. If it is, this means that the process of evaluation and feedback has been inconsistent and opaque.
- A meeting to discuss the evaluation should be a two-way substantive discussion, not a one-way critique. The department head should give specific examples that illustrate the quality of the faculty member's performance and constructive criticism outlining any potential areas for improvement.

3. Special Considerations:

- Interdisciplinary scholars may require special attention in the evaluation process. The risk is that their institution will not clearly define the overall standards for their performance evaluation or that it will change these standards frequently over time.

- Departments should be cautious about conveying excessive optimism about a faculty member's prospects for tenure.
- In the evaluation process, no promises or guarantees should be made that the institution may not be able to honor.

C. Senior Faculty Development

Faculty members who are promoted to full professor should receive a review after 7 years in rank, followed by a review after each 7-year interval. This review process is intended to counter the trend toward a “counter-offer culture”; to offer an opportunity for full professors' accomplishments and contributions to be systematically reviewed and recognized; and to provide an incentive for faculty to continue their outstanding research, teaching, and service.

D. Faculty Salary Equity

- Haignere (2002): Investigate bias in faculty salaries, with the goal of ensuring equity in faculty salaries. This resource, published by the AAUP, is a guide for conducting salary equity studies.
- Wylie, Jakobsen, and Fosado (2007): Institute periodic salary reviews to identify and rectify the salary inequities that occur as the compounded effect of subtle types of evaluation bias.
- Curtis (2010): The salary equity study process must be open and involve faculty in a meaningful way. Repeat a salary study every 3-5 years, depending on the size of the faculty.

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APPENDIX A:

University of Michigan’s “Faculty Annual Review Form” Template

Source: <http://sitemaker.umich.edu/advance/good-practices>

Faculty Name:

**Faculty Activity Report
20XX
Period of Activity XX to XX**

Instructions:

Please complete this form to document your activities over the past year. Your merit raise will be determined based on the information you provide here. Please include a copy of your current vita, reprints, and course syllabi with your materials.

All faculty are to complete these materials every spring. You may add lines and pages as needed to provide complete information. This form is available as an electronic file.

A. Teaching

1. Courses taught during the year, including directed study projects and research hours. For regular courses, include enrollment and student evaluation scores on the broadest questions assessing the quality of the course and the instructor.

Lecture Courses						
Course #	Course Name	Term	Enrollment	Course Rating	Instructor Rating	Was this a new course?

Directed Study and Research Courses			
Course #	Course Name	Term	Student Names

If any Q2 score is below 3.0, please include an explanation here.

If relevant, comment on gender balance of students in each course.

2. Summer conference courses, short courses, or other teaching activities.

Course Name	Venue	Enrollment

3. List the names, status and positions obtained for your Ph.D. and Masters students in the current year in the following table.

Student Name	<u>Indicate:</u> Graduated (date) Cand. (exp. grad. date), Precand. (exp. grad. date)	Name of Co-Advisor if any	Positions Obtained

4. Ph.D. committee (post-candidacy) membership (list names of students). Do not include chairships listed in item A3.
5. Undergraduate projects or graduate projects involving students not listed in A1 or A3 above.
6. Provide additional information concerning your significant contributions to teaching, including development of a new course, a major revision of an existing course, laboratories supervised, etc.
7. Explain what you think your most significant contributions to teaching were this year.

B. Research

In this section, include the names of all authors in the order in which they appeared in the publication; include page numbers; underline your students' names; and identify 'keynote' or 'invited' as appropriate.

Note: Different departments may list these different forms of publication in different orders, to reflect the order of their average importance in the discipline.

1. Books, book chapters and book reviews.
2. Published articles in refereed publications (journals or transactions).
3. Letters, briefs, notes or other shorter communications in refereed publications.
4. Papers published in rigorously reviewed conferences with archival proceedings.
5. Other papers presented at conferences, symposia or workshops with published proceedings.
6. Presentations at meetings that are not included in a published proceedings.
7. Number of a) keynote conference or symposium presentations, and b) invited journal or conference papers. (These should be listed above and designated in the listing as invited or keynote.)
 - a) Number of keynote addresses _____
 - b) Number of invited papers _____
8. Invited talks to prestigious seminars or colloquia.
9. Patent and software disclosures to UM Office of Technology Transfer.
10. Patents issued this year (list licensees) and software distributed this year (list users).
11. Major media exposure.

12. Papers submitted for publication along with their publication status.

13. Research grants and contracts under your supervision during the period of this report. Feel free to add any explanatory notes.

a. As PI or Co-PI

Project Title (Your Role: PI or Co-PI)	Source of Funds	Total Funding this year in your name

b. Others (not as PI or Co-PI)

Project Title (Identify Project Director and other PIs)	Source of Funds	Total Funding and Funding Period	* Your Share (in dollars) of Research Expenditures for the Period of this FAR

14. Proposals submitted during the year and their status.

Project Title (Identify Project Director and other PIs)	Source of Funds	Total Funding and Funding Period	Your Total Share (in dollars) of Project Budget

15. Fractional general fund and sponsored research appointments for Winter Term 2002 and Fall Term 2002.

	General Fund Percentage	Sponsored Research Percentage
Winter 2002		
Fall 2002		

16. Explain what you think your most significant contributions to research were this year.

C. Service

Include formally assigned as well as informal activities-.

1. Internal

Dept, College, Univ.	Service Assignment	Role	Estimate Time Contributed (per week/month)

2. Professional (membership on editorial boards, reviewer of manuscripts & grants, officer in national

organizations, site visits, member of major review panel, service in community, editor of scholarly journals, conferences organized, etc.)

Organization	Service Assignment	Role

3. Outreach activities (pre-college student training and recruiting, minority and women faculty and student recruiting).
4. Mentoring of faculty and students (in addition to graduate students you are supervising).

Please list the names of any junior faculty for whom you read a draft version of a manuscript and provided feedback on.

Please list the names of any junior faculty to whom you were assigned to be a mentor.

5. Explain what you think your most significant contributions to service were this year.
6. On which committees would you like to serve?

D. Recognitions, Honors, and Awards

E. Are there any other issues that affect your performance that you would like to bring to the attention of a chair?