

Special Report

Handbook Illusions

An Investigative Report on CoB Faculty Governance

CoB Interim Dean Alvin Williams recently communicated to CoB faculty that a college-wide vote on amendments to the CoB faculty handbook, *Enhancing Faculty Productivity*, was looming. Contained in Williams' communiqué was a copy of the latest version of *EFP*.



Alvin Williams

This report concentrates on certain aspects of Chapter 8, "Faculty Evaluation Procedures."

CHAPTER 8 FACULTY EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Chapter 8 of *EFP* explicitly states the familiar "balance" of expectations of members of the CoB faculty -- 40% teaching, 35% research and 25% service. However, notice the curious line (also see red box on page 2 below):

"The Dean may alter these percentages in particular cases where merited."

Where would such an alteration be merited, and not discriminatory in favor of the individual faculty member on the receiving end? The answer is obvious: this statement gives the Dean of the CoB authority to, with greater ease, develop so-called "letters of agreement" or "letters of understanding" that work as performance contracts, wherein the CoB's administration is allowed to support the continued good-standing of various *under*-performing faculty. Such was the case in recent years with the "letter of agreement" used by former CoB Dean Harold Doty to secure the promotion to professor of management's David Duhon.



Harold Doty



David Duhon

Defining and Assessing Faculty Productivity

Faculty productivity is traditionally defined as encompassing contributions in the areas of instruction (teaching), intellectual contributions (research), and service. We seek a relative balance among these activities with a typical College of Business faculty member having a commitment of 40% in instruction, 35% in intellectual contributions and 25% in service activities. The Dean may alter these percentages in particular cases where merited. There follows a discussion of how the College's annual evaluation process assigns a performance rating to each faculty member/administrator in the areas of instruction, intellectual contributions, and service activities. An overall weighted rating, using the weights above, is also assigned.

The *EFP* next launches into verbiage (see black box below) that describes the administrators' jobs as so "demanding" that course releases are necessary -- in addition to salaries ranging from \$130,000 to \$175,000 -- for them to be able to "maintain active teaching skills and research agendas." How does the assignment of a 3-hour teaching load promote active teaching skills? How does a 20% "commitment" to research provide the impetus for maintaining an active research agenda?

Administrators are evaluated in accordance with the University Faculty Handbook with personnel committees consulting with supervising administrative officers to produce a single, unified annual evaluation. Department chairs, school director, and assistant/associate deans are considered to be faculty members with additional service responsibilities in their administrative duties, having a commitment of 20% in instruction, 20% in intellectual contributions and 60% in service activities. Release time (three or six hours during semesters and no teaching responsibilities during summers) compensates for the demanding administrative duties in order for these individuals to maintain active teaching skills and research agendas. While the Dean may alter them; typically, administrators will be evaluated with the percentages in the paragraph above.

Sources recently informed usmnews.net that EFIB Chair George Carter's nebulous "literature presence" had been killed by the CoB's top administrators. Not so, at least not as far as *EFP* goes.



George Carter

In the orange box below, one can see that Carter's new measure is now codified in *EFP*, which

states ". . . faculty are expected to maintain a presence in the literature of their disciplinary field." One can't exactly be reprimanded for *measuring*, as Carter has been doing, what CoB faculty are tasked to do.

Intellectual Contributions

The College is committed to engaging in and supporting a spectrum of intellectual contributions. We seek a relative balance among the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of application, and the scholarship of education. Tenure-track and tenured faculty are expected to maintain a presence in the literature of their disciplinary field. The following guidelines are used in evaluating intellectual contributions:

In the first paragraph of the pink box below, CoB faculty are informed that their intellectual contributions may be counted in only a single evaluation period. That obviously doesn't apply to accounting's Marvin Albin, who has been counting the same pedagogical accounting paper for the better part of a decade.

On the approval of the Chair/Director and the Dean, refereed journal article acceptances can be used as the basis for an evaluation. However, use of an acceptance in one evaluation period precludes consideration of the published article in future periods.

Certain intellectual contributions (new textbooks or multi-year externally funded grant research) may, on the approval of the Chair/Director and the Dean, be evaluated as intellectual contributions in more than one evaluation period.

The second paragraph in the pink box above explains "the Albin exception," as *EFP* lets CoB faculty know that "certain intellectual contributions . . . may, on the approval of the Chair/Director and the Dean, be evaluated as intellectual contributions in more than one evaluation period." So, *EFP* gives the Jim Crocketts of the future the right to double-, triple-, and quadruple-count the intellectual contributions of a select few. Don't you think that, if anyone qualifies, accounting's Mary *Morgan* Anderson qualifies for this fringe benefit?



Marvin Albin



Mary Anderson

The next passage shows that CoB administrators can play "carrot" or "stick" at every turn, depending upon who you are. According to the text boxed below, CoB administrators have the authority to discount "co-authored work." As the *EFP* states:

"Co-authored work may be given the same credit as single authored pieces."

As you can see, administrators aren't obligated to credit co-authored research on par with solo work.

Co-authored work may be given the same credit as single authored pieces, depending on quality. However, when there are more than three co-authors, some reduction in credit awarded in the evaluation process will be considered.

The second sentence in the box above stings even more than the first. It states that when there are more than three co-authors, "some reduction in credit awarded in the evaluation process will be considered." Sources are wondering whether this one applies to Jon Carr and his vaunted (recent) publication in *The Academy of Management Journal*.



Jon Carr

Many CoB faculty are unaware that Carr is the *fourth of four authors* on his co-authored paper in *TAMJ*, and that the authors are listed in reverse alphabetical order, from "T" to "C," with "M" and "L" in between. Of course, few if any CoB faculty are under the impression that Carr will have his article somehow discounted by CoB administrators. However, many would agree that if "Carr" had instead been "Topping" or "Vest," a dramatic discount would have applied.

Work published outside the faculty member's discipline will be evaluated primarily on the basis of rigor and the quality of the research outlet. However, there is the expectation that over time the preponderance of publications will be in the faculty member's own (primary) discipline.

Let's close this report with the green boxed text (from *ECP*) above. How in the world are administrators like Williams and Carter supposed to evaluate the rigor and quality of research that is out of the author's discipline when that same research is almost certainly out of their disciplines as well? Of course, they can't. But then again, when has that ever stopped them from trying?