

Report of Senate Study Committee C

February 4, 2019

This committee met five times between 10/31/18 and 1/30/19. Its charge from the Senate was to seek ways to improve response rates to the *Administrator Evaluation Survey* in the face of faculty skepticism about the extent to which the *Survey* was taken seriously in the evaluation of administrators, and concerns about the anonymity of the *Survey* responses. We were also given leeway to pursue other questions that we found relevant to gaining perspective on the administration, distribution and value of the *Survey*.

We looked at the presence and use of administrator evaluations at some other comparable universities, at Texas Tech's own OPs on the evaluation of administrators, at recent responses to the Senate's current *Administrative Evaluation Survey*, and at the ways that IR and administrators themselves handled the survey results after they were collected.

Findings and Recommendations:

1. There are two particularly relevant TTU OPs on the evaluation of administrators (OP 30.15, *Academic Administrator Evaluation*, and OP 32.37, *Fifth-Year Review of Deans*). There is no mention of use of the *Administrator Evaluation Survey* in OP 32.37, and only a single limited reference to it in OP 30.15. We think this is a major oversight that contributes to a sense that faculty input on such things is not taken seriously. So, we have proposed several revisions to these OPs (see Appendices to this Report) to correct those omissions.
2. In addition, there is an entirely distinct evaluation survey attached to OP 30.15 without any indication of to whom that survey is sent. Per the Provost, that attachment is never used in such evaluations, and so in our proposed revisions to OP 30.15, we eliminate it and all references to it.
3. In order to emphasize the importance of the Senate-administered *Administrator Evaluation Survey*, we recommend that it be referenced in future letters of appointment of chairs, deans, and provosts.
4. Confidentiality of Survey:
While there could be several reasons to worry about guaranteeing the anonymity of respondents, some of the more common reasons appear to be groundless. A reason often cited by faculty is that respondents could be identified in small departments by information about gender and rank. However, gender and rank are simply not entered at all into the survey as it currently stands. Hence, there need be no concern in that regard. Another concern expressed was that identification of departmental home might (in the case of a particularly small department, or perhaps a larger but unanimous department) tip off a dean as to the

identity of the respondent. Presently, though collected, that information is not accessible to deans through the survey in its current form.

Respondents are also concerned about whether their discursive comments might undercut the anonymity of their evaluations. As it presently stands, discursive comments are only seen by the Provost when evaluating the deans, and are not seen by the dean who is the subject of the evaluation. However, to institutionalize this way of handling the information, our committee believes that there should be formal protocols provided to the Office of Institutional Research that would lock in the confidentiality of the discursive comments. Thus, we recommend that formal protocols be put in place to guarantee that the discursive comments be withheld from the administrator being evaluated, and that departmental source be masked from the subject of the evaluation.

That said, the committee also still worries about whether allowing an on-campus entity (IR) handle the survey might generally undermine confidence in the confidentiality of the process. If more formal protocols for IR cannot guarantee the safety of the information gathered, we would urge that the processing of the survey be given to an agency external to the University. (Of course, we realize such guarantees can never be absolute in view of the possibility of a successful request for information through the Freedom of Information Act.)

Respectfully submitted by the Members of Senate Study Committee C:

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Appendix:

Proposed Revisions to OP 30.15 and 32.37