CALS Guidance for Chairs in Addressing Faculty Performance Expectations

Faculty lines, especially tenure-stream faculty lines, are among the most valuable resources in CALS. The College has both a right and an obligation to expect full performance as a prerequisite for full pay. To appropriately steward these college resources, we encourage Department Chairs to work with faculty to encourage appropriate faculty performance to meet the expectations and needs of the department and the college.

Several resources are available to help guide setting performance expectations and documenting whether those expectations are met. CALS has specific guidelines that articulate expectations for faculty. These guidelines provide a context within which to discuss performance expectations related to percent effort appointments in research, teaching, and extension/outreach: http://cals.cornell.edu/about/leadership/sad/academic-policies/faculty-effort/

The University has articulated specific expectations related to faculty presence on campus and engagement in the life of the university. The general university policy on leaves for professors and academic staff is:

Policy 6.2.1, Leaves for Professors and Academic Staff, accessible here: http://www.dfa.cornell.edu/treasurer/policyoffice/policies/volumes/humanresources/leaves.cfm

In relation to faculty performance, see especially page 17 of that policy, which addresses “excessive absences” and clearly indicates that “A department chair or other academic manager is authorized to set work hours and reasonable standards for attendance, office hours, and other academic business.”

CALS guidance on conducting faculty performance reviews and regarding content of performance review letters is available at: http://cals.cornell.edu/about/leadership/sad/academic-policies/faculty-performance/

Other university policies that may be useful to consider in relation to faculty performance include the following:


Dismissal/Suspension Policy for Faculty Members http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/pdfs/2008DismissalSuspensionPolicy.pdf

Faculty members with medical concerns that may affect performance may consult Medical Leaves Administration to seek accommodation or modification of work duties because of a disability: http://www.cornell.edu/disability/faculty-staff.cfm

Incentives and disincentives available to address faculty performance include the following:

Incentives
(a) Increase salary (annual SIP increase)
(b) Mutual agreement between the faculty member and the Chair to reassign or redistribute duties, provide teaching relief, etc. – provided the overall mission and responsibilities of the department
continue to be met (greater than 10% change in effort distribution requires Senior Associate Dean approval)
(c) Adjust assignments of office space, lab space, other “perks”
(d) Increase discretionary funding
(e) Provide academic leave (paid or unpaid) – this may be especially helpful if the faculty member needs to “retool” to become more up-to-date in teaching content or research methods

Disincentives
(a) Issue a written reprimand/warning
(b) Reassign or redistribute duties (the Chair has such authority to ensure faculty contribute to overall department responsibilities and mission; 10% or greater change in effort distribution requires Senior Associate Dean approval)
(c) Change assignment of office space, lab space, eliminate other “perks”
(d) Reduce or eliminate discretionary funding
(e) Withhold SIP (no annual salary increase)
(f) Reduce salary (e.g., by 5%, and reassess for further reduction in 6-12 months)
(g) Issue a suspension notice and implement suspension
(h) Terminate the position

Addressing Performance through Voluntary Change in Duties, Pay, or Separation

Any variety of ad hoc arrangements can be negotiated by mutual consent, including phased or immediate retirement. All such negotiations need to be discussed between the Chair and the Senior Associate Dean. Human Resources and Counsel’s office will likely be involved as well. These arrangements may include agreement on changes in duties (changes in effort assignment of 10% or more require approval of the Senior Associate Dean), or voluntary and mutually-agreed reduction in time and pay (including phased retirement if the faculty member meets eligibility requirements).

A CALS overview of the university’s phased retirement program is available at: http://cals.cornell.edu/about/leadership/sad/appointment-procedures/retirement/

Addressing Performance through Involuntary Change in Duties, Pay, or Separation
Department chairs may make changes in duty assignments for any faculty to address department and college responsibilities and mission, whether or not the faculty member is in total agreement. (Changes in effort assignment of 10% or more require approval of the Senior Associate Dean.) Other involuntary methods such as withholding SIP, reduction in pay, or suspension or termination will require close consultation among the Department Chair, the Senior Associate Dean, Human Resources, and University Counsel.