

**Faculty Affairs Committee Motion
Regarding Faculty Annual Reviews
February 23, 2010**

The Faculty Assembly of the School of Liberal Arts recommends to the Dean that the annual faculty evaluation scale be simplified from the current five cardinal categories to three ordinal categories:

- **Outstanding** performance beyond departmental standards of excellent
- **Successful** performance according to departmental standards of excellent and satisfactory
- **Unsatisfactory** performance below departmental standards of satisfactory

In practice this would mean:

- These three evaluation categories are the required minimum across the School.
- Research, teaching, and service are evaluated independently, according to faculty appointment as lecturer or professor.
- There is no overall, averaged score.
- “Successful” would be the broadest category.
- “Outstanding” would apply only to the most distinguished achievements in research, teaching, or service.
- Additional comments by the chair could be added.

Rationale for the Change:

- The background culture of assessment in the School of Liberal Arts is based on promotion and tenure. Faculty Annual Reviews have a different purpose in being used primarily for merit pay raises. However, the current cardinal ranking system created by former Dean Herman Saatkamp is too far out of line with the background culture. Departmental standards of Excellent, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory should be the baseline measures for Faculty Annual Reviews, too. Including the category of Outstanding recognizes that in a given year some faculty members’ performance may exceed even the measure of Excellence.
- The proposed three ordinal categories will lead to better practices for determining merit pay in both the short-term and the long-term. In the short-term of severely constrained pay raises, the annual exercise of drawing fine distinctions for minimally different pay increases is not worth the effort. Even in the long-term of adequately funded merit pay raises, an evaluation scheme with a broad category for Successful performance and small categories for Outstanding and Unsatisfactory performance is a more equitable basis for determining merit pay. Bonus merit pay would be reserved primarily for Outstanding performance. Unsatisfactory performance would receive reduced merit pay, if any.
- The Committee believes that hair-splitting evaluations required by the current Faculty Annual Review evaluation categories exceed the precision of the data available on faculty. Such distinctions are misleading. The averaged, weighted score of an entire year’s work can be demoralizing.
- Because Faculty Annual Reviews are used informally to chart progress toward promotion and tenure, chairs may add comments distinguishing work that is Excellent or Satisfactory when they judge a faculty member’s performance to be Successful.