Perspective

The NSF-funded Georgia Tech ADVANCE Program for Institutional Transformation is performing a self-assessment of Institute RPT practices across colleges, schools and academic units, along with efforts to assist RPT committee members in those units to be aware of various forms of bias that may enter into their evaluation of peers.

Goals of P&T ADVANCE Committee

- Identify measures that can improve our P&T processes across the board.
- Provide foundations for more uniformity of the methods for administering P&T reviews across campus.
  - Report
  - Best practices
  - Instructional materials (e.g. CD-ROM based)

Chronology

- May-June 2002: Discussions with J-L Chameau, Bob McMath, and Mary Hunt
- July-early August 2002: Committee appointed
- August 22, 2002: Kickoff Meeting and charge
- September-mid November 2002: Committee study of issues, literature; formulation of survey and information gathering needs; meetings every three weeks
- November 2002-January 2003: Collection of materials, surveys
- February-March 2003: Writing case studies; instructional materials
- April-May 2003: Distribution of materials; orientation

Possible Forms of Bias

- Perhaps obvious
  - Gender
  - Race
  - Ethnicity

- Perhaps not so obvious...
  - engagement in interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary research
  - teaming versus independent investigation
  - forums for publishing and presentation
  - selection of review committees and their composition/representation
  - use of citation indices
Possible Forms of Bias

*Perhaps not so obvious…*

- assignment of graduate students
- financial and equipment resource allocation
- nature of committee assignments
- constraints on service growth opportunities
- career advisement
- others

Committee Composition

Chair: Dave McDowell, Regents’ Professor and Carter N. Paden, Jr, Chair, Mechanical Engineering/Materials Science & Engineering

Ivan Allen College
Willie Belton, Associate Professor, Economics

College of Sciences
Jeannette Yen, Professor, Biology
Mustafa El-Sayad, Julius Brown Chair and Regents’ Professor, Chemistry & Biochemistry

Committee Composition

College of Engineering
Paul Benkeser, Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering
J. Carlos Santamarina, Professor, Civil & Environmental Engineering
Ronald Schafer, Regents’ Professor, Electrical and Computing Engineering

Dupree College of Management
Marie Thursby, Professor and Hal and John Smith Chair of Entrepreneurship
Director, Technology and Innovation Program

Committee Composition

College of Computing
Dana Randall, Associate Professor

College of Architecture
Douglas Allen, Professor and Member of GT Executive Board

Committee Composition

Liaison:
Bob McMath, Vice Provost, Office of the President
Mary Hunt, Office of Provost/VP Academic Affairs
Beth Gourbiere (beth.gourbiere@carnegie.gatech.edu, 404-385-0015)
ADVANCE Program project coordinator
Tabitha Barnette, Administrative Manager, Office of the Provost

Recent GT ADVANCE reports

In-GEAR Report on the Status of Women at Georgia Tech, 1993-98
(http://www.academic.gatech.edu/study/report.htm)

ADVANCE website
http://www.advance.gatech.edu/

Recent Trends in Family Friendly Policies at Georgia Tech
http://www.academic.gatech.edu/handbook/
Other Resources

- Existing best practices report (from ad hoc committee of the GT Executive Board (2000))
- Report on current guidelines on RPT to faculty senate
- GT faculty handbook, by-laws

NSF Funding

- Partial salary support for members (up to two weeks) to serve on this Committee.
- Secretarial support and consultant support is also available to this Committee through the ADVANCE Program.
- Support to produce report and any related multi-media materials is available

Aspects of bias now being explored

- Selection of review committees, their composition and representation
- Publication and presentation venues; conference vs. journal publishing as well
- Nature of committee assignments
- Gender
- Race, ethnicity
- Teaming versus independent investigation, interdisciplinary research
- Career advisement/mentoring

Aspects of bias now being explored

- Resource allocation; assignment of space and graduate students
- Service growth opportunities
- Teaching evaluations: methodology, interpretation and utilization
- Fallacies of comparing faculty in different fields using citation indices
- Balance of funding and intellectual products
- Factoring in teaching load - large versus small units

Three Conditions that Enhance Equity

- More information on candidates

  People are more likely to make subjective judgments when information is “low.” Social bases for assessment are more likely to occur when information content is low.

Three Conditions that Enhance Equity

- Clarity of criteria/standards

  When criteria are clear and specified, factors of gender, ethnicity, etc. are less likely to be an issue. Written guidelines are important. Individual departments with written guidelines for doctoral study, for example, produce higher numbers of women doctorates. Guidelines should include expected progress from year to year.
Three Conditions that Enhance Equity

- **Evaluation processes should be open/transparent**

  Open processes tend to increase the amount of decision-making based on performance (due process). When processes are less systematic, social contacts, networking, etc. tend to play a more important role. Openness does not mean that the deliberations are in any way public or known to the candidate, but that the number of meetings, their timing and a summary of their outcome is available to the candidate at each stage.

Some Early Observations

- There are significant differences in P&T practices across GT at the unit level
- Openness of the process is a critical element; does not seem to be uniform across Tech, and there is some question available to candidates at each stage of the process
- Written guidelines may vary in degree of completeness from unit to unit

Some Early Observations

- Existing documents (e.g. Existing best practices report from ad hoc committee of the GT Executive Board, 2000) do not address various possible forms of bias and in fact may exhibit biases of a relatively small group of authors.

Deliverables

- Novel, informational, interesting, and perceptive/relevant training materials will be developed and made available to units across campus (e.g., CD-ROM based).
- Examples: Surveys of range of campus practices; interviews regarding bias, incorporation of relevant recent research studies and pertinent literature.