Report of the Boulder Faculty Assembly Administrator Appraisal Committee¹
Concerning Todd Gleeson, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Colorado at Boulder
Third-Year Review, Fall 2004

DESIGN OF THE SURVEY

The Administrator Appraisal Program (AAP) seeks to provide in-depth feedback with a high rate of faculty response, in order to assure a representative survey. Faculty have the opportunity to provide AAP feedback to the review/reappointment process when the president, chancellor, provost, or the dean of their school or college is undergoing the third- or fifth-year review. Faculty are also requested to complete and return a “BFA Satisfaction Survey” addressing campus-wide concerns such as salary and benefit programs. In regard to the appraisal of administrators, the surveys contain questions addressing the effectiveness of each administrator's performance in key areas. Twelve questions--addressing general administrative style, salary process, and diversity--are common for all administrators. Responses are solicited using an effectiveness scale of 1 to 5, in which 1 = very ineffective, 3 = effective, and 5 = very effective (the committee has interpreted the ratings in between as 2 = less than effective, 4 = more than effective), plus a "Don't Know" option.

The evaluation process for Dean Gleeson was designed to take into account the broad scope of faculty across the college. While chairs, directors, and assistant deans have regular opportunities to interact with the dean, most individual faculty members do not, and therefore may be less well informed or simply uninformed about many aspects of the dean's performance.

In an attempt to address the problem of different levels of familiarity, the AAP Committee sent the questionnaire to all faculty designated as eligible by the BFA, and then analyzed the responses from three groups among the recipients. The first group of recipients was all 754 A & S faculty. There were 296 responses, 39% from this group. The second group was a random sample of 166 recipients from among all A&S faculty members. 100 (60%) responded. The third group was 93 faculty who were in a position to have the most knowledge of the dean's work: all A&S chairs and directors, the Arts and Sciences Council, and all associate and assistant deans. 75 of these responded, 81%.

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

The AAP Committee and Boulder Faculty Assembly have agreed, on the advice of faculty who specialize in survey methods, that a 60% return rate is needed for a representative statistical study. The knowledgeable group met this requirement, with a 81% response rate. The random sample response rate was 60%, at the 60% threshold. The response rate for the entire A&S faculty is too low at 39% to assure that it is representative.

AIMS OF THE AAP EVALUATION

The AAP Committee hopes to provide a developmental picture of strengths and weaknesses for administrators standing for reappointment in AY 2005-2006.

Broadly viewed, we considered four general categories in evaluating responses regarding Dean Gleeson:

Strengths to Build On represent areas of the administrator's performance which were rated as highly effective by a substantial majority of the faculty (60% or higher 4 or 5 ratings).

Assets to Protect were areas where at least half of the responding faculty found the administrator's performance to be better than effective (50% - 59% of respondents gave ratings of 4 or 5). Thus, any reallocation of effort to correct weaknesses or changes in priorities should try to protect these strengths.

Issues to be Mindful Of were judged to be effective or better by the majority of the respondents, but less than effective by a significant minority of respondents (25% - 39% ratings of 1 or 2).
Areas that Need Improvement were areas judged by a significant fraction of the faculty as unsatisfactory (40% or more 1 or 2 ratings).

OVERVIEW

On every question at least 68% of all respondents (knowledgeables, the random sample, and the total population) rated Dean Gleeson 3, 4, or 5, with a median of 82%. In none of the samples did the dean receive a rating that falls in the Needs Improvement (40% or more 1 or 2 ratings.) category.

Strengths to Build On (60% or more ratings of 4 or 5)

The committee defined these to be areas in which 60% or more of the respondents gave ratings of 4 or 5. The dean received ratings in this category on 8 of 12 questions in the random sample and 9 of 12 in the knowledgeable group.

Both the random and knowledgeable samples rated 7 issues as strengths. They were:

- Supporting high-quality research
- Supporting high-quality service
- Treating all faculty fairly and inclusively
- Acting with integrity
- Creating an atmosphere of trust
- Receptive to faculty, staff, student concerns
- Appropriately involving faculty in decisions.

Assets to Protect (50% - 59% more ratings of 4 or 5)

Only one area fell into the category of assets in both the random and knowledgeable samples. It was:

- Making decisions in a timely fashion

Issues to be Mindful Of (25% - 39% ratings of 1 or 2)

There were no areas in this category among the random sample.

In the knowledgeable group, one of the questions fell into this category:

Managing conflict among faculty and staff

Areas In Need of Improvement (40% or more ratings of 1 or 2)

No areas In Need of Improvement were found among any of the three groups surveyed.

COMPARISON TO BFA SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

The BFA also asked the respondents in A&S to complete a satisfaction survey which asked 20 questions about the general level of university support. The number of respondents was 289 out of 754 surveyed, a response rate of 38%. It is noteworthy that the respondents rated Dean Gleeson much more highly than they did the university in their responses to the Satisfaction Survey.

The Satisfaction Survey reported one area of strength:

- Relationship with Colleagues.
Three areas were listed as assets:

- Teaching responsibilities
- Library access to outside information
- Education and Training support offered by the library

The faculty listed 9 Issues to be Mindful of:

- Technological support of teaching
- Departmental support services
- Support for soliciting outside money
- University Support for research and creative work
- Involvement by the library in holdings decisions
- Benefits other than health care
- Faculty governance
- University efforts to recruit and retain diverse faculty
- Classroom facilities.

The faculty also listed 7 areas in Need of Improvement:

- Number of graduate students assisting in teaching
- Space and facilities
- Salaries compared with peer institutions
- Equitable distribution of salary
- Current health plan
- University efforts to retain diverse undergraduates
- Evaluation of teaching

Overall, the Satisfaction Survey indicates substantial dissatisfaction in those areas involving the level of material support. The highest percentages of dissatisfaction were for Salaries in comparison with peers (74% ratings of 1 and 2), Equitable distribution of salaries (58%), and the Current health plan (57%). Among these, only one of them, Equitable distribution of salaries, is under Dean Gleeson's control. When respondents in A&S were asked specifically if Dean Gleeson Fosters an equitable, merit–based salary system their answers were more favorable than on the Satisfaction Survey. On Gleeson's questionnaire of the random sample the responses for this question were 24% 1+2, 32% 3, and 44% 4+5.

CONCLUSIONS

Dean Gleeson scored very highly among A&S faculty members. There were no areas that were listed as needing improvement. The issues to be mindful of involved managing conflict among faculty and staff, an area which is by its nature contentious, and salaries. The latter depends largely on the financial constraints of the university. Dean Gleeson's high approval contrasts with the significant areas of dissatisfaction respondents noted on the Satisfaction Survey. The faculty of A&S show high levels of support for their dean, despite a university environment which many of them regard as severely limited.

[1] The members of the committee are: Jane Elizabeth Dougherty, Wayne Gazur, Judith Glyde, Anne Heinz, Bruce Henderson, Clayton Lewis, Uriel Nauenberg (chair), Lynn Ross-Bryant, Jeff Schiel, Robert Schulzinger, Daniel Sher.

[2] Faculty are defined as all members of the Boulder Faculty Senate, including all rostered contract instructors.