17

How Post-Tenure Review Can Support the Teaching Development of Senior Faculty

Mary Deane Sorcinelli, Mei-Yau Shih,
Mathew L. Ouellett, Marjory Stewart
University of Massachusetts–Amherst

A key question that campuses face as they develop and implement post-tenure review policies is how to blend the concepts of accountability and renewal. This chapter examines a faculty development initiative linked to a post-tenure review policy at a research-intensive university. It describes the goals, processes, and outcomes of a five-year study of the program, extending research on post-tenure review and its potential for positive faculty development.

As colleges and universities seek to renew curriculum, advance academic programs, and engage in innovations in teaching and student learning, they will need to rely on their mid-career and senior faculty. Amidst dwindling resources and a concurrent rise in adjunct and part-time faculty, institutions can no longer assume that new tenure-track faculty will be hired in numbers great enough to invigorate classrooms, laboratories, and research projects (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). The vitality of institutions will depend to a large degree on the productive engagement of mid-career and senior faculty.

Institutions have not yet fully answered the question of how best to keep senior faculty vital and productive throughout their careers. There has been much attention given to identifying and supporting the needs of new and early career faculty (Rice, Sorcinelli & Austin, 2000; Sorcinelli, 2000). In contrast, much less research has focused on faculty whom the literature refers to

as “tenured,” “experienced,” “seasoned,” “mid-career,” or “senior.” While it is difficult to precisely define this group of faculty, we do know that senior faculty now represent higher education’s largest faculty cohort (Finkelstein, 1993), with data suggesting that more than two-thirds of all full-time faculty are over the age of 50 and approximately 50% of full-time faculty hold the rank of associate or full professor (Bland & Bergquist, 1997).

In fact, when institutions, policymakers, and higher education associations have turned their attention to tenured faculty—their roles and responsibilities, performance evaluation, and long-term career development—they have focused more on assessing faculty performance rather than on nurturing faculty development (Walker, 2002). Over the past decade, two fundamental responses to concerns about tenured faculty have emerged: post-tenure review systems and senior faculty development initiatives. It should be noted that these two processes have rarely been linked to one another in any meaningful way. This study fills a gap in the literature by examining a faculty development initiative linked to a post-tenure review policy at a research-intensive university, presenting data that assesses the program’s impact as part of a post-tenure review process.

Post-Tenure Review

In the past decade, due to demographic and economic pressures, state policymakers and higher education board members have urged institutions to initiate post-tenure review policies to ensure accountability for the quality of faculty teaching, research, and service. Collective bargaining agreements in more than 37 states have initiated mandates for the implementation of post-tenure review and evaluation of tenured faculty (Licata & Morreale, 2002).

Post-tenure review refers to a “systematic, comprehensive process, separate from the annual review, aimed specifically at assessing performance and/or nurturing faculty growth and development” (Licata & Morreale, 1997, p. 1), which can be embedded in either a summative or formative framework. As Licata and Morreale (1997) note, the summative framework uses the review to collect accurate and reliable information about past performance that is used to make a personnel decision. Specific actions are taken as a result of the review—either *reward* when the performance is above average or *remediation*, in the form of a professional development plan, when the performance is judged to be below average. In contrast, the formative framework outlines a review process that is developmental, and the outcome of such a review is the development of a professional growth plan that focuses on future career

development. This framework is usually not connected to any personnel decision-making and, in some cases, only the faculty member sees the review.

Researchers have noted that while the philosophy of most post-tenure review policies is formative, nearly all have summative aspects and policies outlining actions to occur if the faculty member does not address deficiencies identified in a review (Licata & Morreale, 1999). A key question that campuses face as they develop and implement post-tenure review policies, then, is how to blend the concepts of accountability and renewal into a workable system (Alstete, 2000; Licata & Morreale, 1997).

Senior Faculty Development Programs

At the same time that a range of post-tenure review processes have been taking shape, institutions have increasingly recognized the need to provide opportunities for tenured faculty to address new teaching and learning challenges. Faculty members are facing instructional situations in which students may differ widely in their levels of interest and commitment, their preparation, their availability for course-related work, and their learning styles. The ethnic and social diversity in the classroom is also changing, as enrollments of women, multicultural, and minority students continue to increase. Many faculty have not learned to teach with technology and may require support and training to function optimally in a rapidly changing technological environment. In addition, faculty are being asked to assess student learning outcomes and study and document their own teaching (Sorcinielli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2006).

Given dramatic changes in the teaching and learning landscape, what does research tell us about teaching vitality among experienced faculty? While studies support the presence of some unhappiness and malaise, overall they conclude that senior faculty devote considerable energy to teaching and student concerns. Studies further suggest that the effectiveness of tenured faculty as teachers is less related to time spent on teaching than to an enlargement of teaching styles and relationships with students (Karpiak, 1997; Romano, Hoelsing, O'Donovan, & Weinsheimer, 2004).

Crawley (1995) surveyed 104 research universities to learn about faculty development programs available to senior faculty. Findings revealed a high level of support for traditional approaches to faculty development (e.g., sabbaticals, unpaid leaves), but suggested that faculty development approaches that expanded or created new roles and responsibilities for senior faculty were more limited. Our review of programs at teaching and learning centers con-

firmed Crawley's findings. While many centers provide programs and interest groups where faculty can share issues and concerns about teaching, fewer have programs designed specifically for tenured senior faculty. Of those that do, two faculty development models predominate. The first and more common model is the provision of individual funds to encourage renewal in teaching by tenured faculty (e.g., small grants to buy books, supplies, hire technical support, and fund travel to disciplinary and teaching conferences). The literature suggests that relatively modest grants can support the development of new course or program initiatives and also send a message that the institution values the engagement and new directions taken by tenured faculty (Baldwin, 2002; Finkelstein & LaCelle-Peterson, 1993).

Some campuses have developed programs that offer a second type of opportunity in which senior faculty join other senior colleagues in structured learning communities to learn and share ideas about teaching and learning. These programs have been designed in response to studies that suggest that faculty at mid-career and senior level experience isolation and desire opportunities to talk about teaching with colleagues (Bland & Bergquist, 1997; Karpik, 1997, 2000). Both of these senior faculty development programs have documented positive outcomes in terms of the development of new skills in and attitudes about teaching, enhanced collegiality, awareness of teaching and learning styles and strategies, and gains in student learning (Blaisdell & Cox, 2004; Jackson & Simpson, 1993; Romano et al. 2004; Shih & Sorcinelli, 2000; Stassen & Sorcinelli 2001).

Linking Post-Tenure Review and Faculty Development

While senior faculty development programs have reported a number of positive outcomes, there has been little research into the outcomes of the different but related concepts of post-tenure review and faculty development. Studies focusing on the developmental aspects of post-tenure review offer differing perspectives. Some campuses have noted benefits such as improved faculty productivity, morale, and commitment to one's discipline (Goodman, 1994). The majority of studies on post-tenure review, however, reveal little impact on a faculty member's professional development (O'Meara, 2003, 2004; Wesson & Johnson, 1991). The problem is that many of these studies are limited to data obtained during the initial startup of the program, prior to the creation of any faculty development initiatives (Harrington, 2002; O'Meara 2003, 2004). Such studies also reveal that few institutions have actually created post-tenure review processes with any relationship to faculty development programs. In fact,

a new study of faculty development programs in the United States and Canada found that post-tenure review was the issue for which faculty developers from all institutional types offered the fewest services and which they ranked as least important to address through their faculty development programs (Sorcinielli et al., 2006).

The post-tenure review and professional development process described in this chapter offers one model for how to link a post-tenure review process with faculty development in teaching, providing insight into the benefits of post-tenure review that joins performance review with the fostering of the continued professional development of tenured faculty. We also highlight several key features of this model. For example, unlike many other post-tenure processes (Alstete, 2000; Licata & Morreale, 2002), this initiative has the support of the administration and faculty, sparing it from being viewed as merely symbolic. It is framed in the context of renewal rather than remediation, supporting faculty with proven records as well as those whose teaching merits attention. Additionally, institutional funds are readily available to support a wide range of development initiatives. Finally, there has been a concerted effort to document and assess the outcomes of faculty development projects.

University of Massachusetts Post-Tenure Review

The practice of regular annual reviews based on an annual faculty report and peer review by personnel committees, chairs, and deans has been well established on the University of Massachusetts–Amherst campus. However, when the University of Massachusetts System mandated post-tenure review for all its campuses in 1999, the Amherst campus set about developing a periodic multi-year review (PMYR) of all faculty, with goals distinct from annual or major personnel reviews.

The goals of PMYR were twofold. First, the reviews were designed to allow faculty to overview their performance in a way that would inform evaluations, rewards, and academic planning. Second, reviews would allow for timely consultation, intervention, and assistance that would stimulate and encourage professional development. In adopting the PMYR policy, the university and the tenured faculty, represented by the Massachusetts Society of Professors (www.umass.edu/msp), wanted to address external concerns about accountability while fostering continued professional development.

In terms of process, a PMYR is conducted every seven years for all tenured faculty. The faculty member submits a current curriculum vita and

brief statement of principle activities, goals and approaches, and new directions since the last promotion review or PMYR. The statement may include a request for development funds needed for that initiative or change in direction. This statement is reviewed by the department chair and personnel committee and then forwarded to the college dean. The administration and the union agreed to an annual allocation of development funds, primarily for the enhancement of research, to be awarded through the college dean. The administration and union also directed an annual allocation of funding for teaching development to the campus's teaching and learning center, the Center for Teaching (CFT).

The CFT formed a committee representing senior faculty, the union, chairs, and deans to collaboratively create the general outline for a program to be administered by the CFT following the post-tenure personnel process. To refine and implement this development program, the CFT staff named a highly regarded senior faculty member who had been involved in the development of the PMYR process to work with them on the project. The outcome of this process was the development of a grant program designed to provide individual incentives for teaching improvements (e.g., resources, individual consultation) as well as an opportunity for collegial conversation with fellow program participants through an annual luncheon and seminar. The following is a summary of the goals, processes, and outcomes of a five-year study on the program, with the hope of extending research on post-tenure review and its potential for positive faculty development.

Grants for Professional Development in Teaching (PMYR)

Licata and Morreale (1997, 2002) suggest that professional development should be a component of any post-tenure review process. Since the 1999–2000 academic year, the CFT has funded PMYR Grants for Professional Development in Teaching in conjunction with the university-wide PMYR program.

Goals of the Grants for Professional Development in Teaching Program
The goals for the Grants for Professional Development in Teaching program are to

- Provide PMYR participants with opportunities for professional growth and renewal in teaching

- Provide funding for instructional projects designed to enhance participants' courses and teaching methods, and their students' learning
- Provide support for participants as they apply new knowledge and techniques in their teaching
- Reinforce an instructional environment that honors and recognizes dedicated senior teaching scholars

Program Structure and Processes

The Grants for Professional Development in Teaching program provides funds to faculty members for improvements and innovations in instruction through a variety of approaches which include but are not limited to development and use of multimedia or other instructional technology; development of interdisciplinary teaching methods or projects; inclusion of diversity and multiculturalism into teaching; new approaches to the assessment of teaching and student learning; improvements in course design, content presentation, delivery styles, and effectiveness.

Immediately following the department/college PMYR review process, each PMYR participant receives a copy of the grant's call for proposals and relevant information regarding the application process. These letters are followed by an email or personal telephone call reminding faculty of the proposal deadline. To further encourage participation, one-on-one information sessions are offered to assist interested faculty in the application process. Proposals are reviewed and evaluated by a committee comprised of members of the CFT staff and faculty associates to the CFT. Grants of up to \$3,000 are awarded to individual faculty and can be used for such resources as classroom materials, books, travel, equipment, or hiring a research assistant.

Each grant requires at least one consultation meeting with a member of the CFT staff, participation in one voluntary and confidential classroom assessment opportunity (e.g., collecting student feedback at mid-semester followed by a consultation with CFT staff), and submission of a feedback questionnaire/project self-evaluation report at the end of the grant period. Individual faculty retain full control of all teaching plans, assessment feedback, and information on teaching improvement collected by the center. Each awardee is also personally invited to participate in an end-of-year luncheon and seminar for grant participants. At the seminar, several awardees share their project outcomes, followed by discussions among senior faculty regarding course and teaching development goals, campus resources, benefits, and challenges.

Evaluation of the Grants for Professional Development in Teaching (PMYR)

During the 2004–2005 academic year, we conducted a formal evaluation of the Grants for Professional Development in Teaching program, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data from the first five years of the program (1999–2004). The data pool of participants ($N = 98$) represents a wide range of disciplines ($n = 42$) across eight out of nine schools and colleges. All participants had completed the post-tenure review in their department and college during the previous academic year and had applied for and received funds from the CFT's Grants for Professional Development in Teaching program. We summarized data by year, college, and project type (see Table 17.1 and Figures 17.1, 17.2, and 17.3). Information was also collected from self-evaluation reports at the end of the grant period ($n = 49$).

Findings

In reporting findings, we first examine the grant program from an institutional perspective, using quantitative data to determine the impact of the grant program in terms of participation and project type. Second, we use qualitative data collected through consultations and self-evaluation reports to explore the ways in which faculty who have recently undergone post-tenure review articulate their individual development needs and interests as a means of advancing their teaching.

Participation in the Program

Faculty participation by year. In Table 17.1, the number of eligible faculty represents those individuals who were scheduled to complete the PMYR review process at the department and college levels. The participation rate represents the percentage of eligible faculty who applied for and were awarded grants for professional development in teaching. As indicated, the proportion of eligible faculty participating in the program has risen dramatically since year one. Between 1999 and 2004, a total of 98 teaching grants have been awarded to faculty members undergoing the PMYR process. Perhaps more importantly, participation has risen from only 6 grants awarded after the 1999–2000 call for proposals to between 23 and 25 annual awards during the past three years of the program.

TABLE 17.1
Participation Rate by Year

	Number of Grant Recipients*	Number of Eligible Faculty**	Participation Rate
1999–2000	6	90	7%
2000–2001	20	73	27%
2001–2002	23	44	52%
2002–2003	25	50	50%
2003–2004	24	70	34%

*Up to 25 grants can be awarded annually.

**Those faculty members who were scheduled to complete the PMYR review process at the department and college levels.

FIGURE 17.1
Total Grant Recipients by School and College (N = 98)

Key to Schools and Colleges

HFA: Humanities and Fine Arts
NSM: Natural Sciences and Mathematics
SBS: Social and Behavioral Sciences
CNRE: Natural Resources and the Environment

PHHS: Public Health and Health Sciences
ISOM: Isenberg School of Management
EDUC: Education
ENGR: Engineering
NURS: Nursing

Participants across schools and colleges. Over the five-year period of the study, awards have been widely distributed across schools and colleges as illustrated in Figure 17.1. A total of 98 faculty members undergoing the PMYR evaluation process in eight of the nine schools and colleges have participated in the CFT grants program.

Figure 17.2 outlines the percentage of faculty, by school and college, who participated based on the total number of faculty identified as PMYR eligible during the study period. The overall participation rate has ranged from 0% in the School of Nursing (NURS) to 75% in the School of Public Health and Human Services (PHHS). The average participation rate of the eight schools and colleges submitting grant applications was 34% over the five-year period.

FIGURE 17.2
Number of Grant Participants/Number of Eligible Faculty
by School and College

We explored possible reasons for the lack of participation from faculty in the School of Nursing and the exceedingly high participation in the School of Public Health and Health Sciences. Analysis revealed that during the time period of the study, a number of senior faculty members in the School of Nursing elected to retire, thereby terminating their PMYR review and eligibility for teaching funds. This left only two eligible faculty during the study period, neither of whom chose to apply for the grant funding. In the case of PHHS, both the dean and department chairs personally encouraged each of their faculty to apply for the grant program, resulting in six out of eight eligible faculty applying for and awarded grants. Administrative encouragement for teaching development probably played a factor in the PHHS's high participation rate.

Another college, the College of Engineering (ENGR), had a significantly lower than average participation rate, averaging 11% over the period of the study, with only 3 of 28 eligible faculty applying for teaching grants. Upon further consultation with the dean of the college, it was clear that engineering faculty were strongly encouraged to focus their efforts on securing large grants from external sources in support of their research mandate. In contrast, the participation rate for the College of Humanities and Fine Arts (HFA) (38%) reflected a culture that encouraged the seeking of small, internal funds in support of teaching initiatives.

Scope of faculty development projects. We categorized the ways in which senior faculty self-identified their professional needs and interests, as illustrated in Figure 17.3. The vast majority of participating faculty (80%) chose

to experiment with new teaching techniques that incorporated learning technologies. Such projects included the development or update of course and departmental web sites, as well as the use of digitized materials, videos, and PowerPoint slides to improve classroom demonstrations and presentations. Another 12% of awards supported faculty development or redesign of courses or travel to teaching-related conferences to bring back new, fresh content and methods. The remaining 8% of awardees focused on teaching enhancements in the areas of experiential learning and other student-centered pedagogies. For example, one faculty member created a student-faculty partnership aimed at promoting social justice and cross-cultural understanding, integrating three related courses to create a series of interrelated learning opportunities that were student facilitated.

: End of Project Year Faculty Self-Evaluation Report/Survey

Each year, a survey focusing on faculty self-reflection and evaluation is forwarded to the participants at the conclusion of the grant period. In this survey, faculty are asked to respond to a number of questions regarding their end-of-project self-evaluation. To date, 65 surveys (66%) have been received from the 98 participants from 1999–2004. For the purpose of this study, we focused on a qualitative, open-ended item—“What were the most positive effects of your project in terms of student learning and your own teaching? Any negative effects?”—and a global rating—“Rate the overall success of your project.”

Faculty self-assessment of teaching practice. Almost all participants provided valuable feedback as to the status of individual projects and their perceptions of the impact of such projects on their teaching. Often highlighted was the design of “enriched” and more effective lectures. Faculty described their presentations as more well-thought-out and clearer, particularly through the use of technology such as PowerPoint. Comments such as “My lectures are now more logically structured,” “I am convinced that this is the most effective way to deliver my lecture,” and “I have incorporated [these strategies] into my other courses” were among the responses. Some faculty specifically identified experiencing a “transformation” or an improvement in their teaching practice through the use of active learning. For some, active learning was a result of the integration of technology into their teaching. Through personal response systems and online discussion, for example, participants reported having more tools for interacting with students in a more meaningful way. For others, active learning was evidenced by more student engagement in the classroom: “There is more interaction among students as they work together in class.”

Faculty impressions of student learning. In open-ended comments, faculty also provided evidence of improved student learning. Some indicated that innovations elicited positive reactions from students, particularly in cases involving the integration of technology. One participant reported that the introduction of new technologies “reduced student frustration in learning course content,” leaving them with a “real sense of achievement and confidence” the instructor had not witnessed before. Again, a number of the respondents also cited feedback from students reporting increased engagement in active learning through the use of online discussions, integrated video clips followed by class discussion, and “the addition of more frequent problem-solving activities.”

Student impact and assessment. The integration of assessment strategies into the projects afforded students the opportunity to give their input. While all participants had at least 1 one-on-one consult with CFT staff, 20% also participated in formal midterm assessments of their teaching (Midterm Assessment Process, or MAP). The MAP provides a unique opportunity to collect feedback from students early in a course. A teaching consultant collects, synthesizes, and helps interpret feedback from students (through small group or survey) as well as identifies appropriate teaching suggestions. In their comments, faculty indicated that the MAP provided “useful information on students’ perceptions of the course and what helps them learn” as well as concrete suggestions that allowed them to redirect their efforts to better accommodate and enhance student learning.

Overall faculty evaluation of project outcomes. Faculty were asked to rate the overall success of their project using a 5-point rating scale that ranged from “fair” at the lowest end of the scale to “good,” “very good,” “excellent,” and “outstanding.” Twenty-one faculty responded to this question, and the overwhelming majority of respondents (76%) considered the outcome of their grant project “excellent” or “outstanding,” with an additional 14% of respondents rating overall success as “very good.” These data show a high level of agreement among faculty on the value of this professional development opportunity. (Twenty-eight faculty chose not to rate the overall success of their projects yet, noting that the projects were still “in process.”)

Unanticipated outcomes. Feedback in the reports and faculty conversations with the project coordinator suggest that preparing and implementing a teaching project may have enhanced not only participants’ instruction but also their perception of the entire PMYR process. One faculty member responded, “Had I not engaged in preparing my PMYR proposal and carrying out the PMYR project [with CFT], my teaching would have been considerably less effective.”

Faculty also reported that “although the grant has been set up for a finite period, it will be used to acquire tools whose applications will grow over time.” Another faculty member indicated his plan to use these tools “not only to improve my teaching but to enhance my professional development by locating what I do within the larger context of our digital electronic age.” A senior member who had been at the institution for 35 years noted, “With small investments such as proposed here, the University and its students [through Web access] can reap substantial benefits as we enter a period of revolutionary transformation of art history teaching.”

Aspects of concern to faculty. Among areas that merited attention, one-half of awardees expressed concerns about the amount of time necessary to implement a project. Many faculty did not anticipate the level of commitment required to learn new software, revise and prepare new lectures, and develop new laboratory activities. Of respondents who implemented technology-based projects, one-third mentioned technical difficulties and the setup time for computerized visual aids as another area of concern. In cases where web and email communication were introduced between students and faculty members, faculty noted a considerably increased workload in managing these out-of-class communications with students.

Implications

A review of the findings reveals some broad trends in senior faculty renewal in teaching. Given appropriate opportunities, tenured faculty will integrate modern technologies into their teaching practice, investigate pedagogies of engagement as a way to improve student learning, redesign introductory lecture courses, assess gains in student learning and their own teaching practices, and demonstrate interest in departmental priorities (i.e., interdisciplinary programs, new course development, student research internships, etc.).

The following are several implications for the design and delivery of faculty development programs as part of a post-tenure review process.

Emphasize Individual and Institutional Support

This study found that personal contact is crucial to encourage faculty undergoing post-tenure review to apply for and engage in teaching development and renewal projects. Faculty who received encouragement from department chairs and deans regarding teaching development were more positive toward applying for grants for teaching as were faculty who had engaged in other CFT grant initiatives or were personally contacted by CFT staff.

· Assure Confidentiality

Confidentiality was critical to ensure faculty members' willingness to take risks. The CFT's sovereignty from departmental and school or college oversight contributed to faculty willingness to test new waters and engage in developmental activities they previously had refused to engage in within the context of the classroom or their post-tenure personnel evaluation.

· Highlight Opportunity

Another factor that appears to have contributed to increased numbers of faculty participating over the years was the growing realization that many of the university's most distinguished teachers and scholars had applied for and been awarded grant funds. In this way, the program was seen as an opportunity rather than as a remedial program in which exemplary teachers as well as teachers needing improvement applied.

· Encourage the Individual and the Collective

Our study results confirmed previous findings (Finkelstein & LeCelle-Peterson, 1993) that senior faculty express a keen interest in teaching and a willingness to engage in teaching development activities if they meet their instructional situation, interests, and needs. Programs should allow faculty to set out their own project goals and also stimulate faculty to address student learning problems, as well as broader institutional needs (Simpson, 1990).

· Build in Flexibility as Well as Structure

Faculty reactions to the grant initiative confirm that a post-tenure development program must be well structured (e.g., processes, timelines, assessment) but flexible if it is to meet the varied needs of senior faculty as they move through their academic careers. Development programs should promote faculty potential "through processes and mechanisms that release and empower, not excessively control and supervise" (Alstete, 2000, p. 22).

· Support Reflection

Study participants who approached their post-tenure review as an opportunity to pause and reflect on their teaching practice indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the process. Individually and in consultation, faculty can re-examine teaching practices as well as the underlying assumptions about teaching and learning that influence their practice (Patrick & Fletcher, 1998). As one faculty member noted,

I will confess that, while I have remained an active and productive artist-educator over the years, I approached [my] PMYR with little enthusiasm. As it turned out, the process—coming as it did well into my university service—provided me with a timely opportunity to examine the trajectory of my career and to formulate plans to pursue new and important avenues for enhancing the quality of my teaching.

Earlier studies indicate that within the context of a post-tenure evaluation, professional development is difficult (Alstete, 2000; Licata & Morreale, 2002; O'Meara, 2003, 2004). O'Meara (2003) suggests that faculty undergoing PMYR need to "see" information and examples of positive changes in behavior or outcomes in order to view post-tenure review as less of a "sledgehammer" and more of an opportunity (p. 40). The overall findings of this study suggest that post-tenure review, when linked to a carefully designed post-tenure faculty development initiative, can have a positive influence on faculty and institutional effectiveness.

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