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## PEER EVALUATIONS AT AACSB-ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS

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### Abstract

*Deans from schools accredited by The International Association for Management Education (AACSB) were surveyed to assess the use of peer evaluation as part of the faculty evaluation process. One hundred and one of the 355 (28%) deans responded. It was hypothesized that the peer evaluation process is 1) extensively used, 2) rigorous, and 3) valuable to the faculty evaluation process. Results suggest that the peer evaluation process is rigorous and valuable, but not extensively used.*

### Introduction

Centra recommends including peer evaluation as part of the faculty review process (1987, 1993). AACSB accreditation standards require a formal, periodic review process for reappointment, promotion and tenure decisions (Standards for Business Accreditation, 1994). Supervisor, peer, and/or student evaluations have historically been incorporated in this review process. The purpose of this study is to investigate the use, rigor, and value of peer evaluation in the faculty review process. Faculty evaluation is a difficult, time consuming managerial process. Schools of business are accountable to both internal and external customers for providing quality educational services. The faculty evaluation process is generally designed to monitor progress toward faculty instructional, developmental, service, and research goals. Business schools seeking AACSB accreditation must implement a formal, periodic review process for reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions. Centra (1987, 1993), Shaughnessy (1994), and Keig and Waggoner (1994) have described supervisor rating, peer evaluation, and student evaluation as the necessary components of the faculty evaluation process. Because incorporation of each component in the faculty review process consumes valuable organizational resources, it is important to ensure that each is necessary. Description of the levels of use, rigor, and value for each component should assist in determination of component efficacy. The review processes at accredited schools may also serve as models for schools seeking accreditation. The focus of this study is to describe the use, rigor, and value of peer evaluation in AACSB accredited schools. Is peer evaluation an important component of the faculty review process?

The general purpose of this study is to assess the use, rigor, and perceived value of peer evaluation at AACSB accredited schools. The objectives of this study are the following: 1) to identify the extent to which peer evaluations have been incorporated in the faculty evaluation process, 2) to describe how rigorously peer evaluations are conducted, and 3) to describe how the

results of peer evaluations are used.

Results presented here should help administrators and faculty members make informed decisions about including peer evaluation as a part of the faculty evaluation process. Administrators should be able to answer the following questions related to peer evaluation at AACSB accredited schools:

1. How often is peer evaluation a part of the faculty review process?
2. How rigorous is peer evaluation?
3. How valuable is peer evaluation?

### **Literature Review**

Centra (1987, 1993) encouraged college faculty to give strong consideration to including a peer evaluation element in their reviews. Added to student and administrator evaluations, it was suggested that the peer review segment be qualitative in nature. Centra also concluded that faculty were less willing to seek peer review for classroom teaching than for research.

Shaughnessy (1994) illustrated peer review of teaching within a mentoring relationship. The conclusion was that punitive ingredients would be removed while support would be added since the mentoring faculty members were teaching peers. In addition, he added that differences between results from evaluations by students versus peers be investigated.

Keig and Waggoner (1994) recommended that peer evaluations and student evaluations both be utilized; however, these evaluations should be kept separate from each other. Further, it was concluded that faculty should be directly involved in developing peer review programs. Also, faculty should be trained in proper skills to conduct the review and should be rewarded for participating in the process. Osborne (1998) described an integrated model of student and peer evaluations.

AACSB standards require that accredited schools establish and follow a formal, periodic faculty review process. The standards do not, however, specify the components of such a process. Centra (1987, 1993) encouraged inclusion of peer evaluation along with supervisor and student evaluations in the faculty review process. The following hypotheses are descriptively tested in this study:

1. Peer evaluation is used extensively as part of the faculty review process.

2. Peer evaluation is rigorous involving classroom observation and portfolio review by multiple peers.
3. Results from peer evaluation are valuable for making reappointment, tenure, and promotion decisions.

## **Methodology and Results**

To test the peer evaluation hypotheses, a questionnaire was developed and sent to the deans of AACSB accredited schools. Twenty-eight percent of the deans responded. A database of the responses was constructed, and responses to questionnaire items were summarized in frequency tables using SAS. A summary of responses by questionnaire item is presented in Appendix A.

A questionnaire was developed for the purpose of collecting data related to the use of peer evaluations by AACSB accredited schools in the faculty evaluation process. A sample frame of 355 AACSB accredited schools was identified from the AACSB 98/99 Membership Directory. Deans of the accredited schools were asked to respond to the peer evaluation questionnaire. It should be noted that half of the deans were surveyed using a traditional mail survey methodology and the remaining half surveyed using an Internet methodology. The effectiveness of the methodologies has been contrasted in a separate paper. Data generated by the two methodologies were compared using the SAS MANOVA procedure and found to be consistent across the methodologies.

Responses were received from 28% of the schools in the sample frame. Of the schools responding, 54% indicated that peer evaluation is part of the faculty evaluation process. Responses from the schools that use peer evaluation were further analyzed resulting in the following profile.

Hypothesis one states that peer evaluation is used extensively at AACSB accredited schools of business. General support for this hypothesis was not found. Almost half (46%) of the responding schools did not use peer evaluation, and peer evaluation at approximately two-thirds (65%) of those business schools is mandated at the institution level. About 35% of the responding schools chose to implement peer evaluation without an institutional mandate. Thirty-five percent of the peer evaluation schools do not require that all faculty members be evaluated.

Hypothesis two states that peer evaluation is rigorous, involving classroom observation and portfolio review by multiple peers. General support for this hypothesis was found. Business faculty were involved in developing the peer evaluation process at the vast majority (78%) of peer evaluation schools. Eighty percent of the schools using peer evaluation have been doing so for more than five years. While there is no preferred number of peers, the vast majority (72% tenured faculty, 74% non-tenured faculty) of peer evaluation schools involve more than one peer in the process. Generally, tenured faculty are evaluated less often than non-tenured faculty. Non-tenured faculty at peer evaluation schools are generally subject to evaluation on an annual basis (72%), while only 35% of tenured faculty are evaluated annually. Evaluators at peer

evaluation schools are always (100%) of equal or greater rank than the faculty member being evaluated and are almost always (96%) from the school of business. Peer evaluators are known to the faculty member being evaluated (89%). Evaluators observe classes (69%), review portfolios (76%), but do not view video tape (6%) as part of the peer evaluation process. Results are not generally presented on rating forms (33%) but do include written comments (74%). Results are presented in meetings with peers (35%) or in meetings with supervisors (37%).

Hypothesis three states that results are perceived as important when making decisions related to faculty tenure, promotion, salary adjustment, faculty load, faculty development, and research support. Support for this hypothesis is mixed. Deans at peer evaluation schools perceived that evaluation results were important to tenure (63%) and promotion (63%) decisions but not to salary adjustment (24%), faculty load (6%), faculty development (11%) and research support (9%) decisions. Overall, however, deans perceive that peer evaluations, supervisor ratings, and student evaluations are equally important and that both they (91%) and their faculty (91%) value the results of peer evaluations.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

Centra (1987, 1993), Shaughnessy (1994), and Keig and Waggoner (1994) have recommended that the faculty review process include supervisor ratings, student evaluations and peer evaluation. Peer evaluation is in use at only about half of the responding business schools. This suggests that peer evaluation may not be a specifically critical component of the faculty review process.

When used, the peer evaluation is rigorous. The peer evaluation process at most schools was developed with involvement from business faculty. Multiple peers generally conduct classroom observations and review portfolios, and results are reported in meetings with either evaluators or supervisors. Non-tenured faculty are generally reviewed annually. Evaluations are less frequent for tenured faculty.

Results from peer evaluations are perceived as important to tenure and promotion decisions but not to salary adjustment, faculty load, faculty development, and research support decisions. Deans value the results of peer evaluations and perceive that faculty members also value the results. Overall, deans at peer evaluation schools perceive that peer evaluation, supervisor rating, and student evaluations are equally important components of the faculty review process.

## **References**

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## APPENDIX A

### Peer Evaluation Questionnaire Results

1. Does your school include peer evaluations as part of the faculty evaluation process?

Yes	54	53.5%
No	47	46.5%

**Note: The remaining questions pertain only to the 54 schools that use peer evaluations.**

2. How long have peer reviews been used in the faculty evaluation process within the school of business?

1 year	1	1.9%
2-3 years	6	11.1%
3-5 years	4	7.4%
over 5 years	43	79.6%

3. Are your peer reviews mandated by the institution?

Yes	35	64.8%
No	19	35.2%

4. Who chooses the peer(s) who conduct(s) the evaluation?

Dean	3	5.6%
Department Chair	7	13.0%
Faculty Member	5	9.3%
Combination	21	38.9%
Other	18	33.3%

5a. How many peer(s) evaluate tenured faculty member?

1	9	16.7%
2	8	14.8%
3	9	16.7%

4	4	7.4%
5	7	13.0%
More than	11	20.4%
No response	6	11.1%

5b. How many peer(s) evaluate each non-tenured faculty member?

1	4	7.4%
2	10	18.5%
3	10	18.5%
4	2	3.7%
5	6	11.1%
More than 5	12	22.2%
No Response	10	18.5%

6. How often are tenured faculty members evaluated by peer(s)?

Once per year	19	35.2%
Every other year	2	3.7%
Other	31	57.4%

No response	2	3.7%
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7. How often are non-tenured faculty members evaluated by peer(s)?

Once per year	39	72.2%
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Every other year	6	11.1%
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Other	8	14.8%
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No response	1	1.9%
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8. Peer evaluators are from:

Same department as faculty member being evaluated	29	53.7%
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Across the business school faculty	23	42.6%
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Across the university faculty	2	3.7%
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9. Peer evaluators are:

Same rank as faculty member being evaluated	0	0.0%
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Same rank or higher	27	50.0%
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Chosen without regard to rank	27	50.0%
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10. Are all school faculty evaluated by peers?

Yes 35 64.8%

No 19 35.2%

11. Are peer evaluators anonymous to the faculty member being evaluated?

Yes 6 11.1%

No 48 88.9%

12. Were business faculty directly involved in developing the peer review process?

Yes 42 77.8%

No 12 22.2%

13. Of the following procedures, please check all that apply to methods utilized by peer evaluators?

Observe classes of faculty member being evaluated 37 68.5%

Observe video tape of classes of faculty member being evaluated 3 5.6%

Evaluate self-evaluation/faculty portfolio 41 75.9%

Other methods 13 24.1%

14. How are results provided by peers to the faculty member being evaluated?

Standard rating form	18	33.3%
Written comments	40	74.1%
Individual meeting with peer(s)	19	35.2%
Individual meeting with dean/department chair	20	37.0%

15. Indicate the level of importance that you place on the results of peer evaluations when making the following decisions. (1 is very important / 5 is not important at all)

Weighted average scores:      Score of less than 2.00 indicates importance.

Salary increase	2.71
Tenure	1.60
Promotion	1.52
Faculty Load	3.78
Research Support	3.62
Faculty Development	2.92

16. How important are supervisor ratings and student evaluations compared to peer evaluations?

(1 is much less important / 5 is much more important)

Weighted average scores:      Score of 3.00 indicates equal importance.

Supervisor ratings	3.39
Student evaluations	3.22

1. Please indicate your perception of how faculty feel about the value of the results of peer evaluations:

Very valuable	16	29.6%
Somewhat valuable	33	61.1%
Not valuable at all	5	9.3%

18. Please indicate your feelings about the value of the results of peer evaluations:

Very valuable	20	37.0%
Somewhat valuable	29	53.7%
Not valuable at all	4	7.4%
No response	1	1.9%

### **Biographical Sketches**

Dr. Bobby Medlin is an Assistant Professor of Management at Henderson State University. His

research interests include Small Business Management, Ethics, and Strategic Human Resource Management.

Mr. Ken Green, Jr. is an Assistant Professor of Management at Henderson State University. He has completed all requirements for his D.B.A. at Louisiana Tech University, and will receive his degree in November, 2001. His research interests include Ethics, Strategic Human Resource Management, and JIT Selling.

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