

STANDARD FIVE: FACULTY

The institution develops a faculty that is suited to the fulfillment of the institution's mission. Faculty qualifications, numbers, and performance are sufficient to accomplish the institution's mission and purposes. Faculty competently offer the institution's academic programs and fulfill those tasks appropriately assigned them.

INTRODUCTION

In its Mission Statement, the University describes itself as "the State's public learner-centered research university... committed to enriching the lives of its students through its land, sea, and urban grant traditions... the only public institution in Rhode Island offering undergraduate, graduate, and professional students the distinctive educational opportunities of a major research university." The University's faculty are thus responsible for offering a broad array of degrees and programs with a special commitment to its students in the context of a research institution.

FACULTY CATEGORIES AND DISTRIBUTIONS

DESCRIPTION

At the University, the titles and definitions of the various categories of faculty and other teaching and research appointments are found in Chapter 7 of the *University Manual* (http://www.uri.edu/facsen/CHAPTER_707.html). Definitions are based on policies and interpretations of the URI Office of Human Resource Administration and on the *Agreement Between the Rhode Island Board of Governors and the University of Rhode Island Chapter of the American Association of University Professors* (<http://www.ele.uri.edu/aaup/facultycontract2004-2007.pdf>). For reporting purposes, the numbers of faculty, students and other personnel are sometimes given in terms of full-time equivalents (FTEs) or other constructs using definitions provided by the controlling agency (e.g., the U.S. Department of Education) or by the institution. Many of the faculty numbers reported below are based on data compiled and maintained in the Provost's Office. These data are used to implement the contractual terms and conditions of the AAUP-BOG Contract and, because of varying definitions, sometimes appear slightly at variance with data reported in the CIHE Data forms. Student numbers are based on enrollment records as reported through the Office of Institutional Research.

In fall 2005, the University employed 706 in continuing faculty positions as defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Included in this number were: 583 tenure-track (including 17 library faculty); 5 non tenure-track; 29 limited appointment, non tenure-track clinical instructors; and 89 limited appointment, non tenure-track lecturers. Additionally, 26 employees, principally academic administrators, held faculty rank and provided instruction but were not classified among the teaching faculty. Of the 706 continuing faculty, 674 were full-time appointments; however, other positions were sometimes apportioned between teaching and non-teaching duties. When adjusted with this in mind, these 706 represent 687 continuing full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

Besides the continuing faculty positions mentioned above, in the fall of 2005, part-time, per-course faculty were appointed to teach approximately 600 sections of the approximately 2,800 (21%) sections offered.

Faculty Qualifications. Faculty appointments and promotions at the University have reflected standards consistent with those of a research university, but one which is also intent on promoting good teaching. Of the 583 tenure-track faculty mentioned above, 98%—all but 13—hold doctorates, first professional, or terminal degrees appropriate to their field. Of the 706 continuing faculty mentioned above, 630, or 89%, hold the doctorate, first professional, or terminal degree.

With rare exception, a terminal degree is required for all new tenure-track faculty appointments and nearly all other faculty appointments as well. Tenure-track candidates are typically required to demonstrate the capacity for productive research and strong teaching skills. Faculty being reviewed for promotion and tenure must demonstrate productivity in scholarly publications or other relevant productions, show service within and outside the University and must demonstrate appro-

priate teaching skills. Excellent teaching skills significantly strengthen a candidate's case for tenure and promotion.

Faculty Recruitment and Terms and Conditions of Appointment. The process of recruiting and appointing (tenure-track) faculty is specified in the *AAUP-BOG Collective Bargaining Agreement* (<http://www.ele.uri.edu/aaup/facultycontract2004-2007.pdf>). Typically the process is initiated by the deans of the colleges who will solicit proposals for new or replacement faculty members at least yearly from their departments. The department will prepare a proposal indicating the level of the position requested, the desired qualifications, and its justification for the appointment. Specific qualifications will reflect the needs and goals of the department, but essentially all new tenure-track appointments will require an appropriate terminal degree. After review by the dean, the proposal may be forwarded to the Provost, who evaluates and ranks the proposals in the light of enrollment patterns, financial resources, and planning goals. If the position request is ultimately approved, the process of organizing a search is begun and conducted within the department in cooperation with the dean of the college, the Office of the Provost, the Office of Human Resource Administration, and the Office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity. Positions are generally advertised as widely as possible, candidates' resumes and references are reviewed by the search committee members in the light of the criteria set forth in the position advertisement, which specifies qualifications and duties. Finalists are invited to campus for interviews, the department proposes a candidate, and the selection is reviewed by the dean, the Provost, and the Affirmative Action Office. Letters of offer include terms of hire and a description of the expectations of the new faculty member. They are prepared by the dean of the college and the Provost in consultation with the department and referenced in performance evaluations and tenure and promotion consideration.

The process of recruiting and appointing non tenure-track faculty is similar and appointments are typically made through a letter of offer, which indicates expectations, responsibilities, and duration of appointment.

The University continues its significant efforts to recruit women and multicultural faculty. Affirmative action procedures are incorporated routinely in the search process as they have been for many years. A notable addition on campus since the last self-study is the ADVANCE Project (<http://www.uri.edu/advance>). This is a 5-year program funded by the National Science Foundation designed to improve and enrich the scientific, technology, engineering, and mathematic (STEM disciplines) academic workforce at the University through the increased representation and participation of women faculty. URI ADVANCE is involved in recruitment efforts, faculty development, improving networks of support, and overall climate change, to the ultimate benefit of all faculty at the University of Rhode Island.

Graduate Teaching Assistants. In the fall of 2005, the University awarded 409 Graduate Teaching Assistantships. Beginning in 2004, rights and responsibilities of graduate students holding assistantships have been covered by a contractual agreement between the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education and Graduate Assistants United/American Association of University Professors (GAU/AAUP) (<http://www.uri.edu/union/gau/about.php>).

Responsibilities of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) vary from department to department and may include grading homework and exams; setting up laboratories; leading recitation or discussion sessions; teaching laboratory courses; and teaching sections of multi-section courses. In some cases, GTAs have full responsibility for teaching a course. In fall 2005, about 4% of the University's course enrollments were in classes taught entirely by GTAs.

GTAs in the humanities, social sciences, and several professional programs attend the Instructional Development Program's Course Planning Workshops, five half-day sessions offered annually during the week before fall semester classes begin. This series, attended by faculty as well as GTAs, is designed for those who have full responsibility for planning and conducting courses and focuses on a broad range of teaching skills beyond those of the other TA orientation programs. Topics include learning styles and developmental patterns of URI students, establishing course goals, lecturing skills, getting students actively involved, testing and grading, and meeting the first class.

GTAs in the sciences, mathematics, engineering, and computer science attend a separate orientation program sponsored by the Graduate School, the Instructional Development Program, and participating departments. The program,

which includes four half-day sessions also held the week before fall semester classes begin, focuses on a more limited set of teaching skills (introducing a course, explaining difficult concepts, asking and responding to questions) but devotes more time to practicing those skills. GTAs spend fully half of each session in microteaching groups where they practice teaching, are videotaped, and receive feedback from peers and from a faculty member from their department. Because many of the GTAs in these departments are international students, this training program also devotes considerable attention to how education in America compares to education in other countries.

To ensure effective collaboration in this diverse intellectual community, the University requires that all GTAs have the necessary English proficiency to communicate effectively in their instructional duties. International Teaching Assistants (ITAs) must demonstrate proficiency in English. ITAs who need work on their English communication skills can take courses through the English Language Studies Program (ELSP). Sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences and the English Department, the ELSP emphasizes spoken English and focuses on developing the interaction patterns, vocabulary, listening comprehension, and pronunciation skills that ITAs will need in the classroom.

Once GTAs begin teaching, departments assume responsibility for providing continuing support, supervision, and evaluation. Their activities vary. In departments where GTAs teach sections of a multi-section course or laboratories corresponding to a lecture course, a faculty supervisor meets with them regularly to discuss both content and pedagogical issues. Some departments also provide systematic consultation programs in which faculty or experienced GTAs observe classes, videotape new GTAs while they're teaching, collect student evaluations, and then consult with GTAs individually about the results.

Contractual Security, Salaries, and Benefits. Employment security for tenure track faculty, limited full-time faculty, and lecturers, as well as salaries and benefits, is provided by the *AAUP-BOG Collective Bargaining Agreement*. It provides, besides salary and benefit agreements, a description of policies and procedures governing dismissal, non-reappointment, and termination due to programmatic curtailment or financial exigency.

Faculty Workload. According to the basic policy relating to workload at the University stated in Article 12.1 of the *AAUP-BOG Collective Bargaining Agreement*:

Functions and goals of departments and colleges differ throughout the University. Since the various subject areas have evolved from different academic and professional traditions, the precise manner in which each department contributes to teaching, research and public service cannot be specified uniformly on a University-wide, college-wide, nor even on a department-wide basis. Furthermore, as is the case with other professionals, University faculty members can be most effective only if there is reasonable flexibility in determining the manner in which they shall carry out their responsibilities. Individual workload assignments shall take into account teaching, research, and University and public service.

Consistent with this statement, the specific assignments of individual faculty members can and do vary. Since 1995, the University has employed a practice of setting individual faculty effort expectations and of analyzing faculty workload in terms of credit hour equivalents. In this system, all faculty are expected, other things being equal, to be explicitly assigned teaching responsibilities amounting to 9 credit hour equivalents each semester. Teaching three 3-credit courses can satisfy the expectation, but allowances are made for a variety of other assignments including sponsored research, new faculty career startup, curriculum development, assessment activities, special projects, service as chair of a department or as chair of major University committees.

Faculty Review, Promotion, and Tenure. Review, promotion, and tenure procedures are governed by the *AAUP-BOG Collective Bargaining Agreement*. Relevant policies are also found in the *University Manual*. The provisions set forth through this collective bargaining agreement help assure judicious peer evaluation, confidentiality, non-discrimination, due process, and an appeals process.

All non-tenured faculty in tenure-track appointments are reviewed annually. Tenured faculty holding the rank of assistant or associate professor are reviewed every other year. Tenured full professors are reviewed every fourth year. After

serving as a full professor for twelve years, faculty, following an in-depth review, may advance to the level of Full Professor III with a commensurate salary increase. Faculty scholarly productivity is appraised by departmental colleagues, deans, and in tenure and promotion cases, by external reviewers. Faculty teaching performance (full-time and part-time) is appraised in student course evaluations (SETs) which are administered each semester in almost all courses taught at the University. Results of these evaluations are typically referenced in faculty reviews.

Professional Development Opportunities. Faculty members at the University of Rhode Island are strongly encouraged to develop skills and knowledge needed to stay at the forefront of their respective discipline. Attendance at professional meetings, opportunities for sabbatical leave, on-campus colloquia and workshops, and research and teaching fellowships provide the means for advanced training. In the teaching area, the University supports the Instructional Development Program (IDP), which assists both full- and part-time faculty with instructional process (<http://www.uri.edu/idp/>).

Faculty assistance grants, available annually from the Council for Research, the URI Foundation and the Alumni Association, are available to support career enhancement, proposal development, or instructional development. Another important program is the sabbatical leave program. Policies and procedures are outlined in the *University Manual* sections 7.61.10-19 and section 21.1 of the *AAUP-BOG Collective Bargaining Agreement*. Its primary purpose is to provide an uninterrupted period of experience for scholarly enrichment. Tenured faculty are eligible to apply for a sabbatical leave every sixth year. Sabbatical leaves are competitive and can be granted for a period of one year with half pay or a half-year with full pay. Other opportunities for faculty development are provided by the University through programs that enhance the professional and interpersonal skills of the University workforce. The University also provides opportunities for faculty development through participating in extramural programs and workshops by offering release time and limited travel expense reimbursement. The Office of the Provost and individual deans' offices also provide some faculty development funds.

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities. Faculty rights and responsibilities are documented through the *AAUP-BOG Collective Bargaining Agreement*, through legislation recorded in the *University Manual*, and informally by the traditions of American higher education. The University, the faculty, and the URI Chapter of the AAUP subscribe to the principle of academic freedom, and also, by contract, endorse the Statement of Professional Ethics prepared by the American Association of University Professors. While devoted to the free pursuit of knowledge and guaranteed the right of free expression, University of Rhode Island faculty, through the documents mentioned, express a commitment to the highest standards and to the common good of the institution.

APPRAISAL

As reported above, 98% of the tenure-track faculty and 89% of the total full-time faculty hold the highest degree attainable in their fields. Further, scholarly productivity and research, particularly funded research, have been increasingly emphasized as a basis for hiring, promotion and tenure. Although the University does not maintain complete or easily accessible information about all scholarly production, available information discussed later in this chapter indicates that it has increased since the last self-study. External funding has increased as well. Even so, teaching has not been neglected. Teaching excellence enhances faculty profiles in promotion and tenure decisions and the University supports an instructional development program to improve teaching excellence among its faculty. Poor teaching performance can be a serious impediment to promotion and tenure. Considerations such as these make it clear that the University's faculty are qualified to carry out its stated mission.

In fall 2005, the University offered approximately 2,700 sections of undergraduate courses (100–499), with headcount enrollments of approximately 62,000, generating approximately 165,300 credit hours. Of these, about 52% were taught by tenure-track faculty, 16% by full-time lecturers, 3% by clinical faculty, 20% by per course instructors, and about 4% by graduate teaching assistants. The remaining 5% were taught principally by University employees in administrative positions, including those holding faculty rank. Thus, a large proportion (about 80%) of the total undergraduate enrollments and credit hours were generated by employees with full-time or continuing ties to the institution.

In the fall of 2005, approximately 14% of our continuing faculty were multicultural (African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Asians), and approximately 38% were women. In the last self-study, the corresponding numbers, based on fall 1996 data, were 13% multicultural and 27% women.

Based on full-time instructional equivalents of approximately 10,762 undergraduates, 569 first professionals, and 1,824 graduates and an FTE faculty of 687, the student-faculty ratio in fall 2005 was approximately 19 to 1. This ratio, of course, varies from college to college. Ten years ago we reported 631 FTE faculty serving a student body of approximately 9,200 undergraduate and 1,800 graduate students giving a student-faculty ratio of approximately 17 to 1. The 2005 ratio reflects a strategic decision to increase revenues by increasing enrollments, especially in undergraduate and first professional degree programs.

The student-faculty ratio cannot measure the adequacy or inadequacy of faculty members. However, it clearly indicates a change since the last self-study and provides a means to quantify the pressure on resources the University of Rhode Island has felt. Pressure on the University's budget caused by increasing costs and diminishing state support has led to a cautious approach to adding or replacing full-time faculty. URI is not unique among universities in the pressures it faces nor the strategies it uses to meet them.

Nonetheless, even though the student-faculty ratio has increased, there is no substantial evidence that the University has been unable to "support the curriculum," that is, provide the courses and seats in sufficient numbers and in the required areas so that students' progress towards the degree is not delayed by course unavailability. The Provost's Office regularly convenes (at least 3 or 4 times a semester) "Curriculum Delivery Meetings" at which representatives from University College, all the degree granting colleges, and Enrollment Services meet to monitor enrollments and demands and make arrangements to add courses to meet demand. This proactive management procedure seems to be very effective and, by report of the participants, a major improvement over past practice. In some cases, problems are solved by adding sections taught by per-course instructors, but as reported above, in the fall of 2005, part-time, per-course faculty were appointed to teach approximately 600 sections (or 21%) of the approximately 2,800 sections offered.

Although the University has successfully "supported the curriculum" thus far, its plan to increase total enrollments has generated concern, especially among the deans, that too many of our limited resources will have to be allocated to support lower level and general education classes at the expense of majors' programs. So far this has been avoided, but it remains a potential troubling issue that the Provost's Office is aware of and monitoring.

PROJECTION

Since the last self-study, the University has recognized that it is, and will be, increasingly responsible for its own economic viability and in its recent strategic planning has sought to identify and cultivate revenues independent of the state appropriation. Integral to its financial planning is the strategy mentioned above--increasing tuition revenue by increasing student numbers. The University's three-year strategic plan calls for a student body of 16,000 by 2009 (<http://www.uri.edu/pspd/>). The predominant issue will be to carefully match enrollment and faculty increases so that our faculty are sufficient in numbers and qualifications to meet our stated mission.

This process has already begun. This year the President and Provost have authorized searches for 21 new full-time tenure-track faculty and authorized the conversion of 6 continuing non-tenure track clinical faculty to tenure track lines to accommodate the enrollment growth. The Provost has requested an additional nine new faculty positions for fiscal year 2009. Continuing the practice instituted even before the last self-study, open positions are considered to revert to the Provost and open or new positions are filled only after review of needs and in the light of strategic planning. The anticipated appointment of a Vice Provost for Enrollment Management in 2008 should also help the University to better understand and plan for additions to the faculty. Improvements in planning and management, called for in the last self-study, and the increasing implementation of program academic assessment techniques, give confidence that the University will be able to match faculty numbers and increased enrollments so as to retain academic integrity and quality.

Recruitment of women and multicultural faculty will remain a priority. Indeed, as reported above, the University made some improvement in this area. The ADVANCE Program, which has already helped significantly in recruiting women faculty in the STEM disciplines will continue to play an important role. However, because of intense competition from better funded institutions for highly recruited multicultural faculty, it is unlikely that the University will experience major changes in this area. Modest improvement, similar to what has occurred in the last ten years, is a reasonable expectation.

TEACHING

DESCRIPTION

The University has a variety of offices, committees and programs that help monitor and promote teaching and advising. The Instructional Development Program (IDP) and the Teaching Effectiveness Committee play the major roles.

The IDP was created in 1975 to encourage and support the efforts of faculty and other instructors to provide effective instruction for students. It pursues that mission primarily through individual consultation, workshops and seminars, and the Teaching Fellows Program. It also responds to specific requests from departments and programs. The Teaching Fellows Program annually recruits 12 or more faculty members who work together for an entire academic year on learning about and improving their teaching. In all its work, it recognizes and honors diversity of teaching and learning styles, it looks for practical responses to instructional challenges and it attends to the research on teaching and learning. IDP reports to the Office of the Provost and is advised by the Faculty Senate's Teaching Effectiveness Committee.

The Teaching Effectiveness Committee is charged with "conducting and reporting to the Faculty Senate an annual audit of programs, activities, policies, etc., which are available at the University to support good teaching; serving as an advisory committee to the Instructional Development Program; undertaking each year, in cooperation with other interested parties, an initiative designed to improve teaching practices at the University." This year the Faculty Senate Executive Committee asked the Committee to look into "best practices" with regard to the evaluation of teaching and to report its findings to the Faculty Senate.

The principal systematic instrument for the evaluation of teaching is the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) questionnaires administered in all courses enrolling more than five students each semester. The instrument asks students to assess the course and instructor on a number of dimensions, e.g., clarity of presentation, effective use of time, knowledge of subject and approachability. Results are reported to the instructor and department chairs, are included in faculty annual reviews, and placed on file in the University Library. Problematic results can lead to recommendations by supervisors that the faculty member seek help or attend some of the various programs, most sponsored by the Instructional Development Program, to improve his or her teaching.

A variety of committees and procedures at the institution also provide the University and its faculty with means to assess, review, and improve instruction on a regular basis. In addition to the SETs mentioned above, one can cite the Dean's Advisory Councils; the new Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee (LOOC), successor to the Student Learning Improvement Assessment Advisory Committee; Provost's Office support (such as workshops for creating rubrics), annual peer review of faculty, and Faculty Senate committees (such as the Teaching Effectiveness Committee mentioned above, the On-line Learning Committee, the General Education Committee and the Curricular Affairs Committee). Information Technology Services (ITS) provides classes on the use of computer facilities, systems, and application software through Short Courses and classroom presentations. ITS also maintains self-paced learning materials for instructors who cannot attend the Short Courses or who prefer learning on their own.

Aware of the increasing interest and use of on-line technology for instruction, in the fall of 2005 the Provost formed the On-Line Learning Committee, charging it with recommending "policies, guidelines and procedures necessary to support the operations of all asynchronous web-based courses and programs sponsored by the University ... in order to ensure that we are meeting our goal to deliver quality on-line programs and courses." In a parallel effort, the Curricular Affairs

Committee adopted new policies for on-line courses in the spring of 2006 and began reviewing or re-reviewing on-line courses in the fall of 2006 (http://www.uri.edu/facsen/Online_Courses.html). Faculty are also encouraged to invest in the scholarship of teaching. Through its sponsorship of competitive grants designed to benefit students directly in the classroom, the URI Foundation encourages all faculty to research and develop innovative methods for improving classroom and other forms of instruction.

APPRAISAL

The University has in place the review and oversight procedures that can help ensure effective, high quality teaching. For the most part, this infrastructure works well. It demonstrates that the University is responsive to change and serious about its responsibilities.

The Instructional Development Program has played the key role in improving teaching at the University. Nearly half of the University's continuing and many part-time faculty have participated in its workshops or made use of consulting services. However, for the last year and a half, the Assistant Director's position was unfilled, a consequence of several unsuccessful searches. This made it impossible for the Program to provide the full range of activities that faculty and administration at the University had come to expect. The position was finally filled, and the new Assistant Director took up his duties in July 2007.

As mentioned above, the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) has been the principal systematic instrument for the evaluation of teaching at URI. Subject to the terms of the *AAUP-BOG Collective Bargaining Agreement*, it has been used virtually unchanged since about 1980. This long, unstudied use has, from time to time, generated critical comment but no action. Because of the planned changeover from "legacy software" used to process the SET questionnaires and to produce the related reports, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee agreed that timing was appropriate to reevaluate and update the SET instrument. This past academic year, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has charged the Teaching Effectiveness Committee to conduct a study reviewing teaching evaluation methods and to report to the Faculty Senate. Further, an *ad hoc* committee representing the Faculty Senate and the AAUP has been assembled to make recommendations about changes to the SET.

PROJECTION

The University's standing committees and groups described above have a long tradition of activities directed at improving teaching at the University. They will continue to play their longstanding and practiced role. Besides this, there are other, newer initiatives that will be undertaken in support of teaching improvement.

First, with the appointment of the Assistant Director position in the University's Instructional Development Program, its activities will increase. Particularly noteworthy is an expansion of efforts specifically targeted to students and teachers at the University's Feinstein Providence Campus. Some of the academic programs there are directed at student populations quite different than those of the Kingston campus, and workshops or consultations to help professors address their special needs could go a long way to help instructors and students be more successful. The Assistant Director will also be responsible for implementing a Master Teaching Fellows Program, as specified in the 2006-2009 Strategic Plan, to recognize, reward, and support excellence in teaching.

The second important initiative is the review and likely restructuring of the way the University addresses the evaluation of teaching, specifically student evaluation of teaching. Since the present methodology is specified as part of the *AAUP-BOG Collective Bargaining Agreement*, the issue of effecting change is even more complex than other issues of change at a University. But there does seem to be an interest on the part of faculty and faculty representatives and, as reported above, an *ad hoc* committee has been formed. The committee began its work in July 2007 and regular meetings will begin in fall 2007. A timeframe for making recommendations is in development.

ADVISING

DESCRIPTION

Advising responsibilities at the University are shared among advisors at University College (UC) who are responsible for all new students and new transfer students regardless of major at the Kingston campus, advisors for students at the Feinstein Providence Campus, and by advisors in the student's major program once students have matriculated out of University College and into the college housing their major.

Approximately 100 faculty advisors are assigned by their departments to advise in University College. Based on past analysis, University College allocates one advising hour per week for every 25–30 students enrolled. Every major is represented and all students are electronically “mapped” to the appropriate advisor so that they are able to make appointments on-line through the web. Advising notes are maintained on the URI Advisement System—a University addition to its PeopleSoft system. This enables faculty advisors, in UC and in departments, to access student records and advising notes anywhere anytime. All students, regardless of academic college, can be mapped to their respective advisors. The URI Advisement System also allows advisors to communicate with advisees through a managed email system. Access to the URI Advisement System has recently been made available to faculty and staff at the Community College of Rhode Island to help implement the Joint Admission Agreement between the two institutions.

The approximately 1,500 “undeclared majors” at UC are served by two full-time and one additional half-time professional advisors. Several outreach programs are conducted for these students including “exploring your major month” (<http://www.uri.edu/univcol/>), workshops in the residence halls, and outreach by peer mentors who speak with each undeclared student to offer assistance and information about how to find resources that may assist them. UC peer mentors are trained to help in areas such as adjusting to college, using the e-Campus registration system, tips on effective study habits, the importance of getting involved on campus, referrals to campus offices and the general education program. UC has been offering “living learning communities” on campus for four years, extending to one additional college each year. UC provides living learning options for undeclared students, and those majoring in Engineering, the College of the Environment and Life Sciences, Education, and Psychology. University College also supports learning specialists who provide academic guidance and study skill assistance for varsity athletes who are “at risk” academically.

University College is centrally located in Roosevelt Hall. All students are introduced to this College and its services during summer orientation and students are encouraged to see their advisors. UC continually sends e-mail reminders and makes important time sensitive announcements on the University's web pages so that students will work with advisors more effectively. In addition to scheduled appointments with advisors, students are welcome to use daily walk-in services or on-line advising, and UC provides many group advising options as well. University College has an average of 5,000 advising contacts in the fall semesters and approximately 4,100 in the spring semesters. It also provides workshops for students who are in academic difficulty (see also *Standard 6: Students*). The UC Academic Scholastic Standing Committee, made up of faculty and University College professional staff members, determines the dismissal, probation and conditional status of all continuing and returning UC students.

Faculty advisors who are assigned to University College are introduced to essential training issues. These include, but are not limited to, the logistical aspects of advising as well as the ethical implications of this relationship. UC provides initial training, weekly updates, and a series of workshops to address advising issues. UC trains all faculty advisors to use the URI Advisement System and works with each degree-granting college.

Academic advising (day and evening hours) at the Feinstein Providence Campus is carried out by one full-time and seven part-time general advisors and subject specialists. In addition, a full-time tenure-track faculty member advises Psychology majors and another part-time person has as part of his duties, the advising and coordination of the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP).

Once students leave UC or transfer from Feinstein Providence Campus to a major offered at Kingston, responsibility for

advising falls to the department in which the student is majoring. At this level advising practice varies widely. Some departments distribute responsibilities across the entire faculty. Others assign the responsibilities to one, or a limited number of faculty.

APPRAISAL

In general, current advising services delivered in University College, at the Feinstein Providence Campus and through the degree-granting colleges are at least adequate and often very good. The 2005 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data (<http://www.uri.edu/ir/pdf/nsse.pdf>) indicates however, that advising across the undergraduate experience is inconsistent and could be improved. The data showed that 67% of first-year students sampled found the quality of academic advising at the University to be “good” or “excellent,” whereas only 48% of the seniors responded similarly—significantly less than seniors in other comparable schools. Part of the problem can be attributed to high variability in the quality of advising after students leave University College. Further, there has been little formal evaluation about what the major advising issues after University College are and what resource allocations are needed to effectively address them. Efforts have been initiated to address these issues and the 2007 NSSE data show that while first-year student satisfaction with advising remained the same, 55% of seniors now find the quality of academic advising to be “good” or “excellent.”

PROJECTION

Since first-year retention is a strong indicator of eventual graduation, the University has been focusing on excellence in first-year advising. University College is incorporating learning outcomes assessment for advising and will share these results with the degree-granting colleges, as all are involved in various aspects of learning outcomes assessment. The continued focus is on how advising services continue throughout a student’s undergraduate years. The Academic Advising Committee, whose membership includes the deans of all the colleges and chaired by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, is carrying out this work. The Committee’s goals are to ensure a smooth transition from UC to the degree-granting colleges by maximizing current resources through: 1) improved faculty and staff knowledge and skill in the advising role and 2) improved communication between departments/colleges.

Enhancing academic advising by improving faculty advisor preparation, advisor reward structures, interdepartmental communication, and data management will require the work of many people. The goals and strategies outlined in the University’s recently formulated Comprehensive Advising Plan (Appendix 6.21) will serve as a guide for addressing the issues mentioned above. It will be especially useful in directing efforts to improve advising in departments.

SCHOLARSHIP, RESEARCH, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

DESCRIPTION

The University’s Mission Statement makes central its status as *“the only public institution in Rhode Island offering undergraduate, graduate, and professional students the distinctive educational opportunities of a major research university.”* Faculty engagement and productivity in research, therefore, underpin the University’s mission and all faculty at URI are expected to engage in scholarly activities.

The University’s commitment to scholarly activities is closely connected to the mission and goals of the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education that include enriching the intellectual, economic, social and cultural life of the state, its residents, and its communities (<http://www.ribghe.org/>). To fulfill this mission, the Board of Governors adopts and monitors policies that provide opportunities for cultural enrichment, add enjoyment to life, and support research that creates new knowledge and promotes economic development.

Evidence of scholarly productivity is also a required component in annual faculty reviews and for successful tenure and promotion, and to this end the university provides guidance on the general types of outputs that constitute scholarly activities.

APPRAISAL

Faculty research and scholarly endeavor lead to a wide variety of outputs and contributions to intellectual, public and cultural life in the State of Rhode Island, the United States and the world. Scholarship performed at the University encompasses the entire range of inquiry: basic and applied research, artistic and literary production, consulting with local, state, and federal agencies and outreach.

Although an extensive record of self-reported faculty publications is compiled annually and exists on the University Library web site, (http://www.uri.edu/library/faculty_publications/index.html), there is no single comprehensive report or analysis of faculty research and scholarship for each year. Colleges mandate an annual report from their departments detailing highlights of activity for the year, including scholarly activity, while annual reviews beyond those necessary for tenure/promotion require faculty members to list all products of scholarly activity since the last review. Several University, college and department newsletters and web sites give detailed descriptions of scholarly activity and accomplishments. In the arts, local, regional, and national newspapers and other media cover the many artistic performances and exhibits offered throughout the year. The Department of Communications and Marketing increasingly provides timely information about selected aspects of scholarly activity in its press releases and features.

A review of faculty publications on the Library web site demonstrates the consistent and often strong showing of every academic department in annual scholarly publication in peer-reviewed contexts. Faculty continue to win prestigious research fellowships from bodies such as the Fulbright, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Philosophical Society, and to receive significant professional awards from professional societies in their fields. Many University faculty hold positions of professional importance within areas of their scholarly expertise, such as serving on boards of directors, editing scholarly journals, serving on grant review panels nationally and conducting professional reviews of related programs at other institutions. Among the arts, involvement in performances, exhibits and scholarly research are considered critical to continued employment. Virtually all of the arts faculty are engaged in creative work that is then made available to the public in concerts, shows, or exhibits. Artistic presentations are often departmental events involving collaborative efforts among several faculty—and often are interdisciplinary.

The University keeps detailed and accessible institutional information on scholarly activities related to grants and sponsored research through the Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, including data related to topics, amounts, co-principal investigators, success rates and sources of grant dollars. A very encouraging development has been a marked increase over the last two years in the attainment of sponsored grants. Between 2000 and 2004 institutional funds generated from sponsored grant applications ranged between \$57,000,000 and \$60,300,000, with incremental growth occurring yearly. By contrast, in the 2005–2006 academic year, University researchers submitted 634 proposals requesting more than \$200 million and received nearly \$77.7 million in sponsored research funding.

Since 1996, the University has invested more than \$5 million to establish a series of competitive, interdisciplinary, cross-college Presidential Partnerships. The purpose of the Partnership Program is to provide seed money to establish cross-disciplinary teams to enhance the learning/teaching, research/scholarship and service/outreach missions of the University. These Partnerships are broad groups of faculty, staff and students who work together on important societal issues central to the University's excellence and the needs of the state/region. Partnerships may also include organizations outside the University that have interests and capabilities related to the purposes of a partnership. University funding of up to \$150,000 per year for up to three years is available for each Partnership. To date, 11 partnerships have been funded.

Other levels of scholarly creativity are emerging out of and beyond the established interdisciplinary entities. For example, during the past year a team of faculty that had originally met and worked together through the Coastal Partnership Program secured a National Science Foundation IGERT Grant, for science and policy in the Coastal Zone, amounting to more than \$3,000,000. Similarly, a cross-disciplinary team of faculty secured a National Science Foundation ADVANCE grant, for the recruitment, support and retention of female faculty in science and technology areas, amounting to more than \$3,300,000. New initiatives including faculty at GSO and Arts and Sciences have led to the procurement of more

than \$700,000 for research by faculty members engaged in the historical dimensions of underwater archaeology. And a \$12 million NSF grant, RI-INBRE, managed by researchers in the College of Pharmacy, supports research at six participating institutions state wide in projects in molecular toxicology, environmental health, and cell biology.

The University provides several sources of grants and other funding for scholarly activities, including the Council for Research Grants Program supporting career enhancement and proposal development, the College of Arts and Sciences Hope and Heritage Fund, Visiting Scholar Grant Program, URI Foundation Faculty Assistance Fund, URI Foundation Competitive Grants Program, as well as various grant programs through the Provost's Office, including support to graduate and undergraduate students to conduct research under the mentorship of faculty mentors. Since outside funding for the arts and humanities is often difficult, these sources of scholarly support are critical.

The University's Research Office provides excellent mentoring and support services for the preparation and execution of grant applications, which accounts in part for the increased visibility of all academic departments in sponsored grant activity.

PROJECTION

Over the past several self-studies both the increasing expectations of faculty and increasing faculty scholarship and research have been described and documented. The 2006–2009 Strategic Plan places special emphasis on increasing the University's funded research, stating as one of its four initiatives: "[To] Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of research and outreach support" with the following goals: 1) [To] Provide facilities, systems and resources with improved support to meet the research needs of the University; 2) [To] Increase capability and productivity in the areas of entrepreneurship, technology transfer and commercialization; and 3) [To] Increase the size and competitiveness of graduate programs." The University's commitment to increasing its funded research is demonstrated by its upgrading of the position of Vice Provost for Research to Vice President for Research and Economic Development. That position was filled after a national search. A further indication of the University's commitment is the legislation proposed by the University and enacted by the Rhode Island Legislature to create a University Research Foundation. Analogous in legal stature to the already instituted URI Foundation, the Research Foundation has as its mission "the development of scientific research, technology, commercialization of intellectual property and such other purposes as may be necessary to develop, promote and enhance scientific research and technology at the University of Rhode Island." Activities by the new Vice President to promote research through the new Research Foundation will constitute a major focus for the next several years. The University is also exploring the establishment of a "technology park" at its Kingston Campus.

Even as the University emphasizes and can accurately document its efforts and progress in expanding funded research, considerable scholarly activity occurs outside sponsored research. The records kept do not provide a truly comprehensive and accurate picture of total faculty productivity, with obvious impact on the University's ability to assess our level of achievement or its progress in improving it. One approach to addressing this relies on the fact that faculty are reviewed on a regular basis and submit up-to-date curriculum vitae (CVs) as part of the review. It would be possible to submit these CVs digitally and to incorporate them into a University-wide database that would be far more comprehensive and accessible than current practice. An *ad hoc* committee will be formed by the Provost to investigate the feasibility of integrating these records into the University's PeopleSoft (IT) system.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The University employs a broad variety of institutional structures to ensure the presence of qualified and effective faculty in sufficient numbers to provide excellent educational opportunities for its students and accomplish its mission and goals. In the future, under the guidance of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee, the University will be better able to coordinate its efforts for continuing improvement.