

State and Local

Criteria for promotion may change

Faculty Senate approves widening of performance categories

By Sondra Pickard
Senior Staff Writer

The Faculty Senate on Monday approved unanimously a document which, if put into use, would broaden the categories of performance faculty must show before being considered for promotion and tenure.

Three major faculty performance categories — teaching, creation and dissemination of new knowledge or other creative activities, and service — are included in the document.

When considering teaching performance, a faculty member would be judged on the following (among other things):

- Classroom and lab instruction.
- Development of new courses, labs, and teaching methods.
- Publication of instructional materials.
- Supervision of graduate students.

Although the second category would primarily consist of research and publication, some disciplines may include other forms of creative activity such as architectural design, engineering technology, fiction, poetry, painting and sculpture.

A faculty members' service would

be judged by how they served the University — students, colleagues, department and college — as well as service beyond the campus.

The document also suggests that each college establish written guidelines describing its own evaluation process.

In other business, the Senate adopted a resolution that would al-

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low a faculty member to be judged for emeritus status by an open committee instead of a select group.

The resolution says that every tenured faculty member who, at the time of retirement, has served the University at least 10 years must be considered for emeritus status and that non-tenured faculty who have served less than 10 years also may be considered.

A committee open to all available tenured faculty and convened by the faculty member's department head

would judge the individual's contributions and forward the information to the college dean. The dean would submit the recommendation to a Committee for Emeritus Status, which would then report to the provost and, finally, the president.

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itorious contributions to the academic programs of the University."

A related Senate resolution, also approved Monday, suggests that the Committee on Emeritus Status be composed of the dean of faculties plus one tenured faculty member from each academic college excluding the Graduate College. The resolution sets the term of service on the committee at three years and establishes the scope and powers of the body.

Speaking to the Senate's committee of the whole at the end of the meeting, Dr. Chester Dunning, associate professor of history, asked for an investigation by the Senate's Executive Committee into a Nov. 3 program sponsored by the Memorial Student Center's Political Forum. Dunning's motion was unanimously approved by the Senate.

Dunning said the program titled "A Panorama of Republican Persecutions on the State of Texas" was biased and was obviously a forum for Republican candidates to campaign the day before the election. He said how the situation came about was not important, but he said it should not have been sponsored by a University organization that should be politically nonpartisan.

In other business, the Senate:

- Recommended that insurance personnel for the Texas A&M University System give regular, timely reports to the Faculty Senate, which would cover employee benefits policy information.

- Elected Dr. Don Russell, associate professor of electrical engineering, to the Senate Executive Committee.
- Approved several new undergraduate and graduate courses.

Dark cloud hangs over solar energy industry

AUSTIN (AP) — Many companies involved in the solar energy industry have closed their doors because of plummeting sales of solar water heating equipment and the end of solar tax credits, industry observers say.

The industry knew it would have problems in Texas when the solar tax credits expired at the end of 1985, but the sharp reduction in oil prices and the resulting effect on the Texas economy has aggravated the downturn.

Even in Austin, where the city has promoted solar water heating through cash rebates and low-interest loans, sales have dropped sharply, industry officials said.

More than 15 companies were selling solar units two years ago in Austin. Now there are three. Some have turned to air conditioning or related businesses and provide solar equipment as a sideline. Others have boarded up their windows.

"We still believe in the technology and want to

push it," said Phil Barrett, manager of the rebates and incentives division for the city Resource Management Department. "We aren't getting any interest these days."

Solar companies in other Texas cities are under a similar cloud, industry officials said.

"There is no doubt that the solar industry in Texas is flat on its back," said Mike Osborne, president of the Texas Renewable Energy Industries Association and head of Osborne Solar in Elgin.

"In Dallas, San Antonio and Houston there were probably 50 companies out there selling solar water heaters two years ago, and there are only a handful now," Osborne said.

The statewide industry organization, which had about 60 members two years ago, is down to 27 and probably will lose another 15 after the first of the year, Osborne said.

The renewable energy industry includes ev-

erything from solar electric cells to wind generators, but the big business in recent years has been the sale of equipment that uses the sun's energy to heat water and swimming pools.

Sales of solar units were spurred by a federal credit that allowed a 40 percent tax credit on purchases of up to \$10,000 for renewable energy equipment. Despite heavy lobbying by the industry and environmental groups, solar tax credits were not extended this year.

"The companies knew something bad was going to happen when the credits ended," said Scott Sklar, director of government relations for the Solar Energy Industries Association in Washington, "but that doesn't make it feel any better."

Nevertheless, Sklar and others are optimistic the industry will bounce back when energy costs go back up.

"We feel sure the tide is going to turn again," Sklar said.

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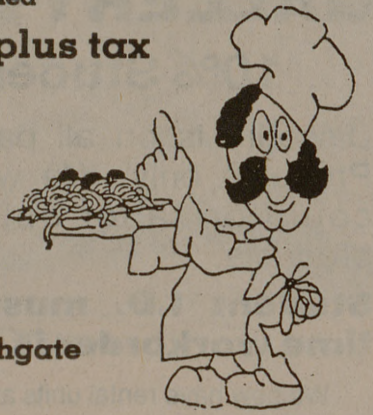
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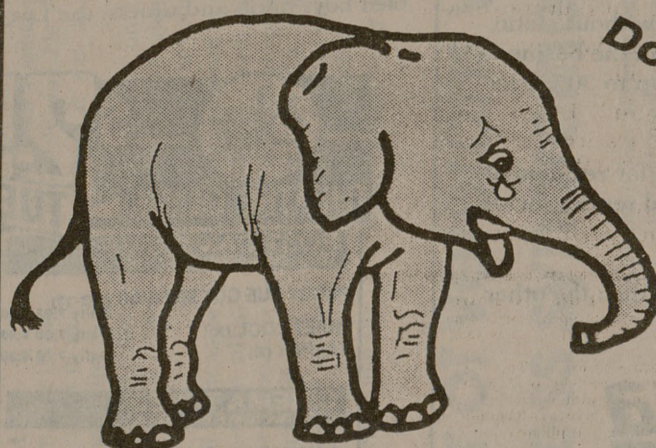


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