COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE NEW FACULTY EVALUATION SYSTEM (SEPES)

BACKGROUND.

On the 15th of July of 2010, the Academic Planning and Effectiveness Department, via its Director Héctor Vargas makes a request to the Academic Senate, via its President, Jorge Sosa López, for a review of the work done so far on the new Faculty Evaluation System (SEPES).

The request was taken to the elected senators on July 21st and it was agreed that a Committee would be integrated to do the review, seeking for this Committee to be representative of the various academic areas and Campuses. The Committee is comprised by the following members:

- Jorge Sosa López – President of the Academic Senate and faculty member of the College of Engineering (Mexicali Campus).
- José Miguel Guzmán Pérez – Vice-president of the Academic Senate and faculty member of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities (Tijuana Campus).
- Patricia Valdes Flores – Senator and faculty member of the College of Business and Management (Tijuana Campus).
- Héctor Velarde – Senator and faculty member for the College of Business and Management (Mexicali Campus).
- Jorge Ortega – Senator and faculty member for the College of Social Sciences and Humanities (Mexicali Campus).
- Alfredo Rodríguez – Senator and faculty member for the College of Engineering (Mexicali Campus).
- Margarita Rubio – Dean of the School of Graphic Design (Ensenada Campus).
- Isaac Azuz – Faculty member for the College of Engineering (Ensenada Campus).
- Roberto Salas – Dean of the School of Engineering (Tijuana Campus).

The Committee met on July 27th 2010, where Héctor Vargas presented the new Faculty Evaluation System (SEPES), based upon documentation that was previously distributed to the Committee members.

Based upon the information the Committee received and analyzed, a series of observations, points of inquiry and recommendations were generated, relating to the following three aspects relating to the SEPES system:

a) Context, relationship with surrounding environment and implications.
b) Handbook.
c) Instruments.

The individual contributions of the Committee members were presented and discussed on August 5th 2010. The Committee agreed to send the points of inquiry to Héctor Vargas, who responded to these on August 10th 2010. The Committee met again on August 18th 2010 to analyze the responses to the points of inquiry and integrate the final observations and recommendations into this final review document.

RESULTS OF THE REVIEW OF THE NEW FACULTY EVALUATION SYSTEM (SEPES) DONE BY THE ACADEMIC SENATE'S COMMITTEE FOR THIS PURPOSE.

a) Context, relationship with surrounding environment and implications.

Observations:

- The Committee recognizes the work done so far on the system and the effort to automate these evaluation systems and their related instruments.

- The evaluation and remuneration systems for faculty in any academic institution are instruments of the university's policy designed to ensure the achievement of institutional objectives, adjust the course of institutional efforts and open new lines of development. In the current context of CETYS University, the new system must be in alignment with the Strategic Planning towards 2020. The Committee is under the impression, based upon the information it was provided, that the work done so far is previous and parallel to the current strategic planning efforts, as well as the definitions and implications derived from the strategic topics being addressed in the 2020 Vision and Strategic Plan.

- It is not possible to establish an evaluation system for faculty without a clear definition of the type of faculty that will be under evaluation (definition of the CETYS professor). The coordinated efforts of institutional experts regarding faculty seeks to define faculty in the context of the 2020 Vision and Strategic Plan. The Committee does not find elements relating to this definition in the information and documentation that was made available to the Committee.

- The documents that were presented do have a high level of detail and analysis, however they only address the work done by the professor in the classroom, and are focused towards the automation of the instruments for evaluation. The Committee does not know there are works being done on the global evaluation system (considering additional aspects) and if there is some sort of timeline regarding this.

- In this sense, the timeline and deployment horizon for the system under review is unclear: when is it expected to conclude? When would the implementation begin? When and how often would the evaluation system be reviewed? For how long would the system be in place?

- There are concerns regarding the operation of the evaluation systems and the issue of being heterogeneous in the three Campuses, with regards to the deployment of the evaluation processes, as well as the use of the resulting information for decisión making purposes, in light of the high impact this has on faculty.

- Even though it is clear that the system under review does not contemplate remuneration aspects, there are concerns regarding this: when, where, how and by whom will the remuneration components of the evaluation system be defined?

Recommendations:

1. Presentation of the global evaluation system to this Committee and the definition of the timeline in which the system will be completed and deployed.

2. Analysis the processes and deployment mechanisms for the evaluation system, with a clear identification of the actors, lines of authority and stages, as well as information management and the necessary spaces of time for the analysis of results for decision making, so the system truly works as an continuous improvement component for faculty.

3. If the evaluation is associated with a financial remuneration, the subsystem relating to this should be defined, giving priority to the quality of the academic work versus the availability of resources. The Committee suggests the presentation of the complete remuneration system to provide feedback and recommendations.

4. If there is an urgent need for the automation of the evaluation systems, then it is recommended that a pilot program be deployed that does not directly affect faculty evaluation, while the design of the complete system is completed.

5. To do an extensive consultation of faculty before the deployment of the system, so faculty is familiar with the information and instruments related to the new system. The Committee recommends this consultation be done via institutional channels and with participation of the Academic Senate.

6. The evaluation system should be analyzed in the context of the 2020 Vision and Strategic Planning, in which case a redefinition may be required focused upon the strategic topics relating to faculty that are being currently defined.

b) Handbook.

Observations.

- The Committee identifies terminology that may be subject to different subjective interpretations (i.e. "good practices", "involvement of students", "real life situations", etc.).

- The support mechanisms for faculty to achieve success are not clearly defined. Some examples: support for faculty development in specialization areas, as well as publications, which are elements that are stated in the new system. It is clear that these mechanisms are not the responsibility of the system per se, the system does imply them and concern is raised regarding the relationship between the new system and other Institutional and Campus instances responsible for faculty development.

- The system does not contemplate evaluation of faculty who teach courses that have special characteristics: courses taught in English, on-line/hybrid courses, guest faculty, etc. Peer evaluation is stated, however it is not clear how this will be implemented.

- The points distribution is not completely defined.

- The documentation that was analyzed is focused upon undergraduate level faculty and therefore the question is raised with regards to the graduate level faculty and the adjustments that the system might required to address this.

Recommendations.

1. Create a simple and compact version of the manual, with a glossary of terms.

2. Develop workshops for faculty so they know the system and manual, as well as the aspects that they will be evaluated upon.

3. Even though it is clear the system per se is not responsible for the support mechanisms for faculty, The Committee stresses the importance of the definition of these mechanisms be done at the Institutional and Campus levels, as well as the actions that will be taken based upon the results of the evaluations, so the continuous improvement cycle is achieved.

4. Define the evaluation subsystems for courses that have special requirements, as well as the points distribution and peer evaluation aspects.

5. Analyze if the system will be extended for the graduate level faculty and the necessary adjustments this would imply.

c) Instruments.

Observations.

- As was indicated for the manual, the Committee identifies terminology that may be subject to different subjective interpretations, and in this case this aspect takes on a higher relevance due to the fact that these instruments are focused towards not only faculty but students also.

- It is unclear what the desirable responses are, as well as the undesirable ones.

- The design of the course syllabus is contemplated, however there are standardized versions of these that are given to faculty and there have been questions raised regarding if these can or cannot be modified, and if so, what aspects are allowed for modification.

- The role of the student in the evaluation process has not been clearly defined, as well as the training process for the personnel who operate the system during the evaluation, in the classroom or on-line.

Recommendations.

1. Create a glossary of terms and examples of desirable and undesirable responses with a corresponding explanation.

2. As with the manual, workshops for faculty should be designed.

3. The instrument should be defined in the context of the standardized course syllabus and the level and type of modifications faculty are allowed to implement on these.

4. For both questionnaires, a couple of brief paragraphs should be introduced at the beginning that state: a) the objevtive of the evaluation, b) how the information will be used, c) how, when and where the results will be made available.

5. Assurance that the student knows what is expected of him or her as a respondent of the evaluation, and this may be done via workshops with students.

6. Training, supervision, and motivation, as well as remuneration to the personnel who participate In the information gathering process in the classroom or on-line

FINAL COMMENTS.

The Committee recognizes and values its participation in the evaluation processes for institutional systems, so faculty have a voice and be taken into account. Even though these processes are in a development stage, it is considered as a great step forward that the Academic Senate participated in the review of the new Faculty Evaluation System via the Committee that was integrated for this purpose.

The Committee also recognizes the work done by those who collaborated in the design and development of the evaluation system, however there is a concern regarding the apparent lack of relationship and linkage regarding this system with others, such as the remuneration and deployment systems at the Institutional and Campus levels; these are not clear and the Committee stresses the importance of achieving this clarification due to the impact these systems have on faculty.

The Academic Senate also recognizes the work done by the Committee and reiterates its commitment to actively participate in the review of the various institutional systems and instruments, so the feedback and evaluation cycle continues in a systematic manner, always seeking to support academic quality and faculty involvement in institutional academic planning and decision making.