

UNIVERSITY REVIEW COMMITTEE, 2015-2016
Items Approved via Consent Agenda, May 13, 2016

The following actions were approved by the University Review Committee via consent agenda on May 13, 2016.

Approval of the report from the working group on student reactions to teaching performance
(see attached)

Approval of the report from the working group on the performance evaluation process
(see attached)

Acceptance of annual reports submitted to the University Review Committee by the seven college faculty status committees in accordance with Section IV.D.3 of the university ASPT document effective January 1, 2012
(see attached)

Acceptance of the annual report submitted to the University Review Committee by the Faculty Review Committee in accordance with Section III.F of the university ASPT document effective January 1, 2012
(see attached)

Acknowledged by the University Review Committee, September 20, 2016

URC Working Group on Student Evaluations:

Chris Horvath (CAS/Philosophy)

Andy Rummel (CFA/Music)

Task:

The subcommittee was asked to review Article VII.B.2 (pg 57) and provide guidance to the URC regarding the following suggestions/requests from the Faculty Caucus (11/4/15):

- (i) *Should the term “student reactions” still be used or should the phrase be replaced with “student evaluations” or some other term?*
- (ii) *Consider adding a requirement that multiple methods of teaching evaluation be weighted equally.*

The Faculty Caucus requested that the subcommittee consider both AAUP Guidelines and recent research on the use of student input in the evaluation of faculty teaching.

Review:

The subcommittee reviewed material available on-line in order to reach its recommendations. In addition to AAUP material and recent research on student evaluations, we chose to examine the practices of “Benchmark Institutions” (list attached) in order to determine “best practices” with respect to the use of student input in faculty evaluations.

The subcommittee addressed the following questions in their review.

1. What are the AAUP guidelines with respect to the use of student course evaluations in the evaluation of faculty teaching?
2. How do our “Benchmark Institutions” administer student course evaluations and how are those evaluations used in the evaluation of faculty teaching? Are other forms of teaching evaluation required for faculty evaluation? If they are required, are different modes of evaluation given equal weight?
3. What are the most recent research findings on the reliability of student evaluations as measure of faculty performance/learning outcomes assessment? Is there evidence of systematic bias in student course evaluations with respect to female faculty, faculty of color, LGBTQ faculty, ESL faculty?

Findings and Recommendations:

*With respect to request/suggestion (i), the subcommittee recommends **retaining** the less-formal term “student response”.*

Justifications:

- There is a great deal of heterogeneity across departments and colleges in both the instruments used to generate student feedback and in the methodology used to administer those instruments.

- Some instruments are clearly designed to elicit comments on the instructor's performance (e.g. "Was the instructor regularly late or absent from class?" "Did the instructor return graded material in a timely manner?") and others are designed to elicit feedback on the course itself (e.g. "Were the reading assignments interesting and relevant?" "Was the course well organized?")
- Some instruments use primarily open questions and others use a numerical scale. (Some departments use 5 as a positive response and other departments use 5 as a negative response.)
- Some faculty self-administer their "evaluations" with little guidance or oversight while other departments have elaborate procedures for administering and collecting evaluations.
- The AAUP has no specific guidelines regarding this issue.
- Our Benchmark Institutions take a variety of approaches. Most use the terms "course evaluation" or "instructor evaluation".
- A review of the relevant literature suggests that "evaluation" is a misnomer. The data gathered on the typical student response instruments do not provide reliable information about the quality of instructor's performance in the classroom or about the instructor's success in achieving desired learning outcomes. (Simpson 1995, Wachtel 1998)
- There is ample evidence of inherent bias in many student "evaluations" with respect to race, gender, sex, and sexuality. Cis-gender, white male faculty may benefit from a race and gender based "assumption of competence". Female, non-white, and non cis-gender faculty suffer the effects of the opposite assumption. (Laube et al. 2007)

This disparity coupled with the documented problems with bias inherent in the student evaluation process lead us to suggest that the student feedback should not be considered "evaluative" in any formal sense. Rather, student "course evaluations" should be treated as an opportunity for students to provide feedback regarding their experience with a particular instructor in a particular course. Whatever we call these student feedback data should reflect this reality. The committee suggests "student responses".

With respect to request/suggestion (ii), the status quo seems to privilege student course evaluation. We believe the intent of this suggestion is to increase the relative importance of modes of teaching evaluation other than student evaluation. The subcommittee endorses this basic idea. However, simply requiring that all sources of data regarding teaching performance be treated equally seems to miss the real target. A review of the relevant literature and "Best Practices" suggests that the evaluation of teaching should be a holistic and on-going process not limited to a single source of data or a single day at the end of the semester. We believe requiring all schools/departments to treat all sources of input equally (i.e. treating student course evaluations with equal weight to peer review of a comprehensive teaching portfolio or peer observation in the classroom) would, in fact, impede the development of comprehensive and on-going methods of teaching evaluation. We

do not recommend the suggested change. Instead, we would suggest language that encourages schools/departments to develop methods of teaching evaluation that take into consideration multiple sources of input over an extended period of time and weight the various sources of data in ways appropriate to the particular the faculty member, course load, pedagogy, course content, and discipline. Revising the language in the ASPT Policy in a way that achieves the kind of comprehensive, disciplinary-appropriate, and individually tailored evaluation of teaching suggested as a “best practice” by our research will take careful consideration. The URC plans to draft the necessary revisions during the 2016-2017 academic year and forward them to the Faculty Caucus for consideration.

Justifications:

- The AAUP has no specific guidelines regarding this issue. However, “a recent AAUP survey finds declining response rates on student reviews of professors, too many colleges that do little beyond student reviews, and concerns about bias against women, minorities and adjuncts. But association panel wants to improve system, not end it.” ([Inside Higher Ed June 10, 2015](#))
- IDEA is a non-profit organization doing research to improve higher education. Several schools and departments on campus use “student response inventories” developed by IDEA (e.g. the College of Fine Arts) According to IDEA, “Student ratings of instruction (SRI) should be supplemented with peer review and ongoing faculty development. We were pleased to read that 69 percent of respondents see the need for student feedback about their teaching. We also agree that institutions should end the practice of allowing SRI to serve as the only or primary indicator of teaching effectiveness. IDEA has long recommended that they count no more than 30 percent to 50 percent of the overall teaching evaluation.” ([IDEA June 22, 2015](#))
- Our Benchmark Institutions take a variety of approaches to faculty teaching evaluation. All include some form of student input. Most require additional sources of data, most often peer review of teaching material and less often classroom observation. The relative weight given to different sources of data regarding teaching performance varies significantly both between and within institutions. Most commonly, college and university level policy requires multiple sources of input on teaching performance while decisions about specific kinds of assessment required and the relative weighting of are made at the department level.
- The variety in policies and procedures at the department level within Benchmark Institutions reflects the differences in course content and pedagogy within different disciplines. These differences should be respected.
- A review of the literature reveals a persistent problem of gender and race bias in student course evaluations. This bias is most often revealed in a complex interaction of student gender, instructor gender, and course content (e.g. Basow, 1998 and Laube, 2007.) For example, a consistent gender bias is found against female faculty who introduce (appropriately) feminist content

- into non-gender studies courses, though a similar negative response does not apply to male faculty who do the same thing.
- The same bias response has been demonstrated with respect to race and race-focused course content.

Selected Bibliography:

Andersen, K., & Miller, E. D. (1997). Gender and student evaluations of teaching. *Political Science & Politics*, 30, 216-219.

Explores the potentially damaging effects of gender bias in student evaluations of teaching, specifically with regard to student expectations. Reviews a number of laboratory and "real life" studies and summarizes their conclusions. Notes the different and conflicting expectations of students and recommends a broader approach to teacher evaluations.

Arreola, R. A. (2000). Developing a comprehensive faculty evaluation system: A handbook for college faculty and administrators on designing and operating a comprehensive faculty evaluation system (2nd ed.). Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

This handbook provides a practical model for developing and using a comprehensive faculty evaluating system that responds to the specific needs, concerns, and characteristics of the faculty and administration of an individual academic unit. It outlines an eight-step procedure that focuses on the determination of: (1) the faculty role model; (2) faculty role model parameter values; (3) roles in the faculty role model; (4) role component weights; (5) appropriate sources of information; (6) information source weights; (7) how information should be gathered; and (8) appropriate forms and protocols. It also examines the selection and development of forms for the student evaluation of faculty, providing samples of student rating form items is included. An appendix contains a sample faculty evaluation manual.

Basow, S. A. (1998). Student evaluations: Gender bias and teaching styles. In L. H. Collins, Chrisler, J.C., & Quina, K. (Eds.), Career strategies for women in academe: Arming Athena. (pp. 135-156). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Using a quantitative approach, Basow argues that the overall effect of gender on student evaluations is small, accounting for about 3% of variance. However, there may be significant interaction effects between gender and other context variables that may cumulatively disadvantage female faculty.

Cashin, W. E. (1995). Student ratings of teaching: The research revisited. IDEA paper No. 32.

This paper attempts to summarize the conclusions of the major reviews of the literature on student ratings of teaching. It is an update of a paper by the same name published as IDEA Paper No. 20 from the Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development in 1988. Viewing student ratings as data rather than evaluations may help to put them in proper perspective. Studies have considered the multidimensionality of student ratings and their reliability and validity. They have been compared to student learning outcomes, the self-ratings of the instructor, and the ratings of others, and possible sources of bias have been studied. There are probably more studies of student ratings than of all the other data used to evaluate

college teaching combined, and there are certainly enough studies to allow some conclusions. In general, student ratings tend to be statistically reliable, valid, and relatively free from bias and need for control. Nevertheless, they are only one source of data about teaching and must be used with multiple sources of data to make judgments about all the components of teaching.

Laube, H., Massoni, K., Sprague, J., & Ferber, A. L. (2007). The impact of gender on the evaluation of teaching: What we know and what we can do. *NWSA Journal*, 19(3), 87-104.

Merritt, Deborah J. (2008). Bias, the Brain, and Student Evaluations of Teaching. *St. John's Law Review* 82, 235-287.

Miller, J., & Chamberlin, M. (2000). Women are teachers, men are professors: A study of student perceptions. *Teaching Sociology*, 28(4), 283-298.

Sociology students' perceptions of their instructors' educational attainment levels are examined empirically. The authors find gender disparities: students misattribute in an upward direction the level of education actually attained by male graduate student instructors, while they misattribute in a downward direction the level of formal education attained by women, even when the female faculty member is a full professor. The misattributions are linked to the imputed statuses "teacher" for women and "professor" for men, regardless of the actual positions held or the credentials earned by faculty members and graduate student instructors. The authors suggest that a process of marginalization explains the empirical findings - a process that is attributed by others, but chosen by the self, regardless of the social and economic costs incurred.

Miller, Claire Cain. "Is the Professor Bossy or Brilliant? Much Depends on Gender." *New York Times* 6 Feb 2015.

Ratings Agency. (2016). "Students Judge Their Teachers. Often Unfairly." *Economist* 23 Jan 2016.

Simpson, R. D. (1995). Uses and misuses of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness. *Innovative Higher Education*, 20(1), 3-5.

While student evaluations of teaching performance can provide useful feedback on faculty, particularly on dimensions of course delivery, there are serious limitations. Bias and distrust are often overlooked in interpreting student ratings. An inappropriate use is in rank-ordering faculty in a department. Student evaluation data must be integrated with other sources of information on teaching quality.

Travis Russ, Cheri Simonds & Stephen Hunt. (2002). Coming Out in the Classroom ... An Occupational Hazard?: The Influence of Sexual Orientation on Teacher Credibility and Perceived Student Learning. *Communication Education* 51(3), 311-324.

Wachtel, H. K. (1998). Student evaluation of college teaching effectiveness: A brief review. *Assessment & Evaluation on Higher Education*, 23, 191-212.

This paper presents a brief review of the existing research on student written evaluations of the teaching performance of college and university instructors. First, a short historical background is given.

**University Review Committee, Spring 2016
Working Group on Annual Performance Evaluations**

Angela Bonnell (Milner)
Rick Boser (CAST/TEC)
Sheryl Jenkins (MCN)

BACKGROUND

At the Academic Senate's Faculty Caucus held December 9, 2015, several senators expressed concern that the current annual performance evaluation system is overly burdensome for faculty members and that too much time is being spent by faculty members preparing their performance evaluation documents.

The following considerations were made at that meeting:

1. Performance evaluations should be conducted every other year rather than every year.
2. Performance evaluations should be conducted annually for probationary faculty but every other year for tenured faculty.
3. Performance evaluations should be conducted annually, but the extent of documentation being submitted by faculty members should be reduced.

Caucus members also commented that performance evaluations inform annual salary increment decisions. Not having an annual evaluation would be problematic in distributing salary increments (when salary increments are available). Consensus of those Caucus members commenting during the meeting (there were several) was that it might be timely for University Review Committee (URC) to revisit how performance evaluations are conducted. The current system has been in place for several years without discussion or change.

URC WORKING GROUP INVESTIGATION

The URC convened a working group charged with investigating this issue at the January 19, 2016 meeting. Any resulting recommendations would likely be considered by Caucus off-cycle from the other ASPT items currently in the review process. To better understand the issue, working group members researched:

- A. past and current practice of annual performance evaluations at Illinois State University
- B. current practice at ISU's benchmark institutions
- C. relevant policy statements by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP)
- D. attitudes from faculty across campus

FINDINGS

A. Past and Current Practice at Illinois State University

Since the first *Appointment, Salary, Promotion and Tenure (ASPT) Policies* document published in 1979, tenured and probationary tenure faculty members have been required to "submit to their DFSC reports on their activities and accomplishments for the purpose of evaluation" (X.B.2). Also, "Each DFSC will conduct merit evaluations of each tenured and probationary tenure faculty member annually" (X.B.4).

The current ASPT document references annual performance evaluations in several areas: Overview: Faculty Evaluation Process, V.C.1.; VII.E.; IX.D.1; X; and XII. The most substantive references are in VII. "Faculty Assignments and Evaluations" and XII.B.3 "Performance Evaluation and Salary Incrementation."

Annual performance review is one of several reviews tenure-track faculty will experience in their academic life. Others reviews include reappointment, promotion, tenure, sabbatical, and post-tenure (ASPT p.3). Additionally, Illinois State University's policy on tenure (3.2.6) states that "The University shall, at regular intervals, review and evaluate the performance of tenured faculty in order to offer

constructive guidance and to encourage a continuing high level of faculty accomplishment. The University shall establish the policies, procedures and criteria needed to accomplish such periodic evaluations.”

B. Benchmarking

Illinois State University’s benchmark institutions <http://prpa.illinoisstate.edu/data_center/peer_groups> require annual performance evaluations except those in the University of California (UC) system (Santa Cruz and Riverside). In the UC system, “Faculty are reviewed on average every two to three years by faculty peers and administrators.” (See attached appendix for overview.)

C. American Association of University Professors (AAUP)

The AAUP 2005 report, “Managing Faculty Productivity after Tenure,”

<<http://www.aaup.org/issues/tenure/managing-faculty-productivity-after-tenure-2005>> states that “In view of the fact that salary increase decisions are made annually at most institutions, an annual review of faculty performance would be necessary to support these salary increase decisions. If merit pay plans are adopted, the process should be made more transparent. Such transparency will be achieved, in part, by:

- ensuring that salary enhancement programs have clear objectives
- incorporating faculty peer-review committees into the process
- developing and implementing policies by peers
- applying criteria for such increases consistently and fairly
- ensuring appeals procedures to provide additional opportunities for decision-maker(s) to obtain relevant information
- ensuring that merit pay criteria are not used to squelch the speech of faculty.”

D. Feedback from Faculty at ISU

Bonnell, Boser and Jenkins sought feedback from tenured and probationary tenure faculty members across campus. Respondents reported

- spending a range from two hours to more than 40 hours preparing and/or writing their activity reports
- that required elements varied greatly from one department/school to another. Required elements included a CV with a brief 3-page narrative to a dossier including a cover page, table of contents, a CV, lengthy narratives, appendices, future plans, summary of student evaluations, summary of peer evaluations, past DFSC/SFSC evaluations, evidence of an updated productivity report entries into in a third-party activity tracking and reporting e-portfolio system (e.g., Digital Measures, Sedona)
- the presence of an e-portfolio system in a Department/School can add time that does not benefit the individual or the department/school and is duplicative of other required elements of the activity report

The working group surmises that the culture of the department/school, as well as required elements of an activity report, are determining factors in how much time is spent preparing and writing annual activity reports.

WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its findings the URC working group has determined changes are not necessary in the ASPT policies in reference to the three faculty caucus considerations. The working group offers two recommendations for further consideration.

Faculty Caucus Considerations #1 and #2

The working group does not recommend conducting performance evaluations every other year (rather than every year) or annually for probationary faculty but every other year for tenured faculty for the following reasons:

Reason 1—Performance evaluations inform annual salary increment decisions; the absence of annual evaluations would be problematic in distributing salary increments (when salary increments are available).

Reason 2—Annual performance reviews are one of several reviews tenure-track faculty will experience in their academic life. Annual evaluations play an integral role in other reviews: reappointment, promotion, tenure, sabbatical, and post-tenure (ASPT p.3). The absence of annual evaluations could likely affect those reviews.

Since the first edition of ASPT policies in 1979 there have been references to annual evaluations: “Each DFSC will conduct merit evaluations of each tenured and probationary tenure faculty member annually” (X.B.4). Currently, the most substantive references in the ASPT guidelines are found in VII. “Faculty Assignments and Evaluations” and XII.B.3 “Performance Evaluation and Salary Incrementation.”

Reason 3—Annual evaluations are recommended AAUP practice: “In view of the fact that salary increase decisions are made annually at most institutions, an annual review of faculty performance would be necessary to support these salary increase decisions.”

Reason 4—Annual evaluations are standard practice at other universities, including those Illinois State University compares itself against.

Reason 5—Annual evaluations can contribute to high achieving faculty performance in teaching, research and service.

Reason 6—If there were different evaluation practices established for pre- and post-tenured faculty members, new policies would need to be established. Each group would need to provide sufficient information in activity reports to ensure that DFSC/SFSCs could fairly apportion annual merit funds, if available.

Faculty Caucus Consideration #3

The working group does not recommend introducing language to reduce documentation submitted by faculty into ASPT policies.

Reason 1—While feedback from faculty in departments/schools confirms that some faculty spend considerable time preparing their annual papers, not all do. The culture of an individual department/school, as well as required elements of an activity report, are determining factors in how much time is spent preparing and writing annual activity reports.

Reason 2—Current ASPT guidelines encourage flexibility: “Each Department/School is both allowed and expected to design a document that, without violating the intent of the criteria given herein, shapes these criteria to reflect its own identity, mission, and culture” (p.1). Standardizing or mandating the length or required elements of activity reports may inhibit a department/school to reflect its culture.

URC Working Group Recommendation #1

Since department/schools are required to “provide guidance regarding the format and content of activities reports” (VII.D) they should review and revise as necessary policies and procedures (p.18, V.A.5) taking into consideration the time faculty spend in preparing the required elements of their annual activity reports.

Reason 1—According to the ASPT policies, departments/schools are free to set their own performance evaluation policies but face the consequences that result from those policies that may require excessive documentation. Requiring faculty to submit extensive dossiers—especially those that also require submission with duplicative information into third party e-portfolio systems—is not an efficient use of faculty members’ time or that of members of the DFSC/SFSC who are required to review those lengthy dossiers.

Reason 2—Reasonable, clearly written policies and procedures are good practice. Well written guidelines can contribute to evaluations that offer constructive feedback for the professional development of faculty. This feedback can contribute toward better faculty performance and continuing high levels of faculty accomplishment in teaching, research and service throughout an individual’s academic life.

URC Working Group Recommendation #2

In addition to inviting periodic review (V.B.) from faculty in Departments/Schools to discuss DFSC/SFSC policies and procedures regarding activity reporting requirements, there would be value in sharing of individual unit practices in a university-wide setting. Such an opportunity could occur at a chairs/directors meeting or a workshop attended by members of DFSC/SFSCs across campus.

Reason 1—There is significant variation in DFSC/SFSCs policies and procedures. Conversations and dialogue throughout and among departments/schools across the University could help DFSC/SFSCs learn best practices. DFSC/SFSCs could apply these best practices, or at least alternate approaches to collecting and evaluating faculty activity documentation. DFSC/SFSCs could apply these practices while maintaining their own identity, mission, and culture. Rewritten guidelines could help faculty in those departments/schools who spend excessive time preparing and writing their annual activity reports.

4/25/2016
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Approved by URC 5/13/16

Appendix

Working Group on Annual Performance Evaluations, Spring 2016

Benchmark Institutions for ISU http://prpa.illinoisstate.edu/data_center/peer_groups/

1. **Ball State University** Annual evaluations used for salary increment, page 98
<http://cms.bsu.edu/-/media/WWW/DepartmentalContent/FacProfHandbook/201516/201516C2.pdf>

2. **Bowling Green State University** Annual review with rolling three-year review to determine merit increases

“The annual merit review will be based upon the accomplishments over the most recent three-year period on a rolling basis, ie., each year new information is added to the file for the most recent year, and information from the oldest year is eliminated from the file. This will help to reduce inequities that can result both from differences in the merit funds available each year and from fluctuations in performance that may occur from year to year.

<http://www.bgsu.edu/arts-and-sciences/philosophy/graduate-program/graduate-student-handbook/philosophy-department/department-policies-and-procedures/iv-annual-faculty-evaluation-and-determination-of-merit.html>

3. **Clemson University** Annual performance evaluations via Faculty Activity System (FAS), Appendices E, F

“An individual's recommended merit increase is based upon the performance evaluation by the chair or director although there may be no precise correlation between the annual faculty evaluation and the amount of salary increase.” page IV-10

“Post Tenure Review Merit salary increments are based on these annual performance reviews.” page IV-8

<http://www.clemson.edu/administration/provost/documents/facultymanual.pdf>, page IV-4

4. **Miami University (Ohio)** Annual evaluations used in determining salary recommendations

“Each tenured and probationary member of the instructional staff shall receive at a minimum a written annual evaluation based at least in part on data supplied by the person in his or her Annual Report of Professional Activities. Evaluations shall serve two functions: (1) to guide the professional development of the person and (2) to record part of the evidence upon which personnel decisions and salary recommendations shall be based.”

<https://blogs.miamioh.edu/miamipolicies/?p=163>

5. and 6. **University of California-Riverside** and **University of California-Santa Cruz** A system of rigorous performance review is linked directly to compensation on salary scales.

“Faculty are reviewed on average every two to three years by faculty peers and administrators.”

“Faculty continue to be reviewed regularly after tenure is conferred. Senior faculty who reach the highest “step” at the professorial level (Professor, Step IX) may receive a special review and be placed “above scale,” where they still undergo regular review but the salary exceeds the maximum salary

designated for the title series. On many UC campuses, these “above scale” faculty are awarded the title of “Distinguished Professor.”

http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/_files/uc-faculty-comp-summary-jun-2014.pdf

Academic Salary Scales

<http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/compensation/2015-16-academic-salary-scales.html>

- 7. University North Carolina-Greensboro** Annual reviews contribute toward merit increases
“Annual reviews should provide a means of recognizing, encouraging, and rewarding faculty performance by means of merit pay increases, when funds are available for this purpose.”

<http://provost.uncg.edu/documents/personnel/posttenurereview.pdf>

8. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

“The Departmental Executive Committee shall provide for the periodic review of the performance of every faculty member. These reviews include those for determining annual merit salary increases, contract renewal, tenure and promotion and tenured faculty review.” page 30

<http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/policies/faculty/upload/May2015P-P.pdf>

Sources

Euben, Donna R., and Barbara A. Lee, "Managing Faculty Productivity After Tenure." *American Association of University Professors*. Last modified August 2006.
<http://www.aaup.org/issues/tenure/managing-faculty-productivity-after-tenure-2005>.

Illinois State University. *Illinois State University Faculty Appointment, Salary, Promotion, and Tenure Policies*. Normal, Ill.: Illinois State University, 1979.
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———. "Tenure Policy (3.2.6)." Last modified April 2012. <http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/employee/3-2-6.shtml>.

———. Planning, Research, and Policy Analysis. "Peer Groups." Accessed February 15, 2016.
http://prpa.illinoisstate.edu/data_center/peer_groups/.

The following attachments have been redacted from the version of this document posted on the University Review Committee Minutes website.

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