

Summary of Meeting of Task Force on Evaluation,
Accountability and Measurement
(Wednesday, March 19, 1:30 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.)

1. David Capson, Andrea Farquhar, David Hitchcock, Basel Jarrad, Aine Leadbetter, Bob McNutt, Karen Menard, Jennifer McKinnell, Lilian Scime and Mike Veall were able to attend. Unfortunately there is no single time that worked for all.

2. The Chair reported on meetings with Allison Sekuler (Associate Vice-President, Research), Carol Podedworny (Director, Art Museum), Andy Hrymak (Chair, Chemical Engineering and former Chair of Implementing Refining Directions committee) and his joint meeting with (Karen Menard) and Anne McInnis (Planning and Analysis, formerly attached to the Provost's Advisory Group to Initiate Change and to Implementing Refining Directions).

3. Lilian Scime very kindly brought some data from COFO, the Council of Financial Officers, regarding the fraction of the McMaster salary budget that was spent on "academic ranks" salaries in 2006/07 as compared to other Ontario universities. It was observed that McMaster was in the middle of the pack. At the same time, as Ms. Scime emphasized, there were serious comparability issues across universities, as evidenced by a very wide range of values.

Ms. Scime also brought data about the fraction of budget spent on "Administration & General" and on Physical Plant, again with a 2006/07 comparison across Ontario universities. McMaster was on the lowish end in each case. Again it was clear that there were comparability issues as to what different universities "counted".

There was some discussion of these data and a desire for clarification as to what exactly was in the "academic ranks". There was also a question as to whether expenditure per student would have some advantages as a measure.

4. Some of our initial feedback was reviewed. This included about 15 direct submissions from students, staff and faculty, particularly faculty in the humanities. It also included some related postings on the Faculty Association's "Mufagab". While the messages covered many topics, one theme was a wariness of too much quantification. From faculty members, there was discussion of the number of ways academic departments were reviewed and assessed already and some concern about additional reviews.

5. Milena Head reported on reviewing the initial draft survey for departments with the Task Force on Teaching and Learning. These comments fit with a number made by members of our Task Force and comments made by a test group of chairs. Among these, the initial survey was thought to refer too much to the Refining Directions framework and to require too much knowledge of chairs. The chair was charged with revising the survey.

6. We discussed briefly a piece by Hanover Research on applying the "Balanced Scorecard" approach in the university setting. The Hanover piece discussed three universities: Penn State, the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of Alberta.

7. We set our next meeting for April 15, 9:30-11:30.

8. We concluded at about 2:50.