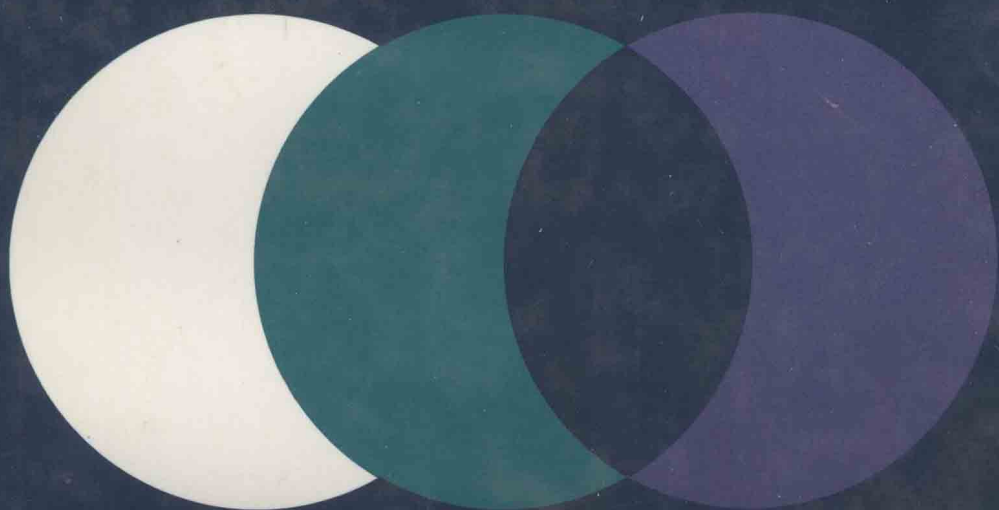


PETER SELDIN

**Changing
Practices
in Faculty
Evaluation**





Changing Practices in Faculty Evaluation



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CHANGING PRACTICES IN FACULTY EVALUATION
A Critical Assessment and Recommendations for Improvement
by Peter Seldin

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Preface

In their rush to make judgments on tenure, promotion, and retention—accelerated in recent years due to increased costs, shortage of funds, dropping enrollments, and incipient competition from large corporations entering higher education—many colleges and universities are embracing seriously flawed faculty evaluation programs. Inadequate, biased, or worse, such programs yield a harvest of faculty resistance and, not infrequently, court challenges that reverse improper administrative decisions.

Intended for administrators and faculty, the essential partners in the development of successful evaluation programs, this book distills the literature and even more, my own personal experience for more than a decade in the improvement of faculty evaluation programs. It reveals changes and emerging trends from the third nationwide study I have conducted of policies and practices in assessing faculty performance. This book will provide both administrators and faculty with an opportunity to compare current evaluation practices and to learn from others' experience how to improve their own. To be consistent with the 1978 and 1973 investigations, the current study focuses on the liberal arts college. Administrators and faculty of professional colleges will discover that the problems and solutions in establishing evaluation programs are readily transferable. They will find many applications in the study to professional colleges.

Chapter One examines the root causes of today's crisis in higher education, describes survival strategies used by colleges and universities, and relates the search for solvency to major changes in assessing faculty performance.

Chapter Two scrutinizes the proliferation of court challenges to administrative decisions on promotion, tenure, retention, the legal right of “discovery” versus the academic tradition of confidentiality, the ripple effect of landmark legal decisions, and the extension of civil rights legislation to faculty evaluation programs.

Chapter Three defines my 1983 study of policies and practices of 616 public and private liberal arts colleges in evaluating teaching, research, and service for faculty promotion, tenure, and retention decisions; compares the 1983 study with the 1978 and 1973 studies; and contains 31 tables and graphs on key changes and trends.

Chapter Four consists of remarks by seven commentators, each prominent in faculty evaluation, who offer diverse and critical observations on the 1983 study and its implications for higher education; and my reflections on key issues raised by the commentators.

Chapter Five is based on my experience in assisting numerous colleges and universities to develop faculty evaluation programs. It describes the step-by-step construction of successful programs, and covers student-, colleague-, and self-evaluation, as well as research and publication, and institutional and community service. It contains tested and proved appraisal forms.

Earlier books on faculty evaluation have taken a broad, how-to approach and been geared primarily to institutions that are just setting up their faculty evaluation programs. This book has a different thrust. It studies the transformation of faculty evaluation systems over the past decade; it points out implications for the future; it provides institutions with a chance to compare practices; it spells out the important legal considerations that impact today on evaluation systems; and it specifies the key elements of existing systems that must be improved in order to strengthen the overall system.

Administrators and faculty members both in private and public colleges and universities will be able to take new bearings from the changes and trends noted in the following pages. The language is straightforward and nontechnical.

I am grateful to Pace University for providing the scholarly research grant for the national study summarized in this book. Special thanks to deans T. H. Bonaparte, John McCall, and Walter Joyce and department chairman Robert Dennehy for their consistent encouragement and assistance throughout this project.

Croton-on-Hudson, New York
February 1984

Peter Seldin



The Author

Peter Seldin is professor of management at Pace University, Pleasantville, New York. He received his B.A. degree (1963) from Hobart College in psychology, his M.B.A. degree (1966) from Long Island University in management, and his Ph.D. degree (1974) from Fordham University in education. His postdoctoral work in faculty evaluation and development was at the University of London (1976).

Seldin has served on the editorial board of the quarterly newspaper *Faculty Development and Evaluation in Higher Education*, on the core committee of the Professional and Organizational Development Network, and on the program advisory committee for the International Conference on Improving University Teaching.

His books include *How Colleges Evaluate Professors* (1975), *Teaching Professors to Teach* (1977), and *Successful Faculty Evaluation Programs* (1980). He has contributed numerous articles on faculty evaluation and development to such publications as the *New York Times* and *Change Magazine*.

Seldin has designed and conducted seminars for faculty and administrators in colleges and universities throughout the United States and in Japan, England, Egypt, Germany, and Switzerland. He is a frequent speaker at national and international conferences.



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Chapter 1



Fiscal Crisis in Higher Education: The Search for Solvency and Consequences for Faculty

Faced by an economic squeeze unprecedented in recent years for its severity and duration, the nation's colleges and universities are struggling to cope with reduced budgets, hunting for new money sources, and casting a gimlet eye on which faculty to promote and which courses to teach. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the origins and consequences of the fiscal crunch and to observe how administrators and faculty are reacting to their predicament.

Impact on Public Institutions

If a single statistic can dramatize the economic problems, it is the annual state appropriation for higher education. For the academic year 1982-83, the state appropriation was only 6 percent more than for the preceding year. This was the smallest increase in more than twenty years. For over two decades, the annual increase in appropriation averaged nearly 20 percent. But the economic recession cut deeply into the states' sales and income taxes, and the states shared their hard times with institutions of higher learning. In fact, after adjustment for inflation, the 6 percent increase in state appropriation actually represents, in fixed dollars, a decrease in support for about half the states. Put another

way, since the Department of Labor's consumer price index rose 17.4 percent during the two years ending June 30, 1982, the states' two-year appropriation increase of 16 percent represented to colleges and universities a 1 percent loss in purchasing power.

A few more facts and figures paint the picture in even more somber hues. Only twice in the last two decades, in 1962-63 and 1976-77, has the yearly growth in state funding dipped as low as 9 percent. By comparison, during the boom years in the late 1960s, the yearly growth in state largesse to higher education twice reached 25 percent, in 1965-66 and 1967-68.

Facing overwhelming economic problems, many presidents of public colleges and universities have given grim voice to the national predicament of higher education. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* recently queried a number of presidents of colleges and universities on the financial condition of their institutions. Two thirds of the public universities and almost half of the four-year colleges reported falling behind financially. Only 17 percent of the public universities and 26 percent of the four-year colleges were able to report a gain (Magarrell, 1982a).

In a worst-case instance, institutions of higher education in Oregon face the most stringent financial problems in the nation, at least so far as state support is concerned. The state appropriation actually dropped by 4 percent for public colleges and universities in 1982-83 from the preceding year. The predictable result was an institutional scramble to cut expenses by a simultaneous freeze on purchasing, hiring, and salaries, the abolition of programs, and the firing of employees.

Impact on Private Institutions

Although private colleges and universities do not depend on the financial lifeline of state support, by no means have they been immune to the economic recession. Many educators and demographers freely predict that as many as 300 colleges will be forced to close by the mid-1990s for lack of students. They predict the greatest demise among private liberal arts institutions. Facing

the specter of going out of business, colleges and universities are embracing cost-cutting methods and cultivating new income sources in a frantic race to remain solvent.

Today, colleges and universities are more businesslike, cost controls are far superior to what they were even five years ago, and careful tracking of expenditures, cost-benefit analyses, and line-by-line budget examinations are the norm. College presidents are sought who have exemplary records in management and efficiency. Typically, recent advertisements for presidents in the *New York Times* call for “extensive management experience” or “prior involvement with modern management techniques and budgetary administration.”

In recent years, private institutions struggling to balance their budgets have demanded more tuition dollars. Annual tuition increases of 10 percent or more are not unusual. The price tag for tuition, room, and board passed \$10,000 per year at many colleges and reached \$14,000 at some of the most prestigious institutions.

The Reagan administration, in an effort to cut federal spending, gave top priority to cutting student assistance programs. The annual bill to the federal government for subsidizing the guaranteed student loan program was in the neighborhood of \$3 billion. This tidy sum began to shrink with the imposition of a “needs test” that made any student ineligible whose family had an adjusted gross annual income of over \$30,000. But cutting the student aid program hit the private colleges particularly hard, since many students counted on government assistance to help cover the high cost of staying in school. This high cost also placed private colleges and universities out of reach for many families with college-bound children. High school guidance counselors reported a growing number of families seriously considering public rather than private institutions. In the fall of 1982, private colleges across the country reported that an unusually large number of enrolled freshmen failed to matriculate because of anxiety over their ability to pay. At Middlebury College (Vermont), for example, out of a class of 500 enrolled freshmen, the number forfeiting deposits increased from 35 to 61.