It has recently come to my attention that the Kapi’olani CC administration intends to begin to enforce procedures for the evaluation of faculty that have been dormant for several years. These procedures pertain specifically to faculty members who have not applied for contract renewal and/or promotion for 5 years or more, generally mid-career or keystone faculty members. In our current climate of pay reductions and reduced reassigned time, I suggest that the Faculty Senate create campus-specific guidelines for this “Five-Year Review” to re-envision its purpose and implementation. This re-envisioning will ease the burden of the five-year review on already over-burdened faculty members and acknowledge the fact that keystone faculty members are less in need of evaluation than they are in need of an opportunity to share and have their work acknowledged and appreciated.

background research

It is not only true but facilitative to assume that mid-career faculty members are functioning at appropriately high levels of teaching and of contribution to the college, academic community, and community in general. Academics do not function best when they feel doubted, judged, or managed: “A managed faculty is a dull faculty—and, therefore, an ineffectual faculty in nurturing students as active and responsible learners” (Traverso, 2003). Instead, we function best when respected and when encouraged to innovate in line with our own interests and educational values. We can be trusted, and we deserve to be trusted.

On the other hand, some kind of career reflection and assessment is universally acknowledged as beneficial for mid-career faculty members. “When mid-career faculty engage in systematic career reflection, they are better prepared to develop strategies that will keep them moving professionally and align their professional growth with the direction in which their institution is moving” (Baldwin & Chang, 2006). Generally, it is suggested that activities such as post-tenure review processes, however, “be more developmental than evaluative” (Baldwin & Chang, 2006), therefore stimulating “the type of active career reflection that can promote renewal in the mid-career years” (Baldwin & Chang, 2006). This kind of activity “will hold greater promise for informing effective educational practice if it incorporates respect for the professionalism and professional development needs of community college administrators and faculty as a central tenet” (Dowd, 2005).

suggested course of action

I would like to suggest that the Faculty Senate ask its Evaluation Committee to create a campus-specific overlay of guidelines and procedures for the five year review. These guidelines and procedures would not contradict those in place at the CC system level, but would interpret and reframe those procedures with the purpose of:
1. minimizing the evaluative tone of the five year review
2. ensuring that the process does not become too great a burden on keystone faculty members
3. using this reinstatement of the five year review as a much-needed and well-deserved opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the work of keystone faculty

outline of suggested campus procedures

1. I would like to propose that the “Five-Year Review” be called, instead, “Celebration of Keystone Faculty” or something equivalent to this. This name change substantially shifts the emphasis of the project, refocusing it appropriately on its potential to renew faculty and stimulate reflection, and avoiding the culture of fault-seeking and punitive reviews that has emerged over the years in Contract Renewal and Tenure/Promotion review processes. Fault-seeking and punitive reviews are not productive, and they are especially inappropriate for the development and renewal of keystone faculty members.

2. I would like to suggest that the Celebration of Keystone Faculty culminate not in a report submitted to the Department Chair for evaluation, but in one of the two following options (to be selected by the individual faculty member):
   a. **an oral presentation** of ½ hour or less in duration highlighting what the keystone faculty presenter feels are the 3-5 most significant contributions s/he has made (including highlights in his/her work with his/her primary duties) over the preceding 5 years OR
   b. **an electronic presentation** highlighting what the keystone faculty presenter feels are the 3-5 most significant contributions s/he has made (including highlights in his/her work with his/her primary duties) over the preceding 5 years

As per the existing CC system procedures, this presentation would be attended or viewed by the faculty member’s department chair, and would be open to attendance or viewing by the entire department. If the keystone faculty member wishes, s/he can choose to open the presentation to other members of the campus community, too.

3. The CC system procedures for five year review outline a course of action for Department Chairs who feel a faculty member is not meeting his/her obligations. This begins with a discussion between the Department Chair and faculty member to determine a plan for more effectively meeting his/her obligations. If there is disagreement, the procedures include several stages of intercession by the Dean, the Chancellor, and a 3-member Review Committee. However, if there is still disagreement between the faculty member and the Department Chair after all stages have been passed through, the process falls back into the hands of the Department Chair and faculty member, who are instructed to “attempt to arrive at a plan for meeting expectations that they can agree upon” (again). Given that this “negative review” process is costly, time-consuming, and ultimately without real consequences, I propose that the campus procedures include a suggestion that this process be initiated only in extreme cases.
4. The CC system procedures create a tone that implies the five year review is required, but do not suggest a course of action if a faculty member chooses not to participate. With this in mind, I suggest that the campus-specific guidelines acknowledge that participation in the Celebration is highly encouraged, but essentially optional. This will aide the shift in tone from evaluation to celebration.

5. To further emphasize the celebratory aspect of the activity, I propose that, subject to the Chancellor’s approval, the procedures include a Chancellor- or Vice Chancellor-sponsored appreciation luncheon for the keystone faculty presenters. This might be better facilitated if presentations were scheduled over a grouped set of days immediately prior to the CC system procedures deadline of September 15.

All of the above suggestions are, of course, subject to review and modification by the Faculty Senate and FS Evaluation Committee, should the Faculty Senate choose to act on them.