

## **Provost's Educational Program on the Tenure Process May 2008**

The provost held an educational program for deans, tenured faculty, department chairs, and program directors on each campus in May of 2008. The purpose of the program was to review a number of cases and to discuss issues pertaining to the responsibilities of the deans, tenured faculty, department chairs, and program directors in regard to the tenure process at the University of New England. A panel including legal counsel, a member of the Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee, and the provost presented information best practices for those who guide the non-tenured faculty members through the tenure process. The information came from a publication entitled, *Good Practice in Tenure Evaluation*, which is a joint project of the American Council on Education, the American Association of University Professors, and United Educators Insurance.

Participants questioned why the tenure-track faculty members were not in attendance. The provost explained that guidance on the process for faculty on the tenure track comes from the Faculty Handbook and is handled by each college. This program has been designed to engage the administrators and senior faculty who actively participate or deliberate on the tenure decisions.

A set of cases was discussed in groups and as a whole. The discussion illuminated issues that all universities must address. Practical suggestions for the tenure evaluation process were reviewed and participants agreed that UNE has a sound system, but quality improvement is always a goal. All agreed that these best practices are essential.

- Clarity in standards and procedures for tenure evaluation
- Consistency in tenure decisions
- Candor in the evaluation of tenure-track faculty
- Caring for unsuccessful candidates

The programs were well attended with almost all the deans, tenured faculty, department chairs, and program directors in attendance at one of the campus sessions. Participants described the workshop as well organized, informative, and timely. The group expressed satisfaction with the chance to discuss these matters with peers. They also indicated that the workshops were a positive experience and that more sessions on the topic would be welcomed. The provost has determined that UNE will host annual training sessions on a particular aspect of the tenure process.

All participants rated the program as good or excellent. Here are some comments from the evaluation of the workshops:

“Good topic...I am glad you involved the RPT Committee...involve them in planning future sessions”

“Continue the dialogue...include info on letter writing”

“Very informative....continue with the training and discussions”