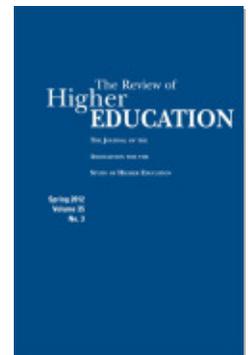# Believing Is Seeing: The Influence of Beliefs and Expectations on Posttenure Review in One State System

O'Meara, KerryAnn, 1971-

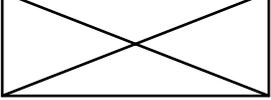→ For additional information about this article

Believing Is Seeing: The Influence of Beliefs and Expectations on Posttenure Review in One State System

KerryAnn O'Meara

Posttenure review is implemented for the first time in one state system. One year later faculty report that they received little or no performance feedback from personnel committees, department chairs, or deans. Faculty criticize the posttenure review process for not having "teeth" but say that it would have been "dangerous" if there *were* teeth. At the same time, however, a faculty member describes how one of his colleagues was "brought back into the fold" of his department by posttenure review, and a few other faculty credit the same process with their decision to apply earlier than

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planned for promotion. Meanwhile, department chairs report that some of their faculty had feared that posttenure review would subject them to "junior faculty research expectations." In response, a department chair explains to an anxious faculty member that posttenure review is not like promotion; it is simply a question of whether his or her "heart is beating." Deans and provosts report that years of uncritical annual reviews have tied their hands when it comes to assigning posttenure review ratings. Finally, deans report that some faculty decided to retire because of what they called the "atmosphere of posttenure review."

The preceding examples represent real-life experiences that emerged in a study of the first-year implementation of posttenure review. Despite the fact that, by 1999, 37 state systems had engaged in some level of posttenure review or "periodic evaluation of tenured faculty" activity or discussion (Licata & Morreale, 2002), little is known about the actual implementation of posttenure review within large state systems (Alstete, 2000; Licata & Morreale, 1997).

Research on posttenure review, like the process itself, is fairly new but is embedded in a rich and expansive literature on faculty motivation and behavior (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995), academic careers (Baldwin, 1990), academic culture (Kuh & Whitt, 1988), faculty reward systems (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996), and/or policy implementation (Gill & Saunders, 1992). A number of studies have explored posttenure review outcomes related to faculty development and faculty performance, with varying findings (Goodman, 1990, 1994; Harris, 1996; Licata & Morreale, 1997, 2002; Wesson & Johnson, 1991). For example, while Goodman's (1994) study of posttenure review outcomes found that posttenure review enhanced faculty morale and commitment to their disciplines, evidence from smaller-scale studies and reports suggests that posttenure review has had little to no impact on professional development or institutional effectiveness (Harris, 1996; Licata, 1986; Wesson & Johnson, 1991).

Recently, scholars have begun to examine faculty values and beliefs regarding posttenure review. Findings suggest that (a) union resistance to posttenure review impacts faculty perceptions of its implementation (Bender 1988; Felicetti, 1989; O'Meara, forthcoming; Wood & Johnsrud; 2001) (b) faculty often experience posttenure review as opposing traditional academic values (Licata & Morreale, 1997; O'Meara, forthcoming; Patriquin et al., 2003; Wood & Johnsrud, 2001) and (c) academic values of autonomy and collegiality, faculty career stage, and institutional context influence faculty beliefs about posttenure review (Licata & Morreale, 1997; O'Meara, forthcoming; Wood & Johnsrud; 2001).

While several studies have examined posttenure review outcomes and recent research has explored faculty values and beliefs related to posttenure review, little effort has been made to link beliefs to outcomes. This article

fills that gap in the literature by examining the process through which be-liefs influenced posttenure review outcomes in one state system.

Conceptual Framework

The literature on faculty motivation and behavior is most useful in un-derstanding the impact of beliefs on posttenure review outcomes. Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) found that it is the dynamic interaction between self-knowledge and social knowledge that determines faculty and (to some de-gree) administrator behavior. Beliefs can have both self-knowledge (self-judged competence, preferred effort to give to a role) and social knowl-edge (perceived institutional expectation of effort given to a role) compo-nents (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). How factors (like beliefs) influence outcomes has been termed the "process question" (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Cognitive theories of motivation, and in particular expectancy theory and sense-making, are helpful in explaining the process through which be-liefs and other factors influence behavior and thus guided this research (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Mills et al., 2001; Trice, 2001; Weick, 1995).

Expectancy theory posits that individuals are motivated to act when they expect that their efforts will "lead to desired outcomes, and when they value work activities" (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995, p. 22; see also Lawrence & Blackburn, 1988; Vroom, 1964). Applying expectancy theory to posttenure review, faculty members would undertake professional development as part of their posttenure review process if they believed that the effort they ex-pended on updating their knowledge would actually bring them up to speed, a career benefit that they value. Weick's (1995) research on expectancy in sense-making helps to complete the picture of the impact of beliefs on ex-pectations and the impact of expectations on outcomes. He asserts that beliefs are "embedded in expectations that guide interpretations, and affect target events" (p. 145). Because expectations influence what a person no-tices, what was inferred, what was remembered, and what is done, expecta-tions often become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Weick (1995) also notes that, when there is a significant amount of envi-ronmental uncertainty, ambiguity, complexity, turbulence, information over-load, or lack of information, sense-making increases. In these cases, those involved engage in sense-making to "structure the unknown" (Waterman, 1990, p. 41) and develop, "cognitive maps of their environment" (Ring & Rands, 1989, p. 342). Seven properties of sense-making were helpful in ana-lyzing the findings of this study. Sense-making is: (a) grounded in identity construction, (b) retrospective, (c) enactive of sensible environments, (d) social, (e) on-going, (f) focused on and by extracted cues, and (g) driven by plausibility rather than accuracy (Weick, 1995, p. 15).

METHODOLOGY

This study investigated (a) outcomes of the first-year implementation of posttenure review on four campuses in one state system and (b) the process through which beliefs about posttenure review influenced outcomes. The term "implementation" is intentionally broad to include the decisions made by faculty, department chairs, personnel committees, and deans to execute a new posttenure review policy as well as voiced opinions and behaviors of the same group, which influenced implementation. I also explored outcomes related to faculty professional development, performance, retirement, and overall satisfaction with the posttenure review process.

While the literature on academic culture suggests that demographic variables such as discipline, rank, gender, and ethnicity may comprise subgroups that are likely to hold different perceptions about tenure and thereby posttenure review (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996), recent research has found that, in faculty beliefs about posttenure review, the variables of discipline, rank, gender, and ethnicity were not significant (Wood & Johnsrud, 2001). In addition, research suggests that, in unionized environments, faculty beliefs regarding employment are more similar than different across disciplines and institutional types (Arnold, 2000). The state system examined in this study was unionized. Therefore, this study focused on outcomes of posttenure review and the process through which beliefs influenced outcomes across ranks (associate and full professor), disciplines, gender, ethnicity, and institutional types.

This study employed two methods. First, I adopted the revelatory multiple case study method to build explanations (Yin, 1994) within and across four state institutions within the state university system, which, to protect the anonymity of those interviewed, I designate as the University of X. My primary data-gathering technique to develop case studies was interviews, which are effective in exploring motivation, meaning-making, and behavior (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Masland, 1985; Schein, 1992, Yin, 1994). The posttenure review process involves multiple constituents including, but not limited to, tenured faculty, department chairs, personnel committee members, deans, and provosts. Because each of these parties might view the process differently and have different responses, I designed different interview protocols for administrators, faculty, and personnel committees. These protocols explored participant beliefs about the outcomes of the first year's implementation of posttenure review on the topics of faculty professional development, performance, satisfaction with the process, and retirement.

From February 2001 through April 2001, I conducted semi-structured interviews with provosts, deans, department chairs, personnel committee members, and faculty involved in the posttenure review process during its first year (1999–2000). I conducted site visits lasting from one to three days

on each of the four campuses and did follow-up interviews by telephone. Interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, with the number conducted on each campus representing the number of faculty who engaged in posttenure review across departments and institutions. Academic administrators on each of the four campuses acted as primary informants and assisted in selecting participants. I made an effort to interview a mix of full and associate professors, faculty whose self-assessments were immediately accepted and those whose department chairs or personnel committees asked for revisions, and faculty with positive, negative, and neutral experiences with posttenure review.

The participants included 19 reviewed faculty: statements (15 accepted, 4 revised); departments (10 in humanities, 5 in professional schools, 4 in the natural sciences); and rank (7 associate professors, 12 full professors). I also interviewed 8 department chairs, 7 personnel committee members (faculty who served on these committees) 6 deans (3 humanities, 2 professional, 1 science) and 6 academic affairs administrators. I interviewed the 4 university provosts as a group. In total, I interviewed 50 people. While many individuals played multiple roles in this process, I counted no one twice and interviewed everyone based on one primary role (faculty member, personnel committee member, department chair, dean, academic affairs administrator, or provost). In the interests of candid disclosure, I promised anonymity to each participant.

In addition to taking notes during the interviews, I also taperecorded and transcribed them. I reviewed such documents as posttenure review policies, memoranda, related reports, newspaper articles, spreadsheets with data on posttenure review participants, professional development center materials, self-assessments if offered by faculty, and union memoranda to faculty as part of my database. I obtained these documents from primary informants, from faculty who volunteered to share them, and from the system administration office.

During the data analysis phase, I read and reread interview transcripts and related documents, coded them, and then revised the coding, as categories emerged from the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Coding reduced the data into smaller chunks or units from which patterns emerged. I marked recurring words and phrases, using them to develop theme statements. I looked for, recorded, and analyzed divergent data that contradicted these statements (Yin, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

To further ground data from the 50 participants and the document analysis in a broader sample of experiences, I also sent a posttenure review outcomes survey designed by Christine M. Licata and Joseph C. Morreale for AAHE's New Pathways Project II (1998) to the 173 faculty who participated in posttenure review within the University of X system in 1999–2000. Of the 173, 71 returned completed surveys: 33 from the doctoral/research

extensive, 17 from one doctoral/research intensive, 14 from the masters I, 6 from the other doctoral/research intensive, and one unassigned (Carnegie Classification, 2000). While this survey was designed to gauge faculty experiences of posttenure review in several areas, I analyzed only those survey questions related to faculty beliefs about outcomes on faculty professional development, performance, satisfaction with the process, and retirement. Survey participants marked one of four choices for each question: "yes," "somewhat," "no," and "insufficient experience to respond." I combined "yes" and "somewhat" responses for a positive category, comparing them with negative and neutral responses (insufficient experience). I describe the responses from these surveys using basic descriptive statistics.

My research has four limitations. While I made efforts to balance the perspectives of faculty and administrators through interviews and document analysis, nonetheless the results may show an overreliance on faculty perceptions and observations. Also, the majority of the data is self-reported. While researchers often fear that self-reported data on reform initiatives may be biased to reflect success, in this case it may be biased to reflect failure, given that the majority of faculty were resistant to and not in favor of posttenure review from its inception. Additionally, the generalizability of the findings is limited by the specific context within which each of these institutions operated (i.e., a unionized environment with a history of difficult faculty-administrator relations); findings might well be different in other settings. Finally, this research is based on only one year of implementation of this reform initiative, and outcomes will likely change as the implementation matures.

My purpose was to generate a clear, accurate, and rich description of the process through which beliefs influenced posttenure review outcomes in one state system, not generalizable conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, I also attempted to mediate the affect of these four limitations. First, the survey enriches the qualitative findings, drawing from a broader sample of experiences than the interviewees alone. To enhance the trustworthiness of my findings, I tried, as Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest, to keep "triangulation as a state of mind" (p. 235). In addition to using multiple sources of evidence, I employed different methods to collect evidence, establish a case study database, develop a chain of evidence, and operate the study at different levels of the four institutions to verify my conclusions (Yin, 1994).

During academic year 1999–2000, the University of X, for the first time, implemented a review of tenured faculty on four of its five campuses. By 2000 Carnegie classification standards, two of the four campuses are doctoral/research intensive, one doctoral/research extensive, and one master's I. The preamble to the posttenure review policy described several principles and purposes for posttenure review including that it "expand the narrow

time window of the annual reviews into an overview of a faculty member's interests; make possible timely consultation, intervention, and assistance to stimulate and encourage continued professional development; account for faculty members' professional activity to external constituencies; assure that the talents of faculty and their contributions are maximized throughout their careers; and be linked to annual faculty reviews so as not to involve the creation of additional unnecessary bureaucracy."

Because each campus's faculty were not represented by the same union, there were some minor variations in policy. However, each campus posttenure review policy required tenured faculty to be evaluated every seven years unless they gave written notice of intention to retire within three years of receiving notification of their review; submit a self-assessment of their own performance in teaching, research, and service that was to be reviewed by department and college personnel committees, the department chair, and the dean of the school/college; and complete a revised professional development plan if their performance was deemed unsatisfactory or they were asked to revise their self-assessment. Each process included professional development opportunities for faculty. Three of the four campuses offered small stipends to faculty who wished to engage in professional development.

In September 1999, 15% of the tenured faculty across the four campuses were notified of posttenure reviews in 1999–2000. About 5% of this group had their reviews waived because of retirement decisions, promotion review, administrative appointments, leaves of absence, or sabbaticals. In the end, 173 faculty (10% of the tenured faculty) did posttenure reviews in 1999–2000. Of this number, 129 (75%) were full professors, 42 (24%) were associate professors, and 2 (1%) were assistant professors. There were two possible outcomes of a posttenure review: immediate approval and acceptance of the self-assessment, or the personnel committee's request to revise and resubmit the assessment. Of the 173 faculty involved, 157 were immediately accepted, and 16 were asked for revisions.

An important element in the campus context was a history of faculty distrust of reforms initiated by the administration. During contract negotiations, the University of X faculty union fought posttenure review initially but agreed to a formative (more developmental than punitive) posttenure review policy (Licata & Norreale, 1997). As a result, many faculty resisted posttenure review in its first year of implementation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section integrates outcomes related to posttenure review's influence on faculty professional development, faculty performance, retirement, and faculty/administrator satisfaction with a discussion of the expectancy and sense-making processes that facilitated beliefs influencing outcomes.

Posttenure Review's Influence on Professional Development

As the preamble to the university's posttenure review policy states, one of its primary goals was stimulating professional development through consultation, intervention, and assistance. Structurally, the major vehicle of providing "consultation" was performance feedback—meaning the process by which department chairs, personnel committees, or deans might provide useful, concrete, and substantial comments and reflections on faculty members' work with the goal of helping them meet their career goals and improve their job performance. Research on professional workers like faculty suggests that getting "immediate, unambiguous feedback on the quality of their work from the people they serve or other sources" (Walker, 2002, p. 233) is a critical condition of professional well-being. While over half of the faculty who experienced posttenure review reported that they were voluntarily engaged in professional development activities, it was not clear that there was any link between these professional development activities (which they may have been involved in before posttenure review was initiated) and feedback through the posttenure review process. Problems with feedback in posttenure review—either too little or inflated—accounted in part for posttenure review's limited influence on professional development.

Little or No Feedback

A major finding of this study was that tenured faculty received feedback ranging from scanty to none as part of their posttenure review. While the intention of the posttenure review policy guidelines was to minimize the labor involved in posttenure review by using existing faculty evaluation materials (e.g., annual reviews and/or teaching evaluations), self-assessments were intended to provide committees with a synthesis of career accomplishments. Some faculty submitted, and some committees accepted, very little in the way of self-assessments (e.g., a paragraph stapled to a vitae), while other faculty wrote longer and more reflective, thoughtful self-assessments. No matter what the faculty member submitted, 80% of those interviewed reported receiving nothing or only a paragraph in response to their submissions—in other words, little to no performance feedback from personnel committees, department chairs, or deans.

Survey respondents corroborated this pattern. "Does follow-up occur based on the review?" was the only question of 18 in that section receiving a greater number of negative responses (42.3%) than either positive (16.9%) or neutral (39.4%) ones. (See Table 1.)

This phenomenon seemed to result from an informal strategy on the part of groups given feedback responsibility. Deans, department chairs, and personnel committees responded to faculty anxiety and concern about posttenure review by downplaying the policy goal of providing feedback to improve faculty performance, improve faculty accountability, and/or en-

<center>

TABLE 1

CLARITY AND FAIRNESS OF PROCESS

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Yes and Somewhat %	No %	Insufficient Experience %	Questions
84.5	12.7	1.4	Procedures clear?
84.5	5.6	7.0	Documentation prepared by the faculty member manageable?
77.5	18.3	1.4	Process widely known and well understood?
74.6	22.5	2.8	Review criteria clear?
70.5	23.9	4.2	Dean's role in process clearly understood?
69.1	25.4	2.8	Department chairperson's role in process clearly understood?
69.0	1.42	6.8	Procedures followed in a fair fashion?
63.4	29.6	5.6	Does review help faculty reflect on accomplishments and directions?
59.1	32.4	8.5	Are possible outcomes from the review clear?
56.3	14.1	23.9	Are peer review committee members prepared and trained appropriately?
52.1	5.6	39.4	Are review criteria applied fairly?
45.1	5.6	46.5	Are procedures followed in a consistent fashion?
42.2	36.6	21.1	Is there adequate range of rewards/ development opportunities available following review?
36.7	5.6	53.5	Are review criteria followed in a consistent fashion?
31.0	8.5	59.4	Are the faculty appeal procedures adequate?
21.1	2.8	70.4	Are possible outcomes from the review applied in a fair manner?
16.9	42.3	39.4	Does follow-up occur based on the review?
11.3	12.7	70.4	Is there an adequate range of selections available following review if called for?
Average:			
56.1	17.2	24.4	

Note: Due to rounding, percengages may not equal 100%.

courage faculty to link their work with department/university goals. One department chair said he told his faculty, "This is not promotion. It is rather [a question of] is your heart beating? It is not any big deal." A personnel

committee member said, "We just put materials together and wrote a half paragraph saying the work was admirable, satisfactory, and left it at that." He was referring to all of the faculty they reviewed. Likewise a personnel committee member explained that the committee's role in posttenure review was not to provide any real feedback as much as to play "a learn-acknowledge-and-pass-on role."

Two comments were most revealing of the experience of many concerning the feedback process. After describing the minimal role the committee played in providing feedback, a personnel committee member said, "There is, after all, no point in agonizing over this." A second personnel committee member explained, "More than one full professor was on his own review committee." Since in many departments only full or associate professors could serve on personnel committees, this pattern was somewhat expected; and while committee members who were also reviewed excused themselves from any "discussions or lack thereof" that might have occurred in reviewing their cases, the faculty member's relationships with other committee members made it unlikely that they felt comfortable providing anything but quick praise.

Inflated Feedback

The feedback issue was further confounded by four academic cultures that were reported to have histories of inflated annual reviews. Reviews were inflated because faculty and department chairs held a belief that everyone was working hard and should receive some portion of the very limited merit funding available. Additionally, department chairs and personnel committee members feared that, if they provided formal critical feedback to a faculty member, administrators could use the information to somehow eliminate the position. Consequently, feedback during peer review was "generous," both in the past and for posttenure review. Many faculty, department chairs, and personnel committee members viewed this informal norm as a collegial strategy to support fellow faculty and as collective resistance to greater administrative oversight.

One faculty member who had also been a department chair and served on the personnel committee recently described his campus as "Lake Wobegon University, where everyone is above average." "Lake Wobegon," author-raconteur Garrison Keillor's description of his mythical Minnesota community, was a phrase that several faculty on all four campuses used to describe rating inflation, particularly at the master's institution. This faculty member and a member of the personnel committee on his campus explained that "all that really occurred" during posttenure review was lining up the scores from the last seven years of annual reviews. If they were all excellent—and they almost invariably were—then the person received an excellent posttenure review rating. Another faculty member explained, "Since

everyone is given a rating of excellent for merit every year, they received excellent on posttenure review. Automatic inflation is built in."

Department chairs agreed and acted accordingly. One department chair said, "The [personnel] meetings were a charade. They all knew they would give the same rating as annual reviews." Inflated performance feedback resulted in minimizing the satisfaction faculty might have taken from positive posttenure reviews. For example, one faculty member who had received a short but positive letter confirming his successful review, commented, "Knowing that everyone exaggerates, the feedback did not mean much."

Additionally, department chairs observed a general feeling in their departments that faculty who received a "revised" rating on their self-assessments were penalized because they had to be reviewed again in three years. As a result, very few department chairs and/or personnel committees gave faculty such a revised rating. As one department chair said, "Revised plans were very few. The person and department had to be at a deadlock." In some cases, informal feedback was given to faculty to revise their plans and resubmit "outside the official system," but this was rare.

Rate inflation had a ripple effect throughout the evaluation system as deans and provosts reported that, for the first year of posttenure reviews, a series of uncritical annual reviews had the effect of "tying their hands" and those of other review levels when it came to assigning posttenure review ratings. Therefore, posttenure review was influenced by and perpetuated existing problems with the overall faculty evaluation process. Evidence suggested that few faculty received substantive performance feedback and/or participated in professional development activities because of posttenure review.

Any major change to a faculty evaluation system requires some foundation of trust among affected parties (Applegate & Nora, 2002). Likewise, genuine professional development, by its very nature, is voluntary, and requires good-faith efforts from faculty members (Goodman, 1994). Unfortunately, in this case, the foundation of trust between faculty and administration and the good-faith efforts that might have flowed from it were in short supply. The majority of faculty, most department chairs, and all personnel committee members believed that the primary purpose of posttenure review was unnecessary oversight and inspection. This belief may have been true, false, or a little of both. Weick (1995) reminds us that accuracy is not necessary in sense-making. Expectations and beliefs influence outcomes simply because (a) something is reasonable, (b) it embodies past experiences and expectations, (c) and it socially resonates with other people (p. 60). In other words, "a good story" often influences behavior (Weick, 1995, p. 61). In this case, the expectations and beliefs that posttenure review would not serve faculty as a tool for professional development influenced the minimal amount of time and energy University of X faculty invested in their self-assessments and the minimal rewards and/or

consequences they expected to receive for their effort. These expectations were confirmed; faculty received little in the way of written or verbal feedback from personnel committees, department chairs or deans.

Posttenure Review's Influence on Faculty Performance

Both of the posttenure review goals (accounting for faculty professional activity to external constituencies, and assuring that faculty talents and contributions are maximized) involve performance—enhancing, assessing, and/or reporting performance. However, findings from this study suggest that the first year implementation of posttenure had a very limited impact on faculty performance. In general, there was no clear evidence that the posttenure review process initiated performance improvements among faculty with minor or major weaknesses or enhanced or increased performance among average or high performers. Deans explained that the process did not have enough "teeth" to impact faculty behavior—nor were professional development funds a large enough incentive to instigate change. Faculty also agreed that the process had no real "teeth" but said the review would have been "dangerous" if it had. Faculty, department chairs, and personnel committees were all quick to critique the posttenure review system for not addressing faculty performance. One faculty member said, "This process does not effectively deal with drunkards and slackers." Another faculty member commented that "it was not taken with enough seriousness." A personnel committee member concluded, "It looks like the process didn't carry much significance. People who did well—there were no ramifications. People who did poorly—nothing much happened. Posttenure review needs a real carrot and/or a real stick."

Several cases described in interviews further revealed this phenomenon. A faculty member recalled, "In one department there was a faculty member who represented a real problem. He had completed no service. His teaching and scholarship were good, but he had a catastrophic relationship with his department. A negative posttenure review was written about him—severely critical—but there was no real consequence. It is impossible to change a faculty member after 25 years. They are intractable." Another faculty member described "one problem case in my department, who went through posttenure review, but it did not help to change him. It [posttenure review] could have been used by the department chair to weed out difficult cases, but it wasn't done."

While the faculty often criticized department chairs for the review's ineffectiveness, department chairs felt somewhat helpless to do anything, given existing structures at their disposal. One department chair explained, "Faculty decide what they want to do. What can I do in directing them? I can send faculty to a center for professional development in teaching [because of posttenure review] but motivation must come from them. If they decide

not to do anything, I can't do anything." Another department chair used a metaphor: "You can take the donkey to water but you can't make him drink. You need to have both carrots and sticks."

However, there were exceptions. A few faculty were given professional development funds to put their courses on-line or somehow integrate technology into their teaching. Deans reported that, for a few faculty, the excitement around this shift improved their overall contribution to the college. In addition, departments that used posttenure review to improve collegiality and appreciation for faculty work saw some improvements in faculty performance. A faculty member described how one of his colleagues was "brought back into the fold" by posttenure review. Afterward, everyone saw a significant change in his involvement with students, his confidence in faculty meetings, and his attention to curricular activities. The faculty member explained: "He is talented. He just needed to know he could be one of us. Before he was left outside the circle." Additionally, departments on one of the campuses that linked posttenure review to its preparation for department accreditation found that the process contributed positively to the departments' working together.

While these stories were encouraging, deans, department chairs, and faculty provided many more examples of cases where performance improvement was warranted but where little changed. Deans recounted several examples of faculty who needed to improve their performance in a given area but who refused. Deans noted that they did not have many methods at their disposal to persuade faculty members to change voluntarily. Two deans mentioned holding back sabbaticals in these cases, and other deans required faculty to take workshops with professional development centers regarding teaching. However, none of these deans and department chairs told stories about how these efforts improved teaching performance. Rather, most related stories of faculty in need of improvement who did not change.

In several departments, faculty who did posttenure reviews and were no longer significantly invested in research "found themselves doing more teaching and outreach, as a result of posttenure review," one dean said. However, one department chair cautioned that, in his experience, it was not always prudent to "force" faculty to teach more courses (often introductory courses), after their research had been deemed insufficient. He felt that, in such cases, faculty resented teaching the extra classes and the students suffered as a result.

An interesting irony emerged from the survey data on the issue of posttenure reviews' influence on faculty performance. (See Table 2.) Thirty-eight percent of the faculty respondents believed that posttenure review increased accountability (29.6% believed that it did not, while 29.6% had insufficient experience to judge). Yet 54.9 % said posttenure review did not stimulate greater efforts in teaching, in research (52.1%), or in professional service/outreach (56.3%). Some of the paradox between these survey find-

TABLE 2

BENEFITS OF POSTTENURE REVIEW

No Benefit %	Insufficient Experience %	Benefit % Major/Minor	Questions
66.2	21.1	8.5	Improves collegiality
64.8	22.5	9.8	Facilitates exchange of information which leads to professional collaboration
57.7	21.1	16.9	Stimulates greater efforts in university citizenship
56.3	22.5	18.3	Stimulates greater efforts in professional service and outreach
54.9	22.5	19.7	Stimulates greater efforts in teaching
54.9	16.9	22.5	Focuses attention on improvement of annual review procedures
53.5	31.0	12.7	Links departmental planning objectives with personal professional plans
52.1	23.9	21.2	Stimulates greater efforts in research
50.7	25.4	21.2	Helps sustain senior faculty vitality
50.7	35.2	11.3	Encourages departments to consider different workloads for members
46.5	43.7	7.0	Allows for comparison of standards for judging work across unit lines
39.4	22.5	35.2	Provides opportunities for additional support for new professional directions
38.0	18.3	39.5	Establishes a culture of expectation for continuous growth and development
36.6	26.8	32.4	Increases opportunities for mid- and late-career transition planning
29.6	29.6	38.0	Increases faculty accountability
29.6	43.7	24.0	Acts as a safeguard to tenure
19.7	47.9	29.6	Increases public confidence in higher education
15.5	53.5	26.8	Forestalls further external interference
Average:			
47.1	27.9	21.6	

Note: Due to rounding, percengages may not equal 100%.

ings may be explained by the fact that some faculty agreed posttenure re-
view may have been needed to demonstrate accountability to the public but
viewed their own work and that of their colleagues as excellent—not need-
ing "stimulation" through posttenure review. More faculty (59.2%) reported
that they had too little experience to judge whether posttenure review was
not changing faculty performance over the long term than who felt this was
a problem (22.6%). (See Table 3.)

Table 3

Problems with Posttenure Review

No Problem %	Too Little Experience %	Problem (Major/Minor%)	Questions
59.2	16.9	21.1	Invasion of professional autonomy
54.9	19.7	22.6	Erosion of collegiality
52.1	18.3	24.0	Erosion of faculty professionalism
52.1	31.0	14.1	Negative effect on risk taking and scholarly pursuit of controversial areas of inquiry
46.5	8.5	39.4	Erosion of confidence in tenure
39.4	12.7	43.6	Prompts effective senior faculty to feel devalued
38.0	49.3	8.4	Unreasonable demands placed on university to support faculty improvement plans
33.8	2.8	60.6	Excessive time
33.8	38.0	24.0	Insufficient training for chairs/ department heads
33.8	46.5	14.0	Hampers faculty recruitment efforts
32.4	2.8	62.0	Excessive paperwork
29.6	56.3	11.2	Unevenness in application of criteria and standards within unit and/or across units
28.2	43.7	22.6	Insufficient training for peers
22.5	43.7	28.2	Insufficient funds to support required faculty development plans
15.5	36.6	45.1	Insufficient funds to support self-initiated faculty development plans
12.7	59.2	22.6	No positive change in performance of individuals over the long term
Average:			
36.5	30.4	29.0	

Note: Due to rounding, percengages may not equal 100%.

These beliefs—that evaluation processes do not encourage tenured faculty to change their behavior, that providing performance feedback for tenured faculty is neither appropriate nor helpful, and that late-career faculty with poor performance cannot be rehabilitated—contributed to a culture of low expectations for performance feedback and professional development as part of posttenure review. Most participants expected that posttenure review would not change faculty performance. Participants' sense-making here was reflexive; for example, respondents focused on cer-

tain cues (a deficient colleague was not penalized) or other outcomes to confirm their initial beliefs and expectations that posttenure review was meant to be surveillance rather than developmental. Many felt that they received a strong institutional message from this first-year experience that posttenure reivw was something "we had to do, but it's not that important." This perception in turn reinforced the minimal effect the process had on encouraging or inspiring genuine professional development.

It might be argued that low expectations for performance improvement thus became a self-fulfilling prophecy as few participants in posttenure review shaped the process toward this goal, then declared their low expectations correct when little or no change in faculty performance occurred. Merton (1948) defined self-fulfilling prophecies as expectations that begin with a false definition of a situation. However, Weick (1995) cautions against this definition: "False in whose view? Relative to what goals? . . . whose reality?" (Weick, 1995, p. 147). This query reminds us that several "realities" might be considered true or false depending on a person's position in the conflict. On the one hand, the belief of many department chairs, personnel committee members, and faculty that mid-career and late-career faculty are intrinsically motivated and will not be significantly influenced by external reward structures like posttenure review is supported by some research on faculty behavior (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). On the other hand, a few faculty did report positive professional development outcomes from their posttenure review. While evidence suggests that little performance improvement may have been necessary for the majority of faculty, in cases where participants noted that performance improvement was necessary, there was little expectation of movement followed by, indeed, little movement. The intentional downplaying of posttenure review's role in providing feedback, improving accountability, and aligning faculty work and department goals did seem to limit any potential influence posttenure review might have had on performance by decreasing how seriously it was taken by everyone involved.

Posttenure Review's Influence on Retirement

While obviously not a formal policy goal, "getting rid of deadwood" was perhaps the most widely used phrase to describe external interests in initiating posttenure review (Licata & Morreale, 2002). When boards of trustees ask their institutions for data on posttenure review outcomes, they show major interest in retirements. Strong qualitative evidence suggested that posttenure review influenced faculty decisions to retire from the University of X system. While faculty who decided to retire were not part of the sample interviewed or surveyed, many faculty, all personnel committee members, all department chairs, three fourths of the deans, all administrators, and all provosts interviewed for this study agreed that posttenure review encour-

aged retirement for faculty who "needed" to retire. Not only was posttenure review's influence on retirement decisions evident from the increase in the previous years' number of faculty who decided to retire, but deans also reported that many faculty decided to retire before, during, or after the posttenure review window captured their decision. Deans reported that some faculty decided to retire because of, in faculty members' words, "the atmosphere of posttenure review."

Most faculty reported that they were personally aware of one or more colleague who decided to retire after being notified about posttenure review. One commented that posttenure review "precipitated retirement decisions." A dean said, "Faculty were nudged when they might have been delayed a few more years." Several faculty said they were amazed that something as "simple as this" made people retire. One faculty member said, "For unproductive faculty, posttenure review was enough of a catalyst to retire." An academic administrator commented, "The retirement issue is very sensitive. Everyone had to swear posttenure review would not influence retirement (to get it approved) but it did. It prevented faculty from waiting around for new retirement deals."

Most faculty, deans, and department chairs did not regret posttenure review's influence on those faculty that they described as "needing to retire." However, a few faculty lamented that posttenure review had caused some stellar teachers to retire too early because they did not want to be "subjected to junior faculty research expectations." They labeled this aspect of posttenure review as negative. Significantly, while only a few faculty mentioned this problem in interviews, the surveys found more faculty reporting that posttenure review caused senior faculty to feel devalued. That is, a greater number of respondents believed that implementing the posttenure review process made effective senior faculty feel devalued (43.6%) than the number who believed that it did not cause problems (39.4%). (See Table 3.)

This discrepancy might be explained in two ways. First, the interview protocol focused on individual faculty member's experiences with their own posttenure review and less on the feelings of other faculty. Although the interviews did address the interviewee's perception of his or her colleagues' feelings (and interviewees did describe negative perceptions), faculty were perhaps more likely to use terms like "angry" and "resentful" rather than "devalued." Also it may have been easier for late-career faculty to report feeling "devalued" anonymously, on paper, than in personal interviews. In addition, more interviewees spoke about colleagues going through the process than about faculty retiring but may have included faculty who felt "forced to retire" in their quantitative response. The combination of qualitative data indicating that faculty and department chairs knew of colleagues who felt forced to retire to avoid embarrassment and the quantitative data reporting that some senior faculty felt devalued by the process suggests that

feeling devalued was likely an unfortunate unanticipated outcome for some faculty who decided to retire.

Expectancy and sense-making were visible players in posttenure reviews' influence on retirement decisions. On the one hand, department chairs, deans, and personnel committee members intentionally shaped faculty sense-making of posttenure review so that they believed it had no "teeth" and that the peer review process would be "pro forma." On the other hand, cultural forces within these four institutions and generational differences in research emphasis among junior, mid-career, and late-career faculty came into play. Some late-career faculty feared the peer review process of submitting their vitas to younger colleagues who might have more recent publications and grant funding and who might devalue senior faculty careers. However, other late-career faculty reported little or no apprehension because of their career stage and accomplishments.

Both faculty responses can be interpreted using the sense-making properties of identity construction and enactment (Weick, 1995). Both fear of rejection and confidence in one's record were grounded in the individual faculty members' own sense of themselves and their careers. Also, as past researchers have noted, "In organizational life people often produce part of the environment they face" (Pondy & Mitroff, 1979, p. 17). By choosing not to "worry" about their posttenure review process, faculty contributed to the experience as something that they later referred to as "no big deal." By choosing to retire to avoid being "subjected" to junior faculty research expectations, some faculty contributed toward making the process more threatening than it otherwise could have been.

Faculty and Administrator Satisfaction

According to the policy, the posttenure review process was supposed to occur without creating additional unnecessary bureaucracy. This section reviews three areas of faculty and administrator satisfaction with the process: the time, the procedures, and the overall experience.

The Procedures Were Reasonable. Most participants viewed the actual posttenure review procedures as clear, fair, and adequate. A very clear majority of faculty fully or somewhat agreed (and only a very small percentage disagreed) that the procedures were clear (84.5%) and that the process was widely known and well understood (77.5%). (See Table 1.) A majority of respondents took the position that they had insufficient experience to comment on whether procedures were followed consistently, review criteria followed consistently, whether outcomes from the review were applied fairly, and whether an adequate range of selections was available following review, if called for. Interviews confirmed this data.

The Time Was Reasonable. Assessing satisfaction with the time required to complete posttenure review documentation requires looking closely at

the survey and interview data together. For example, survey responses suggest that faculty felt strongly (62%) that the posttenure review process required "excessive paperwork," and 60.6% said it took "excessive time." (See Table 3.) However, 84.5% of faculty indicated that "the documentation prepared by faculty members was manageable." (See Table 1.) The qualitative evidence helps contextualize this data.

Interviews revealed great variation in the time faculty spent on preparing their self-assessments and collecting material such as vitae, teaching evaluations, etc. This time ranged from 2 hours to 2.5 weeks, with one faculty member reporting a month. More important than estimates were reports about how the amount of time "felt" to faculty. Three fourths said they were "surprised" because they thought it "would be more paperwork," "did not require a lot of effort," and "wasn't a big bad thing to do." The other fourth said it was a "large-scale effort" and "very time-consuming." These faculty resented the "consumption of time." Due to very little secretarial support (especially at two campuses), they had to play bookkeeper and do administrative copying and collating that took a significant amount of time. However, by and large, faculty reported that completing their self-evaluations was not overly time-consuming, albeit annoying and unnecessary.

Consequently, interviews suggest that survey responses must be understood against the background of 75% of faculty feeling that posttenure review was not useful. While most faculty were satisfied with the minimal requirements for the self-assessment and portfolio, perhaps no amount of time required to complete this documentation would have been viewed as reasonable by faculty who felt that posttenure review was not useful to begin with. Interviews with faculty, department chairs, and deans suggested that most faculty and other parties agreed that the time and documentation required was "not bad"; consequently, the conclusion can be drawn that this aspect of the posttenure review process was reasonable and did not need to be improved.

For three-fourths of department chairs, the process was also not overwhelmingly time-consuming because they said they had such "stellar faculty." About a fourth of department chairs spent time "hand-holding" faculty who were anxious about the process, working on revisions, and collecting materials from "difficult cases." Deans reported significant variations, some spending a great deal of time on the process, others not much at all. Overall the continuum ranged from a few days to one week. Most deans felt that the time was worth the effort, could not be delegated, and had few complaints about it. One dean explained, "It is the weighting of people's professional lives" and felt that the time it took fit well with his other duties and responsibilities.

Overall Satisfaction. In interviews, about a fourth of the faculty, a fourth of the department chairs, and most of the other administrators felt that

posttenure review offered faculty an opportunity for self-reflection, a chance to bring their future plans into focus, and an opportunity to have their colleagues validate their hard work. As a result of the posttenure review process, several associate professors decided to apply for promotion to full professor sooner than they had originally planned, thanks to positive feedback from their departments. Posttenure review also provided validation for faculty that their department chair, dean, and provost affirmed their future plans. One faculty member explained, "It was another opportunity for me to put my goals, aims, and values in front of the administration to let them know what I am doing and reemphasize where I want to go." Faculty gained satisfaction in seeing their accomplishments over a long period of time in print. As one faculty member said, "I had not realized all that I had done, [until I wrote it down] and I was pleased with myself."

There was also some evidence that personnel committees and department chairs read faculty materials, gained a greater appreciation for their colleagues' work, and learned things about late-career faculty and their careers that they otherwise would not have known. A dean reported, "In most cases people felt validated by conversations in hallways and in letters. People were saying to each other, 'I never knew how wonderful your research and teaching were.' It has affected our culture in a very positive way." Personnel committees reported that posttenure review served an important function missing from annual reviews. "We tend to get these spaced-out snapshots of a person's career. Posttenure review was more like a movie. It was helpful that we [got] to look backward and forward." While this outcome is important, it reinforced the consensus among personnel committee members that, nonetheless, they did not need or want posttenure review.

One faculty member said he had really integrated his teaching, research, and service during the last few years and it was beneficial for him to show his colleagues this integration. As a result of sharing his work, his colleagues showed him more appreciation. Likewise, another faculty member found it useful in educating junior faculty on the diversity of courses and number of courses he had been asked to teach over his career. Survey data added that between a fourth and a third of faculty saw some benefit to posttenure review in providing additional funding for professional development (35.2%), establishing a culture of expectation for growth (39.5%), increasing public confidence in higher education (29.6%), and forestalling further external interference (26.8%). (See Table 2.)

However, about 75% of the faculty interviewed were somewhere between negative and neutral about the implementation of posttenure review and the process in general. Faculty interviewed were relieved it was over; most said, "It wasn't bad." Because the majority of faculty did not see the need for posttenure review, they were satisfied that its implementation changed very little about the existing evaluation system. However, there was lingering

resentment that posttenure review had been initiated at all. As one personnel committee member said, "Because there were no radical changes, people felt better." They wished posttenure review had come with more resources to add professional development and help reshape faculty careers. They regretted both the time it required and the effect it had on colleagues who they thought felt devalued. An examination of the 71 survey responses received from faculty involved in the posttenure review process suggested that, on average, faculty (a) tended to feel positive about the clarity, fairness, and adequacy of the process, (b) tended not to see personal, departmental, and broader education benefits in the process, and (c) had mixed reactions about whether problems existed with its implementation.

Overall, department chairs were pleased that the posttenure review process was less work than they had feared but agreed with faculty in their overall view of posttenure review. Personnel committees followed the same pattern. Provosts and other academic administrators concluded that, until the pattern of rate inflation of annual reviews for tenured faculty evaluation changed, the posttenure review policy could not achieve its original goals.

However, deans had by far the best bird's-eye view of the posttenure review process because they were required to read and approve all of the posttenure review self-assessments, confer with departments chairs, and report themes to their provosts. Posttenure review, like other reform efforts, was handled differently and had differing amounts of success, in each department. One dean explained, "One department personnel committee all met and discussed the assessments and did a terrific job. In another they all submitted assessments and everyone just signed off." Most deans felt that the posttenure review procedure worked reasonably well. A few deans felt that it gave them information about their faculty that they did not already know, but others said the information wasn't new or particularly useful. While a few deans wished the process had more "teeth" and could be linked to dismissal processes in some way, others felt that it was fine as it stood.

One dean reported the "outcomes" in his college (numbers changed to assure anonymity):

> I had one dramatic posttenure review case where the culture of posttenure review actually helped the person to be promoted; two hard cases: one we are trying to do remediation, the other will retire; two with special issues confirmed by posttenure review: one needs a course reduction that I can't give her, and the other has affirmative action issues within her department; three cases where the faculty member's stuff is okay: we won't ask them to do anything differently; four really solid good people: maybe we could adjust their workloads if we had a strategic plan and resources, but we don't; and seven superstars: and posttenure review just validated them.

Satisfaction with posttenure review and benefits and problems experienced by faculty and administrators need to be viewed through the lens of expectations, or sense-making's concept of "selective noticing" (Weick, 1995, p. 148). Both faculty and administrators reported that the posttenure review process was clear, adequate, and fair. Clearly the posttenure review process in its first year at the University of X was both procedurally and culturally shaped to be "no big deal" with no major outcomes. Some might call this outcome a "creative subversion" of the original intention of the policy, while others might call it "virtual adoption" (Birnbaum, 2000; Clark, 2002). Either way, the faculty, department chairs and personnel committee members who were most resistant to posttenure review from the beginning and expected the worst from it experienced more problems than benefits. Administrators who had more positive expectations experienced more benefits from the process irrespective of actual outcomes in one direction or another. This finding should not be viewed as a coincidence; rather it reflects whether each group thought posttenure review was a legitimate enterprise in and of itself. These findings are consistent with Weick's (1995) observation that sense-making is not only socially driven but context-driven. Mailloux (1990) notes the political aspect of context and how it affects behavior: "Interpretations can have no grounding outside of rhetorical exchanges taking place within institutional and cultural politics" (p. 133). Participants' position in the ongoing faculty-versus-administration conflict clearly influenced their sense-making of posttenure review, and sense-making ultimately influenced the degree to which the policy met its objectives in the first year.

This outcome can be further explained through the concept of selective noticing: "When a person compares an event with an expectation, regardless of whether the course of that event has been deflected or not, noticing becomes focused" (Weick, 1995, p. 148). For example, when administrators assessed the time required to prepare materials for posttenure review, it seemed minimal within the context of and appreciation for the potential benefits administrators assumed the process could provide faculty and the institution. When considered from the perspective of the faculty, department chairs, and personnel committees, the time seemed less reasonable because it was understood as part of a process imposed by "outsiders" with little to no benefit to "insiders."

Finally, the data are consistent with Weick's (1995) observation that sense-making is both reflexive and on-going. Those faculty who were most anxious about posttenure review before it occurred reported that it wasn't so bad when they made sense of it later. Participants' interpretation of posttenure review in its second year may have differed from those of its first, and may be different again during the third year. This on-going aspect

of sense-making reminds readers to be cautious in interpreting the results of studies such as these after one year of implementation.

Implications

This study has several implications for those interested in reforming existing or implementing new posttenure review processes and also for scholars of organizational behavior in colleges and universities.

Starting Points

When posttenure review was first implemented in the University of X system, participants did not have much information or experience to make sense of why it was initiated, what it would accomplish, or what it would mean for individuals and their work. As noted at the beginning of this article, when there is a lack of information and environmental uncertainty, sense-making increases. Participants turned to what they did know (the politics of which camp it came from), expectations, and beliefs to interpret the process. Weick (1995) notes that hypotheses, anticipations, expectations, and beliefs are all "starting points" (p. 148) that are very useful when we don't have much else to go on: "Expectations tend to build up causally on the basis of a sprawling mixture of myth, peer pressure, accidents, stereotypes, hearsay, avoided tests, fiction, vividness, and wishful thinking" (p. 190). I found that a myriad of forces also shaped expectations, some of them developed through actual experiences (like contract negotiations), others through the academic culture's peer pressure (such as late-career faculty's fear of junior faculty peer review) and still others through hearsay, avoided tests, and myths (like the idea that the administration would use negative feedback to fire faculty). These beliefs, expectations, and/or constructions of reality made many faculty, department chairs, and personnel committees defensive, resulting in their use of one of the few weapons at their disposal: creatively subverting the posttenure review process to ensure that it would not change the aspects of their culture and work-life that they most valued.

Pause for Reflection

If the bad news is that "believing is seeing" (Weick, 1995, p. 133), or that we in academic communities filter our experiences to see what we expect to see, the good news is that we often self-correct. After "disconfirming data" (p. 190) has been put in front of stakeholders (faculty, department chairs, deans, even trustees), our expectations, beliefs, and even filters can change.

Licata and Morreale (2002), leaders in both posttenure review policy making and research, note that "key policy aspects can be lost and/or policy gaps uncovered, oversight can be ignored or forgotten, or the entire pro-

gram can turn to ritualistic compliance" (p. 9). They further suggest that it is important for all stakeholders in a policy implementation to pause along the change process to assess where things are.

The two most identifiable outcomes attributable to posttenure review in the University of X system in its first year were that it (a) influenced retirement decisions and (b) was implemented in such a way that most faculty and administrators concluded that it was "no big deal." Faculty and administrators also believed that, by simply initiating posttenure review, the system achieved the goal of demonstrating greater accountability to the public. (There was no evaluation from the public's perspective, however.) It was useful, and would be useful for other campuses, to pause after one year, consider the policy gaps in posttenure review policy implementation, and ask why they exist. Each affected party might consider, for example, the policy goals of enhancing faculty professional development and performance, and whether any party wants to expend the energy and resources necessary for posttenure review to have a greater influence in these areas. If, in fact, the answer is yes, each stakeholder might consider some disconfirming data to adjust his or her filters of posttenure review implementation.

For example, those trustees/legislators who initiated the policy might consider that (a) research on performance reveals no significant differences between younger and older faculty regarding the quality of contributions (Bland & Bergquist, 1997; Blackburn & Lawrence, 1986; Walker, 2002) and (b) research suggests that professionals like faculty are more likely to thrive under evaluation systems that provide significant autonomy and freedom (Baldwin, 1990; Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Alstete, 2000). Faculty, department chairs, and personnel committee members might consider how their own norms of low expectations for faculty who need to improve deficient performance and/or systemic rating inflation might be inconsistent with their belief that most faculty are self-motivated and high-performing. It is important to cultivate trust so that those involved do not believe that they need to subvert posttenure review to remain loyal to faculty interests. Finally, cultural expectations of investing in professional development and retraining for late-career faculty need to be transformed so that these academic careers and their potential contributions to institutional purposes are valued in their last decade. If each of these groups is persuaded to "see" information and examples that contradict their previous beliefs and expectations, some change or movement in behavior and, thus, in outcomes might occur.

In this way, faculty might come to see posttenure review as less of a "sledgehammer" (McLean & Callarman, 2002, p. 62), and more of an opportunity. Likewise, trustees/legislators of state systems might approach the topic of faculty evaluation believing in the high performance of their faculty, and by believing in and expecting high performance, see more of it.

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