

A Critical Look at Issues of Conflict in Academic Staff Promotion in Ghanaian Public Universities

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Abstract

Sound management practice requires that administrative decisions affecting academic staff promotions reflect systematic, uniformly applied, fair, and valid evaluations of performance. To meet these requirements, a performance evaluation criteria and procedures must be put in place to reflect two decision elements: what will be evaluated, and how the evaluation will be made. This paper reviews literature regarding the three main criteria (Teaching, Research and Publication and Service to the Community) for academic staff promotion evaluation and how the modalities and procedures of academic staff promotions could create fertile ground for conflict to erupt. The paper reveals that academic staff face their evaluation with anxiety. However, the implementation and processing of academic staff promotions are interfaced with challenges. It is concluded that both faculty and administration should cherish the ideal methods and purposes of faculty assessment. Among other things, the paper recommends that administration/management should institute a data-based academic staff performance evaluation programme; specifically oriented toward such administrative actions as promotions. As a sequel, management/administration should robustly enlighten academic staff on their promotion modalities and procedures.

1. Introduction

Conflict, which entails a misunderstanding or disagreement that causes a problem or struggle between entities, forms part of everyday life situations. Gunn (2002) sees conflict as an inescapable part of human nature. Organisations comprise human beings whose varied needs and interests can clash, though the results of such clashes may be managed. Since human beings are unique with different backgrounds, conflict is bound to occur. Conflict then, is a natural and inevitable phenomenon, as asserted by Shani and Lau (2000). They explain that conflict is part of organisational life and may happen at any time in organisations since organisations comprise human beings with antithetical interests. This fact of endemic conflict influences the organisation's performance. Higher educational institutions have always had their share of conflicts, large and small. Approaches to dealing with these conflicts have varied over time, based on prevailing norms, societal conditions and available resources (Holton, 1998). For Holton, conflict is nothing new on campus. Aclover (2009) suggests that the university and academia are, by nature and structure, a perfect breeding ground for conflicts, disputes, problems and grievances. In spite of this, every employer aims at developing motivation processes and a work environment that will help to ensure that individuals deliver results in accordance with the expectations of management. Armstrong (2006) contends that 'an organization can provide the context within which high levels of motivation can be achieved by providing incentives and rewards, satisfying work, and opportunities for learning and growth'. Such incentives and rewards include opportunities for promotion, higher pay and participative management.

Universities all over the world have two main categories of staff. They are teaching and non-teaching. The teaching staff is made up of lecturers while the administrative staff are senior administrators and other professionals. The teaching staff is sometimes referred to as faculty members or academic staff. In this paper, this category of staff will be referred to as academic staff. Universities, whether private or public, have a special responsibility to commit their time, efforts and intellectual capacities to the universities' educational, service, research and scholarship obligations. Academic staff are therefore encouraged to appropriately pursue extra curricula activities such as research and community service that may benefit not only the university but also the public. McGlothlin (1960) posits that Academic staff of universities must relate both to the academic and to the professional world, even though he candidly observed the inevitability of some academic staff doing better with one of these worlds than with the other. He notes that there is the need for academic staff to be characterized by: 1) mastery of the knowledge in their field as certified by the terminal degree, usually the doctorate. Their search for knowledge in the field, according to him, must be on-going and not static; 2) and a desire and competence to teach. Similarly, Guzzetta (1972) asserts that there is the need to reinforce changes in university arrangement to include assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of existing academic staff in order to recruit new ones to complement them effectively. Miller (1978) argues that achieving this requires academic staff to possess scholarly qualities, including skills in teaching and commitment to teaching, interest, motivation and capacity for continuing self-development as a teacher. He adds that capacity to function as a member of an academic staff is to develop his or her own knowledge and teaching skill, and to make contribution as an individual, but as part of a whole working towards a common purpose.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) cite Wall and Callister (1995) to define conflict as a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being negatively affected by another party. Similarly, Moore (1996 p.16) sees conflict as a 'struggle between two or more people over values, competition for status, power or scarce resource'. Operationalization of criteria and procedures involved in the processing of academic staff promotions are conflict potential since they are made and implemented by human beings. If misunderstanding and tension surrounding the processing of academic staff applications are not managed well, it will result in promotion-related conflict. Issues of academic staff promotion can therefore come up as a result of doubts about the operationalization of criteria and procedures, promotion decisions, and unfair treatment (Bartos and Waller 2002). Promotion procedures in institutions of higher education are shrouded in secrecy and lack transparency (The Scottish Council for Research in Education). Brink, Benschop and Jansen (2013) interpret such transparency in the context of promotion criteria, implementation of promotion policies and decision making process.

Scholarly authorities, including Guzzetta (1972) and Miller (1978), made significant contributions on the need for scholarly qualities in teaching and research as necessary ingredients for continuing self-development and universities as a whole. This paper goes beyond that to discuss issues that can create fertile grounds for conflicts to erupt in the criteria and procedures of academic staff promotions in Ghanaian public universities.

2.0 ACADEMIC STAFF PROMOTION CRITERIA AND ISSUES

2.1 Research and Publication

Universities worldwide, including public universities in Ghana, in their criteria for appointments and promotions, place emphasis on research and publication. This criterion poses threat to some, if not all, academic staff because their promotion largely depends on that. It is an adage in academic circles that an academic staff "publishes or perishes". The dilemma in this adage is that academic staff are required to research and publish scholarly works, at all cost, for them to progress from one rank to another. Similarly, there is an idealized conception that operates in higher educational institutions which states that a good researcher is a good teacher (Arreola, 1984). The insistence that research and knowledge production in one's field correlates with effective teaching continues to permeate the academy (Waller, 2004 and Geis, 1984). For Miller (1978) research and publication appears to be a consensus that scholarly efforts should be required, particularly at the associate and full professor levels, though this could vary according to the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the academic staff. According to Miller (1978), the requirement for a specified number of publications vary with institutions, although a substantial number of universities prefer articles to be published in refereed journals, it is not obligatory. However, quality of scholarly production is preferred to quantity. Tien (2008) confirms the importance of research as criteria for academic staff evaluation by noting that research is one of the most important functions of universities throughout the world. Tien and Blackburn (1996) use the Carnegie Survey of American Academic Staff to demonstrate that promotion issues influence publication rates and the shape of academic staff productivity curves.

In spite of promotion policies established in institutions to regulate the processing of promotion applications, there are wrinkles of conflict in the operationalization of the criteria and procedures for Academic Staff promotions.

2.2. Teaching

Some academic authors, including Remler and Perma (2009), suggest that the idea of reward based on research instead of teaching is in contradiction to Universities' focus of "selling education". They believe that for any academic staff to be rewarded, the person must be assessed, based on what he/she has been able to teach as the prerequisite for promotion. Hearn and Huber (1992) posit that institutions of higher education are neglecting their core function of teaching in favour of research and publication to the disadvantage of student's education. This is on the basis that whilst Academic Staff are recruited to teach courses, their promotion must largely be based on their teaching output and efficiency and not on research and publications and service to the community.

2.3. Service

Under this criterion, academic staff are expected to make contributions to two major areas which are service to community (national and international) and service to the institution in question. Academic staff application for promotion should show evidence of contribution to their subject other than teaching and research may also include other contributions made within and outside the University. This may include administration and research groups, and the creation and management of multi-institutional, national or international research facilities. It may also include more widely contributions to the subject, for example, a widening participation activity and the design and delivery of outreach programmes. An applicant should show public and professional

service, including social responsiveness and activities based on the candidate's academic skills to bodies outside the University, including serving as an active member of a professional society, serving as an editor of professional and research journals, serving on national committees and agencies concerned with tertiary education and/or research, serving as a member of, or adviser to, governmental and other regulatory bodies, or serving as an external examiner to another institution. However, work load such as sandwich programmes and marking take much of their time.

However, lip service is given to the three-fold criteria (research, teaching and service) for Academic staff evaluation. Most importantly, instead of considering teaching as more important, research is rather accorded greater emphasis (Aleomoni, 1984).

3.0 Processing of Academic Staff Promotion and Issues

3.1 Collegiality and Accountability as a Culture

Collegiality and Accountability are a conflicting set of worldviews that manifest within higher education organisations. This concerns the nature of evaluation methods and the importance of accountability. The difficulty, as described by Chickering (1984), is with evidence and criteria. On some campuses and in some departments, faculties and schools, this culture of collegiality is quite strong (Birnbau, 1988). The assumption is that, chairs and deans who are evaluating their colleagues today will most likely return to the ranks of the department and be evaluated, possibly by those same colleagues, in a few years. This recycling encourages evaluations that avoid confrontation and accountability (Mills & Hyle, 1999). Be that as it may, administrators seek methods that are more comprehensive and more objective, and thus easier to judge to work things out. This culture has become a problem for universities to handle. Although some organisational theorists contend that culture can be changed and managed, Hatch (1997) agreed with those that maintain that culture cannot be managed directly because its norms and values are too deeply imbedded in the participants and barely articulated, let alone malleable, to change.

By implication, administrators and academic staff should understand the culture of their unique institutions. Though many academic staff promotion policies contain standardized evaluation criteria, administrators and academic staff should consider modalities and procedures that will speak to the specific needs and unique aspects of their environment. Furthermore, those involved in academic staff evaluation should propose organisational change that will support the purpose of academic staff evaluation.

3.2. Resolution Mechanisms and Issues

Conflict in academia is handled in several ways. Aclover (2009) opines that the university and academia are, by nature and structure, a perfect breeding ground for conflicts, disputes, problems and grievances. She intimates that problems that most frequently come up include breach of norms, interpretation of norms and violation or harm of rights. Institutions of higher education are as prone to conflict as all other human organisations. It is imperative that universities observe good practices of conflict resolution (see Miklas and Kleiner, 2003). In recent years, the use of mediation in academia has grown as a valuable and efficient tool in resolving conflicts (see Miklas and Kleiner 2003 & Waters, 2000). In their attempts to handle these conflicts, universities have instituted grade appeal procedures, and many universities have established offices of Ombudsman to provide an internal grievance mechanism for conflict resolution among its members (see Bauer, 2000; Harrison, 2007). Institutions try to adapt these mechanisms to the particular characteristics of the university (Aclover, 2009).

Nonetheless, some universities use the Procedural Appeal System in addition to Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms to redress academic staff promotion conflicts. It is a general knowledge that academic promotion policy allows the right to lodge an appeal against a decision taken on an application. According to the policy, appeals must be written to the Vice Chancellor, via the Provost/Principal of a College, Dean and the Head of Department respectively, within 10-14 days of notification of the application outcome. For consideration, the applicant is expected to give clearly the reasons on which the appeal is grounded. An academic staff may appeal for review of decision on an application if s/he believes that there might have been a significant degree of unfairness in the procedure or that the outcome was unreasonable in terms of the relevant performance evaluation guidelines. However, not every academic staff whose application failed and was not satisfied with the outcome sees it as a problem, hence the need to appeal. For Tien (1988), the aftermath of an appeal as mechanism to redress conflict is very crucial. He explains that it may have some implications for the commitment of the applicant, particularly if the applicant perceives the procedures for promotion as unjust, unfair and corrupt. Conflict resolution beyond the appeal system becomes inevitable, and if it is not done or done tactically, there will be the problem of post-appeal difficulties.

4.0 Academic Staff Promotions in Ghanaian Public Universities and Issues of Conflict

Public universities play an indispensable role in Ghanaian higher education and thus in national development. There is therefore the need to critically look at tensions and misunderstanding surrounding their evaluation and subsequently suggest options to improve ways issues of conflict in academic staff promotions are handled. This will minimize strife between administration and academic staff and ensure delivery. This paper focuses on public universities in Ghana, given their relatively longer periods of existence, their depth of involvement in public policy processes and their wider socio-economic linkages. In relation to the public universities, each of them has a specific focus and mandate within which to operate. Most of these universities started as university colleges and were later upgraded to fully-fledged status. These universities, like any other, encourage their staff to upgrade themselves academically and professionally. With the advancement of these institutions, staff who did not qualify at the time they were colleges were encouraged to upgrade themselves. Others who had the potentials were given the opportunity to go for further studies and new staff who met the requirements at the time were also taken on. Nearly two decades ago, one needed only to get the number of required documents and was promoted. As staff numbers increased, there was the need for criteria to streamline promotions. A common criteria was developed and had been reviewed when the need arose by the National Centre for Tertiary Education (nd). Recently, with the advent of Single Spine Salary and Market Premium controversy in Ghanaian public universities, there is the policy that academic staff who are beginners should hold a doctoral degree to be eligible for lectureship. Applicants with M Phil should be considered based on the need for their services and they should also be appointed as Assistant Lecturer for between two to five years within which time they should be enrolled on a PHD program. The issue here is what happens if s/he is not able to be on a PhD programme? However, Academic staff who are already teaching and do not possess PhD are given ultimatum to be on a PhD programme because it is a requirement. Some lecturers are already in their fifties and so what about that? Should policies take retrospective effect by all means? Lecturers without PhD could be promoted to Senior Lecturer status but cannot progress to the status of an Associate Professor.

Processing of applications for promotion always demand particular attention especially for Senior Members (Academic staff and senior administrators and other professionals). The general perception is that when they put in their applications, processing delay unduly and the interpretation of some criteria policy items are implicit. The reality is that the average period within which an application can be processed ranges between six months and two years. In extreme cases, it goes beyond that. This brings a lot of anxiety to applicants since they are always eager to know the outcome of their applications. Criteria policy items are sometimes interpreted to merit a particular case and this cause a lot of ill-feelings that affect staff commitment and team work.

4.1 General Promotion Procedure

- An applicant picks application form from the Directorate/Division of Human Resource (DHR) or downloads a copy of the form from the University website, completes and submits the application to the Dean through the Head of Department. The Department then forwards it to the Faculty and sometimes a college/school for them to undertake internal assessment of the publications submitted. On receipt of a satisfactory internal assessors' report, a Dean nominates four external assessors for the promotion exercise and forwards the application to the Registrar for further processing.
- On receipt of the application, the Registrar then forwards a list of nominated external assessors to the Vice-Chancellor to nominate two. After the Vice-Chancellor has nominated two external assessors, the Directorate/Division of Human Resource then sends a request to the external assessors to find out whether they are willing to assist in undertaking the exercise. The external assessor is given a maximum of three months within which they are expected to respond indicating their willingness or otherwise. When they respond, the publications are forwarded to the assessors giving them a maximum period of three months within which to submit the report.
- In all cases, two positive reports are expected before the application can be tabled before the Appointments and Promotions Board of the University for further consideration. After consideration by the Appointments and Promotions Board, professorial and analogous grades are considered by the University Council before letters are issued to inform staff of the outcome of their applications. In situations where one report is negative, a third opinion is required. In such cases, a new nomination must be made for the whole process to be gone over.

The procedures outlined above are interfaced with conflicts. These procedures are complied and implemented by human beings with different background and interest could provoke issues of conflict. Most universities in Ghana are relatively young and still growing and academic staff numbers increase with each passing year. For

this reason, the workload on the Directorate/Division of Human Resource (DHR) has become heavier than it used to be in the past. Nevertheless, the DHR as part of its mandate does work hard to reduce the bureaucracies as much as possible. The Division also puts in efforts to ease the anxiety of applicants as much as possible. In all these, they are sometimes blamed and branded wrongly.

In processing applications for promotion, the DHR handle the following issues which, when not tactically, handled create misunderstanding and tension in the university system:

- Giving academic staff updates on their promotion at every stage of the processing
- Sending e-mails and calling External Assessors to find out whether they are available to assist.
- Sending reminders to External Assessors who unduely delay in submitting their reports.
- Ensuring that External Assessors' honoraria are transferred into their accounts or sent directly to them.
- Delays in the processing of applications at various stages in the university
- Communication of decision on an application to an applicant

4.2 Delay in the Processing of Academic staff Application

It must be emphasized that delays in promotion could be from both avoidable and unavoidable sources. The unavoidable sources include administrative and institutional procedures which cannot be by-passed. It could also be from avoidable sources which include the Academic staff in question, the department, faculty or college and external examiners and personnel who handle the application.

4.2.1 Avoidable Sources of Delay

- ***Errors in the preparation of Curriculum Vitae***

Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a form of advertisement for the applicant. It speaks for the applicant. For this reason, CVs are supposed to be detailed with a good lay out. This makes it easy to study. Unfortunately, some applicants do not comply with the standard required. In such situations, the attention of the candidate must be drawn to the errors for the necessary corrections to be made, thereby delaying the processing of applications for promotion. Application forms and CVs are supposed to be dated and signed. However, it is common to find that these are not done and the Directorate/Division of Human Resource has to return CVs and application forms back to applicants to be dated and signed when they are not done.

- ***Errors in the Completion of Application Forms***

A standard form has been designed for eligible candidates to complete when applying for promotion. Some applicants complete the form in a haphazard way, which makes it difficult to study. Applicants are therefore requested to fill a new form.

- ***Publications not Well Cited to Tally with Publications Submitted***

Publications submitted in support of one's application for promotion are listed on the promotion form. Sometimes, the publications submitted differ from those listed on the promotion form. It is either some publications listed are not attached or some attached/submitted publications are not listed. In such instances, the application has to be sent back to the applicant to effect the corrections. All these delay the process.

- ***Effective Date of Applications for Promotion***

Academic staff promotions take effect from the dates indicated on their promotion forms. Some candidates are made to do corrections on their publications and re-submit for consideration. Once this is done, the date on the promotion form should be when they re-submitted for consideration. Some applicants fail to do this and would want to maintain the initial date of submission. When such applications are received at the Division of Human Resource; attention will have to be drawn for the correct date to be put on the form.

- ***Delays in Submitting Names and Addresses of Nominated External Assessors***

The processing of an application may delay when the applications are submitted without names, and sometimes, wrong addresses of external assessors. The Division of Human Resource will have to write to the Academic Head concerned requesting for the nomination of external examiners and their right contact addresses. With the advent of technology, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of external assessors are very helpful in processing applications. Thus, when such details are not readily made available to the Division of Human Resource, delays become inevitable.

4.2.2 Unavoidable Sources of Delay

- ***Difficulty in Getting External Assessors for Some Areas of Specialization***

There is a genuine difficulty in getting external assessors for certain areas of specialization. This problem has become more real, because the Universities want to avoid choosing assessors from institutions candidates have ever attended. In such situations, a lot of search must be done in order to get assessors who are independent minded.

Another twist to this problem is that some Faculties nominate external assessors who know candidates. In several instances, external assessors have refused to do assessment for some staff because they know them and felt they could not be objective if they took up the task. It also happens that external assessors' reports are rejected because they are not done in line with the criteria of the university in question.

Some assessors nominated are people who candidates have indicated on their Curriculum Vitae as their referees. Sometimes, candidates even have joint publications with external assessors nominated. Addressing all these issues take time and therefore cause delay in the process.

- ***Busy Schedules of External Assessors***

The honest fact is that most of the people who qualify to do assessment are very busy people. Therefore, most assessors find it difficult to meet the three months deadline.

5.0 Summary and Conclusion

This paper has attempted to deal with a number of issues that affect the criteria/modalities and procedures employed in Academic staff promotion in Ghanaian public universities. Universities are called upon to articulate clear visions of education. Nonetheless, publications in facilitating production and dissemination of knowledge call for fair faculty evaluation by the universities and the use of contingent approach in dealing with cracks in both academic staff promotion criteria and procedures. The problem is a complex one starting from submission of application through processing to handling of issues of conflict should emanate. Potential conflict issues are spread throughout the process of Academic Staff promotions and this can affect productivity. In summary, these issues include senior members (Academic Staff and Administrators) being ignorant of promotion policies. Also interpretation of policies is sometimes discretionally done and delays (which may not be the fault of administrators) create too much suspicion in the university. The anxiety of Academic staff when they put in their applications for promotion serves as source of worry. What is worse is when the report unduly delays; it lowers morale and subsequently affects academic staff commitment to productivity. It also stifles relationships among academic staff and also between academic staff and administrators including Heads of Department and Deans of Faculty. Some Academic staff have the perception that administrators working on their documents play foul deal in the processing of their documents or perhaps the process is too slow. They therefore personalize the situation and bear unnecessary grudges and have issues with innocent people. Meanwhile, some of these issues could come up as a result of applicant/academic staff error, unavoidable delays by institutional structures, and so on.

When academic staff are able to progress on the job, it is a sign of advancement of the institution. A university's ability to process applications for its academic staff within a given time or the shortest possible time frame provided by the promotion policy of the university, helps the university to groom people to take up higher responsibilities. If this does not happen, there will always be ill-feelings among academic staff and university administration. Besides, the institution will always have to fall on staff from outside to fill sensitive positions which could have been filled from within. Currently, the strength of an institution is measured by the number of Professors and Senior Administrators it has produced. This raises the image of the institution in the eyes of the public.

6.0 Implications and Recommendations for University Administration/Management

To handle the issues of conflict discussed in this paper, the following recommendations are made for consideration by university administration/management:

- ***Criteria for promotion***

As publicly funded institutions, Ghanaian public universities should comply with promotion policies stipulated in the conditions of service provided by the National Centre for Tertiary Education of Ghana (NCTE) and the Statutes of the individual universities. Be that as it may, the weighting of the criteria should be revised. Besides interpretations of every promotion item in the policy should be devoid of ambiguity. Furthermore, publications in renowned refereed journals should be accepted but not necessarily abroad because publishing abroad involves a lot of money to the Ghanaian academic staff given the position of the economy. Teaching as a criterion should

be given equal weighting just as is given to research and publication to know what exactly goes on in the lecture halls. Finally, structures and systems should be put in place to enforce service to the institution at both national and international levels.

- ***Sending Three Sets of Publications out for External Assessment***

The general practice is that two sets of an applicant's publications are sent out for assessment and a decision is taken only when two positive reports are received. In unfortunate situations, when one assessor unduly delays in submitting the report, a third assessor will then be nominated for the exercise. It is suggested that three sets of an applicant's publications be sent to external assessors right from the beginning. In this way, the first two positive reports received can be used in taking the decision. This will avoid the situation where a third opinion will be sought only when one report is negative in the long run.

- ***Increasing the Honorarium Paid to External Assessors***

External Assessors are experienced academic staff and are very busy people taking into cognizance their heavy load of responsibility in their institutions and beyond. A lot of things call for their attention. The academics teach all year round, they go for teaching practice supervision, supervise long essays, mark students' assignments and examination scripts, just to mention a few. Since a lot of things compete for their attention, request for their services for extra curricula activities should go with attractive financial implications. It is therefore recommended that an upward review of the current Honorarium paid to external examiners be done to motivate them to work faster. For assessors from outside the country, the honorarium should be a bit weightier to attract their services. The justification for increase in honorarium is that the volume of work involved is huge; reading through and critically analyzing all publications submitted demands a lot of time and expertise.

- ***Nomination of External Assessors***

Some nominations that Faculties forward to the Registrar do not include detailed addresses. Sometimes, only names of external assessors are provided and it becomes difficult to contact such assessors in the shortest possible time. It is therefore recommended that when nominations are made detailed addresses of nominated assessors must be included. The process of contacting external assessors becomes easy when their correct telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are included.

- ***Criteria for Nominating External Assessors***

There is no established criteria that guide Faculties in nominating external assessors. To solve this problem, it is recommended that the various Appointments and Promotions Boards of the Universities should constitute a sub-committee to come out with a criterion to guide the Faculties in selecting assessors. This will avoid the situation where all or some nominated assessors are disqualified from doing the assessment.

- ***Giving Candidates Access to Reports***

The usual practice has been that the whole process of academic staff promotion is kept confidential and shrouded in secrecy, such that candidates are not allowed access to their confidential reports. However, this paper recommends that external assessors' reports should be made available to candidates without necessarily disclosing the identity of the external assessor. This should be done for both candidates who are successful and those who do not succeed. This will help those who do not succeed to improve on their publications and re-submit for consideration. Candidates who are successful sometimes also need to know their strengths and their weaknesses to help them in future applications. This will avoid the usual suspicion people have when their applications fail.

- ***Training on the Preparation of Curriculum Vitae and Completion of Forms***

Curriculum Vitae is supposed to sell a candidate. For this reason, it should be prepared to suit an intended purpose. It is therefore suggested that orientation programmes be organized for Deans, Heads of Department, Deputy Registrars, Sectional and Unit Heads. The Directorate/Division of Human Resource should be given a slot to enlighten such officials on how to prepare Curriculum Vitae for promotion and how to complete promotion application forms. These officials will subsequently create a platform and discuss it with their academic staff.

- ***Training for Administrators***

A data-based academic staff performance evaluation programme specifically oriented towards such administrative actions as promotion should be instituted. This will equip them with the required skills for processing applications for promotion.

- **Resolution Mechanisms**

To handle academic staff promotion-related issues of conflict, the university should, in addition to the appeal system, establish a desk/ an office of Ombudsman to provide an internal grievance mechanism for conflict resolution among its members. This will help unearth presage issues other than structural matters.

- **Change in Culture of Collegiality Vs. Accountability**

Academic Administrators should make conscious efforts to ensure that accountability supersedes collegiality. This will remove the use of discretions to favour a few and subsequently control the setting of precedence that cannot be followed.

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