GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS WITH PROBATIONARY FACULTY MEMBERS
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

All probationary appointees in the Faculty are to receive a written annual evaluation of their performance. This is to be associated with individual meetings with these faculty members.

These annual assessments are part of a larger commitment of the Faculty of Arts to faculty development.

Based on his research of new faculty members at five different types of post-secondary institutions, Robert Menges¹ suggests that there are five sources of stress for new faculty members.

1. Anxiety about survival in their job.
2. A greater sense of isolation than they expected.
3. Stress on the job that creates stress at home or in personal relationships.
4. Pressure from competing obligations (teaching, research, service, committees, etc.).
5. Dissonance about the rewards they receive for their work.

Both dissonance in the allocation of time and rewards are subject to conflict between the actual, the preferred and the expected? How much time do I spend on teaching? How much would I like to spend on it? What are the expectations of my Department Head?

Raymond Perry's² research suggests that there are several things that can be done to reduce the dissonance and stress.

1. Faculty members must have some perceived control over the situation. This will positively affect their emotional well-being, their stress levels and their job satisfaction.

2. One condition of control is that expectations must be predictable. Individuals must know the expectations of their Heads, in teaching, research and any other responsibilities to which they are assigned. That is


why the meeting with their Head of Department is so important.

3. The nature of the institution has a bearing on this issue. Comprehensive Universities, such as ours, with responsibilities for undergraduate and graduate teaching as well as research present more possibilities for conflicting responsibilities than liberal arts colleges.

4. Finally, time does not heal all. In fact, without addressing these issues and expectations, adjustment can decline over time.

For these reasons I thought it might be useful to present Heads with this outline for interviews with probationary faculty members. Many of the issues, however, could also be raised in the context of annual evaluations of any faculty member.

The following topics and questions may be useful as a catalyst for those meetings.

**Teaching:**

1. Has your teaching been going well?
2. Do you feel that you have been successful in each of your courses?
3. Are the library holdings in your area adequate to support your teaching?
4. What problems, if any, have there been?
5. Do the student evaluations reflect your own sense of your performance as a teacher?
6. Have you thought of ways to improve your teaching next year?
7. Have you been able to balance your commitments to both teaching and research?
8. Are you keeping a teaching portfolio that contains course outlines, assignments, evaluations, and evidence of curriculum development, etc.?
9. Has your mentor been of help with theoretical or practical aspects of teaching that you would like to discuss?
10. Are you aware of the resources of the University Teaching Services that are available to you, including their workshops, and peer consultations?
11. Would you like the Department to sponsor your participation in UTS workshops on curriculum development, classroom techniques, or grading?

Research and Scholarly Activities:

1. What research or scholarly projects are you currently working on?

2. Are the resources available to support your research adequate?

3. Is the library collection adequate to meet the needs of your research projects?

4. What plans do you have for acquiring funding for your research from outside agencies and from within the University?

5. Are you planning to apply to SSHRC or NSERC as appropriate?

6. Have you submitted any applications for travel grants?

7. Have you developed satisfactory relations with graduate students who are interested in working in your area of expertise?

8. Has the supervision of graduate students become an integral part of your research projects and your teaching commitments?

9. Has your mentor been helpful in providing guidance or advice about your research?

10. Has the Department and the Faculty provided appropriate technical support for your research projects?

11. Are you interested in developing collaborative research projects with colleagues in the Department, in other units of the Faculty or at other Universities?

12. What plans do you have for publication of your current research?

13. Do you know that the Department and Faculty can, from time to time, assist with travel costs to conferences at which you are reading papers?
Service:

1. Do you find your service commitments in the Department appropriate?
2. Are there any particular committees of the Department on which you would like to serve?
3. Have you yet served on any Faculty-level committees?
4. Which Faculty committees would be of most interest to you?

General:

1. Do you feel that your life within the University community is satisfactory? If not, what specific issues are of most concern?
2. Have your colleagues made you feel welcome?
3. Have you found colleagues with whom you can discuss your particular interests?
4. When you arrived at the University, was your spouse or partner in need of an academic or other position?
5. Has that situation been resolved satisfactorily?
6. Do you have any suggestions for ways in which the Department or the Faculty could make your academic and professional life more satisfying?