

ISSUES AND OBSERVATIONS CONT.

4. Faculty leave policies. It has come to our attention that omissions and ambiguities in policies governing faculty leaves of absence frequently cause difficulties for both faculty members and students. For example, it is often unclear what obligations faculty members owe to existing graduate students during periods of leave. Similarly, if faculty leaves are not publicized to students well in advance, students' progress towards their degrees may be interrupted by the unavailability of needed courses. Finally, some policies are silent on the question of whether or not the faculty member owes an obligation to the University following the completion of a period of funded research. Where a faculty member receives and wishes to accept an offer from another institution during or just prior to such a period, the silence may produce contradictory expectations or even conflict between the faculty member and the university.

Certainly, it is often difficult to predict faculty leaves far in advance, and the importance of research dictates a certain degree of flexibility when grant funding or other research opportunities become available. Nevertheless, we suggest a review of faculty leave policies to ensure that they are clear, complete, and attentive to the needs of all constituencies. In addition, it would help to address student concerns if more funds were made available to hire visiting professors to teach key courses while the faculty members who customarily teach such courses are on leave.

5. Transfer and non-traditional students. As discussed in our Focus for 1998-99 section, we paid special attention this year to the needs of transfer and non-traditional students. We are pleased to see that Associate Provost Folkins is proceeding with plans to conduct a survey of these students to determine their needs. It is our hope that the transition to our community can be made easier for these students.

6. Human Resources Training. The Associate Vice President for Human Resources—Finance and University Services and his staff are to be congratulated on