

2007-2008 Group on Faculty Affairs  
AAMC Listserve Queries & Responses

**Query: Paperless Processes**

*Question from Andrea Kay DiMattia, The Commonwealth Medical College (adimattia@tcmedc.org):*

I am Director of Faculty Affairs at the proposed new medical school in northeastern Pennsylvania, The Commonwealth Medical College. One of our goals is to be as paperless as possible in our processes, especially promotion and tenure, so we were wondering who might currently have a paperless process including a faculty database, what type of management system do you use for it, pros and cons of doing it this way and any other thoughts or suggestions that you might have.

Thank you in advance for your help.

**Responses:**

*Lois Geist, University of Iowa (lois-geist@uiowa.edu):*

We have a paperless process but we do not as yet have a faculty database in an organized sense. The database is held centrally and can give us information regarding appointments, time for tenure etc. We are currently working on implementation of an electronic CV, but we are not there yet.

The electronic promotions process is different than that. We use a website and files on a password protected drive to deposit information from the departments. I would be happy to discuss this with you.

*Edward Callahan, University of California, Davis (Edward.callahan@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu):*

The idea of developing a database as opposed to a repository of pdf files is a very good direction to take your school. You will have a much more flexible and powerful system by pursuing that direction.

We are moving into a paperless system for all merit actions, promotion and tenure called MyInfoVault. We hope to begin putting appointments into the same system in the near future. We have used the original version of this within the School of Medicine for several years. Over the past three years, the campus has adapted the School of Medicine system, rebuilding it from the ground up to make it easy for people to use (we are encouraging new faculty to input data as they publish, speak, teach, provide service, etc.). Buy-in to the new system is running high even in departments on campus which had stayed away from it initially. The packet for merit evaluation aspect of the system is substantially intact, with the ability to link to electronic versions of papers, to upload teaching many of the types of teaching evaluations from campus (ironically, we are working to link the School of Medicine electronic teaching evaluations into the system- other units from campus are already on-line with that component).

For the appointment process, one aspect you may want to consider is confidentiality of letters of reference. We have not yet put these into the system electronically because we have concerns about whether you can assure the continued confidentiality of external evaluators if you make an electronic copy available to reviewers. For now, we are using electronic packets with a paper copy of external reviewers' letters.

The original system was presented in *Academic Medicine* last year by Lydia Howell (Howell, LP, Poon, B., Nesbitt, TS, & Anders, TF). A web-based data repository and review system for faculty evaluation and promotion. *Academic Medicine*, 2007, 82(7): 704-712.

Good luck with your building process!

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*Kathleen Nelson, University of Alabama (knelson@uab.edu):*

I hope that we can have exhibits of this type of system displayed at our next Professional Development Conference---I know that the leadership of the GFA is considering this.