Faculty Issues: 2000–2001 Year in Review
A Report to the Trustees

J. Robert Cooke, Dean of the University Faculty
May 8, 2001

Overview: This has been another busy year for faculty governance. Numerous issues were considered in our eight well-attended monthly Senate meetings. As usual, most of the work in shaping the issues occurred in the various committees.

Senate Governance Activities

Faculty Salaries: Discussions between the administration and the Financial Policies Committee have continued. The administration's commitment to rectify the problem is greatly appreciated. Nonetheless, we remained disappointed that it has been necessary to assign such a large tuition increase to the students (and their parents) for the statutory component. We urge the Trustees to renew their efforts to find a more suitable source of support.

Distributed and distance learning: The eCornell effort has been launched and not withstanding our concerns about its for-profit structure, we applaud the thoughtful manner in which its management is proceeding. We're relieved that the University wholly owns the entity (but not authorized to offer courses bearing transcript credit). Unfortunately, the angst surrounding the political process through which it was created still casts a shadow over other very important related aspects of distributed learning. Our University Faculty Forum on March 8th – *Beyond eCornell: Technology in the Classroom, Distance Education and New Pedagogy* exhibited some of that burden. We are still struggling with finding a focus that will organize our remaining technology-mediated distributed learning efforts. I sketched some potential directions in the March/April issue of the *Cornell Magazine.*

Our second and more successful discussion was held on May 7th, *Forum for Faculty Who Teach Large Courses* centered on the technological support experiences (good and bad) for this important group of faculty. (We video-taped this session and it is available from Polley McClure.) In the fall we'll turn our attention to copyright policy and especially how it affects distributed learning.

Tenure appointments: The Faculty Advisory Committee on Tenure Appointments (FACTA) has gained proficiency with its reviews. The Provost now attends our sessions when we consider exceptional cases. FACTA also provided advice to the Deans and Department Chairs on the essential, common components expected in documentation regardless of the College. (See Exhibit 1.) This year FACTA reviewed 51 promotions to tenure, 10 of which were examined by the full committee, and 1 was not recommended.

Campus Climate Committee: This broad-based group, consisting of faculty, students and staff, sponsored department-based discussions led by the Cornell Interactive

Theatre Ensemble (CITE). A vignette, 'Hang In There and Be Tough' was used to stimulate discussion. A unique aspect of these performances is that the actors stay in character while responding to the audience. This format allows even very tender issues to be freely explored. This approach was used in the fall with a Faculty Forum on Diversity in the Classroom and in many departmental groupings throughout the campus. (On May 9th the Senate is expected to renew this committee, transforming it into a standing committee of the faculty, but also having student and staff representation designated by the Assemblies. (We're learning to work together!)

Academic Calendar: The Educational Policy committee capably led the Senate through a discussion of the academic calendar, including consultations with the various Assemblies concerning Labor Day. The Provost has approved the calendar through 2004-2005.

Program Reviews: The Faculty Committee on Program Reviews has reached a milestone in its efforts to critique departments and area studies. See the Reaccreditation report for more details concerning this substantial effort. (http://www.ipr.cornell.edu)

Natural Sciences Research Advisory Committee: The charge of Local Advisory Committee, or LAC as it is more popularly known, was reviewed. The LAC performed major studies of Ward Center's nuclear reactor facility and prepared a second study concerning Research Support for Environmental Science and Engineering. The former led to extensive Senate debate, which eventually led to a recommendation that the reactor not be decommissioned. Although an administrative decision has been made to decommission that facility, the Senate provided a forum for the faculty whose work will be most adversely affected to present their concerns. The process worked.

New Programs: The Committee on Academic Programs and Policies (CAPP) recommend approval of Graduate Fields of Systems Engineering and a Master of Engineering Degree in System Engineering, and a composite Graduate Field of Horticulture.

Qatar Medical Program: Our interest centered upon the preparatory undergraduate program whose credits will appear on the Cornell (Ithaca) transcript on a par with courses taught in Ithaca to students who meet our very stringent admissions standards. The faculty's ability to perform its academic quality oversight role was compromised by the secrecy with which this major new initiative was handled. Many faculty remain puzzled and deeply troubled by the process.

Faculty Online Forum: We established a standing committee to oversee the Faculty Online Forum. To broaden the opportunity for thoughtful comment on major issues, we created this web-based technique to serve as an expanded editorial page for faculty, allowing all faculty to engage in debate on campus-wide issues in a virtual meeting context.

Issues under consideration:

Copyright Policy: The Provost's Advisory Committee on Distance Learning proposed four guiding principles for a revamped copyright policy. These were endorsed by the Senate and are expected to become the basis for a fully developed policy next year.

Proposed New Professorial Titles: A special taskforce spent the year exploring the possibility of three new professorial titles. One, Senior Professor, is intended to encourage a redistribution in the age profile of the faculty, allowing funding to be recovered from older faculty who elect part-time employment to be used to hire new faculty as a means of institutional self renewal. See Exhibit 2 for a characterization of the evolving age profile. Given the federally legislated uncapping of retirement age (including tenured faculty having indefinite appointments) we must take steps to preserve our capacity for institutional self-renewal.

The other two titles under consideration would create renewable, non-tenure track professorial titles. If adopted, this would create a major cultural shift that is in sharp contrast with out 'up or out' model applied to tenure track faculty. These discussions are stalled awaiting some college faculty to embrace and support these before the Senate begins formal consideration. Undoubtedly we have a serious debate ahead.

Evening Prelims: The Educational Policy Committee will make a progress report on its study on May 9th. The focus is on minimizing the scheduling conflicts. That committee has also examined the growing popularity of evening courses and the seemingly perpetual competition for use of the 4:25 – 7:30 p.m. time that is supposed to be free of formal courses in order to allow time for other student interests.

Other: We will cooperate with the Vice Provost for Research and the University Conflicts Committee to define our institutional needs for educational programs for our faculty, staff and students who are involved in research activities and to satisfy federal mandates.

Committee Activities

The Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC) nominates and convinces faculty to serve on approximately 30 University Faculty, Faculty Senate, administrative and joint administrative/senate committees, and about 15 Assemblies committee – in addition to approximately 8 short-term committees for searches.

Numerous other committees perform vital functions, but whose actions generally do not lead to legislative expression. For example the Lectures Committee manages the University Messenger Lectures series. Judy Bower, now retired but for many years had served this office, has prepared the draft of the new edition of the decade-old Faculty Handbook.

Exhibit 1: GUIDELINES FOR TENURE DOSSIERS SUBMITTED TO FACTA

Introduction

FACTA is a university-wide faculty committee that evaluates the quality and consistency of the evidence used to justify a recommendation for promotion. FACTA sends its judgments on each case to the Provost, who is responsible for the final recommendation to the Board of Trustees. To do its work responsibly, FACTA must receive the appropriate information in a timely way.

Timing of submission of materials

The due date issued by the Academic Personnel Policy Office to the Dean's Offices is the guaranteed date for timely consideration. Dossiers submitted after the due date risk not being considered in time for the next Board of Trustees meeting. Dossiers received later than 5 academic weeks before the Board of Trustees meeting cannot be considered by FACTA. (Three weeks of this 5-week period are reserved for Trustees' mailings, etc.)

Materials to be submitted

Checklist for dossier:

The materials listed below are expected for an internal candidate for promotion. Some of these materials may not be available or applicable for external candidates, but letters of evaluation in addition to references suggested by the candidate, as well as evaluations of teaching, should be provided.

Dean's Recommendation

- Report of the ad-hoc committee, including the names of its members
- Transmittal letter from the Dean, addressing disagreements or matters of serious concern in the file

Departmental Recommendation

- Letter from the chair presenting the case for promotion and addressing disagreements and matters of serious concern in the file
- Departmental vote (including abstentions)
- Report of any departmental review committee

- Letters from department colleagues that are part of the review process
- Comment on quality of journals, presses, and other venues where the candidates work has appeared

CV

- A complete CV, including a list of publications and/or artistic work, funded research, extension work, and university, professional, and service activities

Candidate Statements

- Statements from the candidate about his/her research, teaching, advising, service, and (if applicable) extension.

Appointment/Performance Review Letters

- Initial job description
- Appointment and reappointment letters
- Any subsequent change in the terms of appointment
- Any written responses by the candidate to the above

External evaluation letters

- All letters received from outside experts about scholarly, creative and extension work
- List of external evaluators solicited, indicating which were suggested by the candidate and which by the department
- A brief explanation of the evaluators' qualifications and their relationship (if any) to the candidate
- A copy of the letter requesting evaluations

Teaching

- List of courses taught, with enrollments
- Summary of teaching evaluations, prepared by someone other than the candidate.
- Letters from students and advisees
- Copy of letter(s) requesting student evaluations
- Assessments by colleagues of teaching and course materials (e.g. syllabi, project assignments, homework sets, field studies, lab experiments)

In addition, FACTA has found the following information especially helpful:

An assessment of the candidate's contributions to co-authored publications, explaining the conventions of the field in listing authors.

Comments on candidate's efforts to improve instruction.

Statement of how student evaluators were selected, the rate of response, and the usual rate of response in the department.
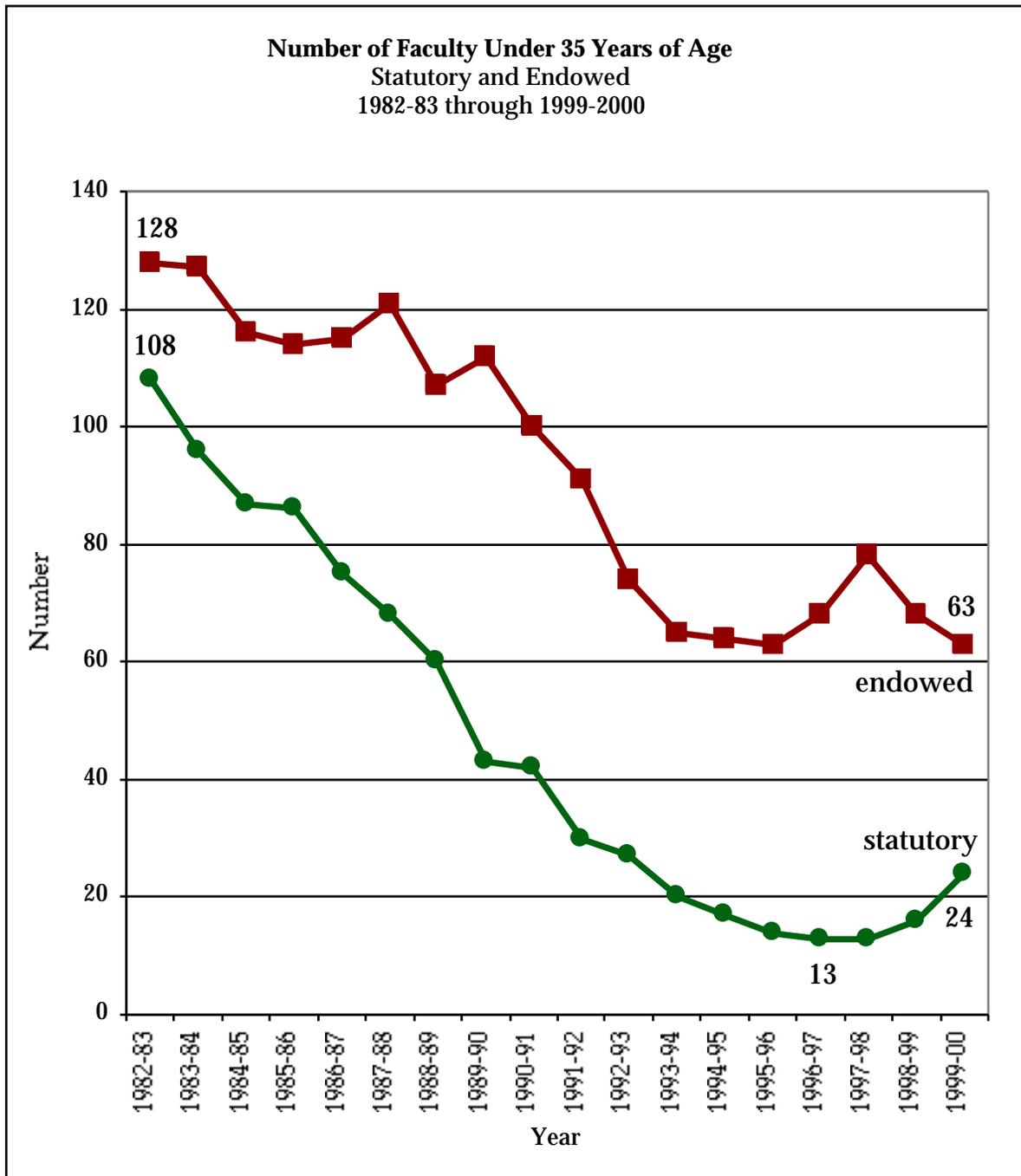
Data on how candidate's teaching evaluations compare to those of other faculty teaching the same or similar courses.
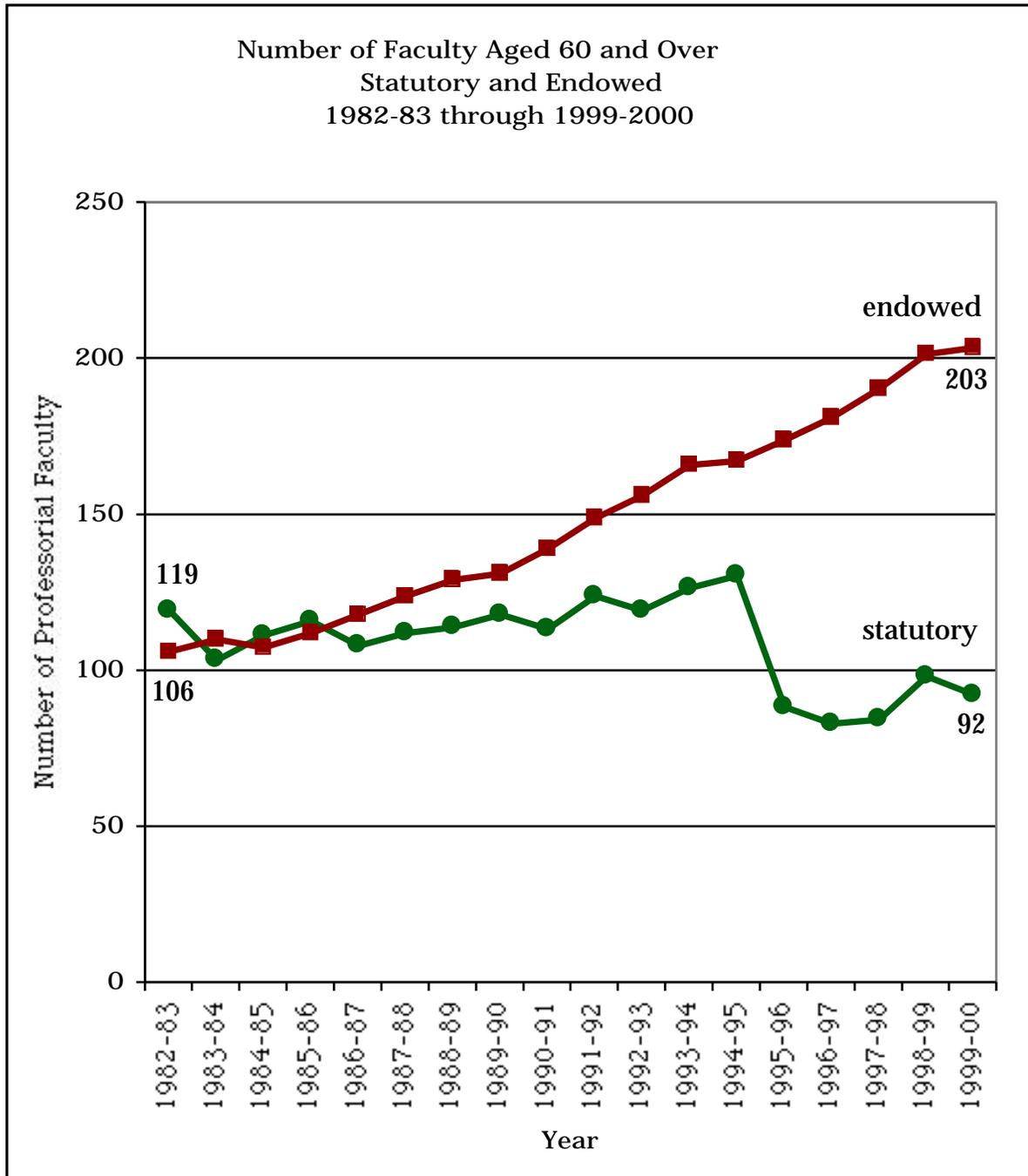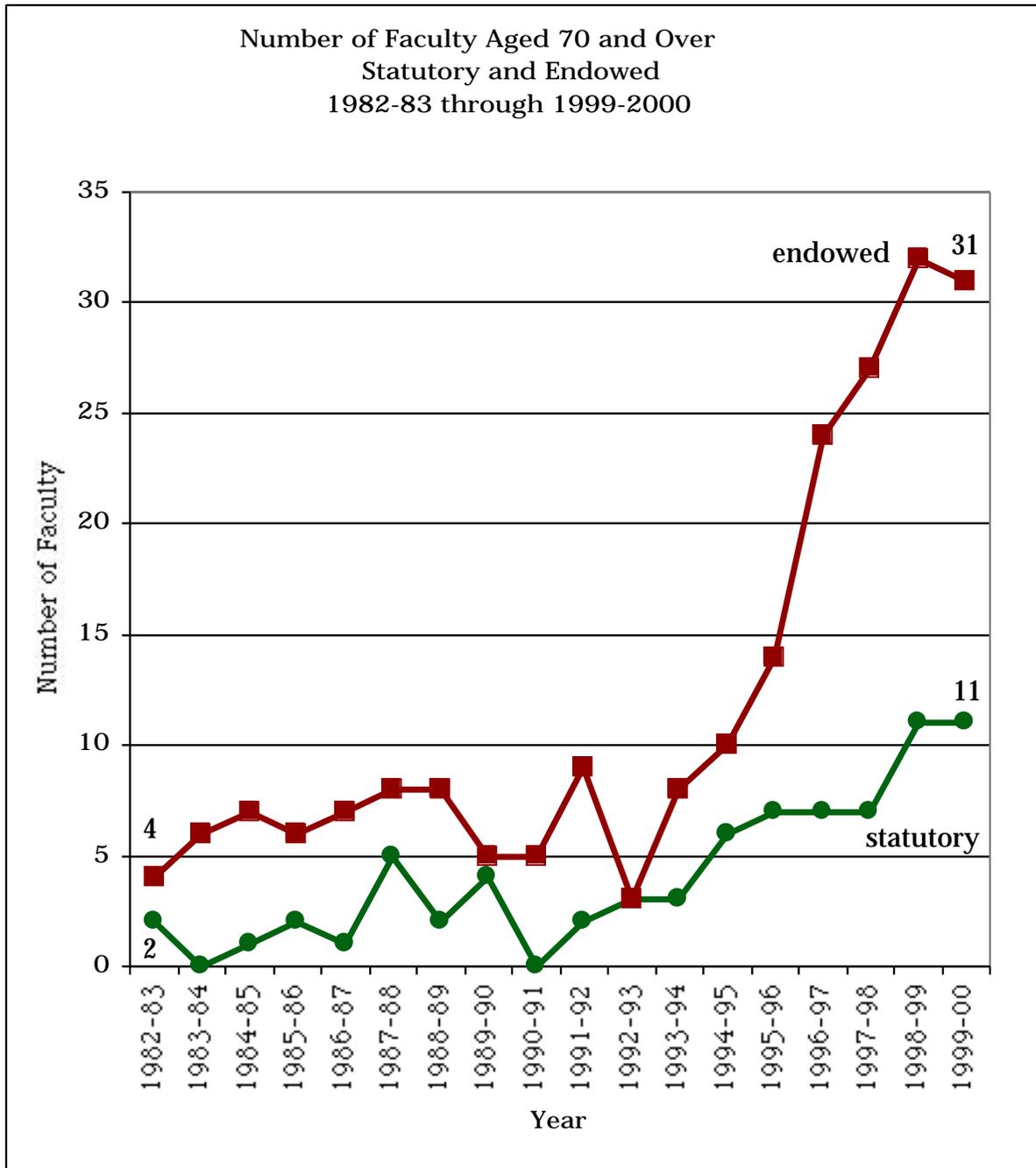
Physical format of the dossier

Dossiers should be submitted in a ring binder with clearly labeled index tabs marking major headings as noted above. Additional material should follow these sections and be similarly marked with clearly labeled index tabs.
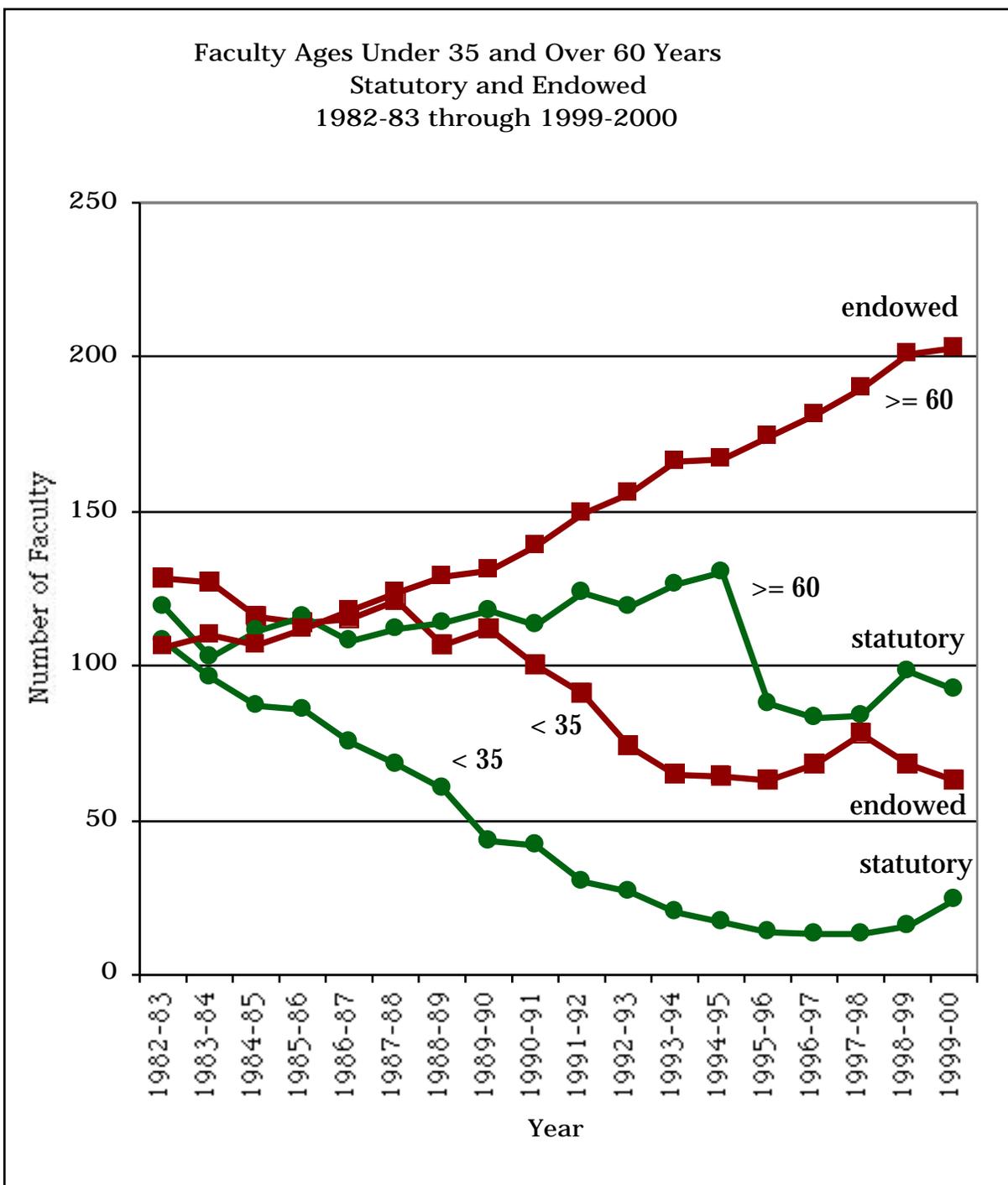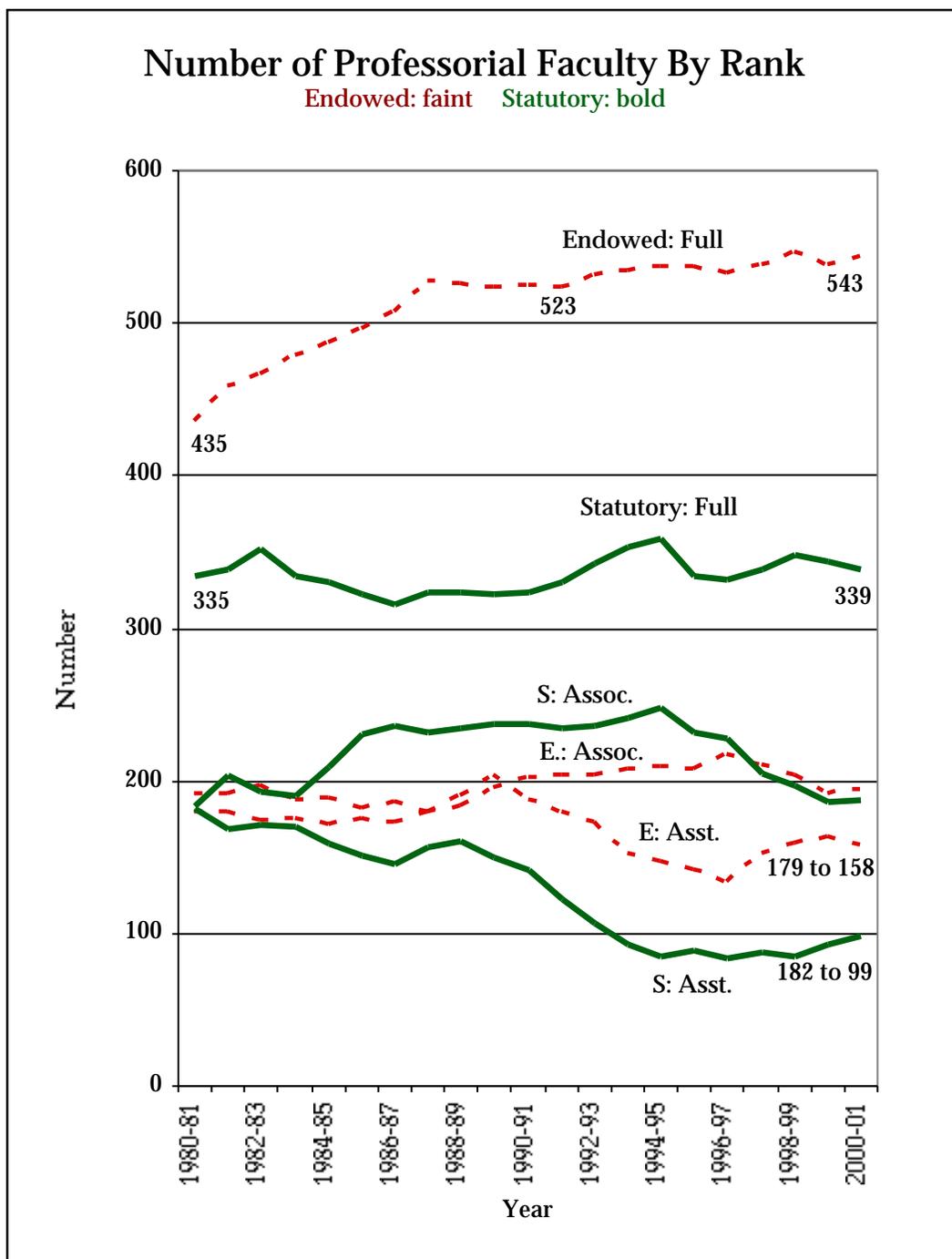
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Exhibit 2: Faculty Age Profile Trends

Number of Faculty Under 35 Years of Age
Statutory and Endowed
1982-83 through 1999-2000

Number of Faculty Aged 60 and Over
Statutory and Endowed
1982-83 through 1999-2000

Number of Faculty Aged 70 and Over
Statutory and Endowed
1982-83 through 1999-2000

Faculty Ages Under 35 and Over 60 Years
Statutory and Endowed
1982-83 through 1999-2000

Number of Professorial Faculty By Rank

Endowed: faint **Statutory: bold**

NOTE: Faculty include part-time and acting appointments but exclude courtesy, visiting, adjunct, emeritus, Health Services and ROTC appointments. Faculty at the Medical College are excluded.

SOURCE: Academic Personnel Database (February 1 each year)