

Minutes of the Faculty Standards Committee, University Senate, 3/6/2017

In Attendance:

*Jc Beall, Chair, Philosophy

*Jack Clausen, CAHNR

*Michael Fischl, School of Law

*Elizabeth Jockusch, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology

*Lewis Gordon, Philosophy

Lloyd Blanchard, OIRE

Preston Britner, Human Development & Family Studies

Amy Fehr, Graduate Student Senate

Brandon Murray, Office of the Provost

Andrew Rogalski, Undergraduate Student Government

Sarah Woulfin, Neag School of Education

Guest:

Dr. Wesley Byerly, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance

Jc Beall called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Old Business

The 2/6/2016 Minutes were approved (unanimously).

Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs)

At Jc Beall's request, Preston Britner reviewed the SET topics that FSC had covered over the previous few meetings and the data and measures Lloyd Blanchard (OIRE) had shared with FSC. After a brief discussion, the FSC formulated the following recommendation for next steps.

"The FSC sees no reason to request a change in the SET measure or its application at this time. However, we do encourage the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE), in consultation with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), to research best practices with respect to measures, applications (e.g., online vs. in class), participation rates (e.g., incentives, requirements), and appropriate interpretation (e.g., use of single items vs. full scales; large, required vs. small, elective classes).

The FSC has long stated that SETs are but one measure of teaching. Reviews of syllabi/pedagogical plans, assessments of learning outcomes, and other markers of teaching effectiveness are important. Direct observations of classroom teaching by qualified colleagues (e.g., those in the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning; those in one's department/program or a relevant area of inquiry; a peer with experience in a lab/large lecture/controversial topics setting; relevant teaching experts in pedagogy, instructional design, assessment, or classroom management) should be a key part of the evaluation and professional development for faculty."

Lloyd noted that he and Peter Diplock (CETL) are already having conversations along the lines of both these two areas (i.e., SET best practices; support for observations).

Preston reminded the group that the April 2017 PTR Forum provides an opportunity to emphasize these recommendations and the University's expectations, procedures, and resources. Deans of Schools and Colleges (who will be responsible for the "off year" School-/College-specific meetings in 2018) should consider their own practices, procedures, and needs.

Varieties of Professorships

Lewis Gordon shared an updated draft of his "Summary statements for distinguished ladder professorships" document, which he presented as a draft to stimulate conversation and possible development. [He also shared the University of California system model, which includes nine steps within the Professor rank, and a salary scale tied to each step. No one, including Lewis, was interested in pursuing that approach.]

Some of the ideas were to encourage promotion to Professor at an earlier stage and consider tiers within the rank to encourage ongoing growth, innovation, and productivity in the period after promotion to the rank of Professor. In the proposal, candidates would apply for review at the higher level ranks. In addition to the prestige/recognition, there could be other incentives such as discretionary research funds made available upon successful achievement of a new rank.

Concerns raised by Lewis about the current model at UConn include: the lack of incentives after reaching the rank of Professor; the possibility that mid-career Associate Professors aren't encouraged to go up for Professor early enough (and potential for bias/discrimination in such messages and mentoring); the practice of having to go out on job market in order to gain leverage for raises/advancement; and, given relatively few endowed professorships at UConn, the lack of "titles" to entice Professors from other universities to take a new position at UConn.

FSC members thanked Lewis for bringing the idea forward and discussion ensued on a variety of points, including:

- consistency (and potential bias) in standards for evaluation of promotion, and whether that was a separate or confounded issue.
- whether it could backfire to have a “regular” rank beyond Professor, playing into biases in additional applications (e.g., literature on women being less likely to apply, negotiate).
- other “unintended consequences” of incentives in the balancing act of scholarship, teaching, and service.
- the opportunity costs to additional levels of review, and if it is worth the time and effort.
- the possibility of meeting with high level exemplars (faculty at UConn) to listen to how they might react to the concept of additional ranks, how they might be vetted/selected, etc.

Updates of standards (as well as procedures) for promotion to Associate Professor and Professor are already under way across the University. The FSC should request an update on those results.

Jack Clausen raised the idea of a Senate Metanoia on a broader university topic of “equality.” Jc led a brief discussion about how systems of rewards/incentives, biases/barriers to equality (and, more narrowly, tenure and promotion) might best be addressed. Jc will take both the key ideas from the “ladder professorships” discussion and the idea for a Metanoia to the Senate Executive Committee.

New Business

Alleged Misconduct of Research

The Office of the Vice President for Research wanted FSC to review a revision of the policy. The draft for the revised policy was shared electronically, in advance of the meeting. Dr. Wesley Byerly, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance Representations, discussed the proposed policy changes. He explained the history of separate policies at the University (Storrs and regionals) and UCHC and an interest in approving one federally compliant policy for the whole University. It has been vetted by unions, administration, etc.

The main updates include research misconduct jurisdictional authority, research that isn’t federally funded, roles/responsibilities, procedures, and conduct of an investigation.

Jack Clausen raised the issues of: coverage of students under the new policy (versus the current handling of undergraduates by the Student Code); the idea of a standing committee (versus an *ad hoc* committee with relevant expertise, as well as the wording of titles); notification standards (i.e., instances in which ORI is notified) and timeline; and, terminology of “actions” (versus “sanctions”).

Elizabeth Jockusch asked about a stronger statement of how the University should assist the faculty member during an investigation (e.g., sequester of evidence) and following a finding of “no misconduct.”

Sarah Woulfin asked about how this policy overlaps with human subjects, animal care, and other regulations. [The current policy is narrow and overlap should be minimal.]

Wesley Byerly explained the reasoning behind each of these points, noted the issues raised by FSC, and promised to take the points raised back to those working on the policy.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Minutes submitted respectfully by Preston Britner.