

## Annual Report

### Faculty Standards Committee (FSC) of the University Senate

*April 2020*

The FSC membership for academic year 2019-2020 included:

- \*Preston Britner, Chair, Human Development & Family Sciences
- \*Marysol Asencio, El Instituto
- \*Dan Burkey, Engineering
- \*Stephen Dyson, Political Science
- \*Phillip Gould, Physics
- \*Lisa Holle, Pharmacy Practice
- \*Vicki Magley, Psychological Sciences
- \*Linda Pescatello, Kinesiology
- \*Paula Philbrick, EEB, Waterbury Campus
- \*Kathy Segerson, Economics
- \*Del Siegle, School of Education
- \*Cristina Wilson, School of Social Work
- \*Sarah Woulfin, Educational Leadership (sabbatical Fall 2019)
- Stuart Allen, Undergraduate Student Representative
- Lloyd Blanchard, OIRE
- Cynthia Gerber, Graduate Student
- Lewis Gordon, Philosophy
- Dalton Hawie, Undergraduate Student Representative
- Elizabeth Jockusch, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (sabbatical Spring 2020)
- Syam Nukavarapu, Engineering
- Girish Punj, Marketing
- Martina Rosenberg, CETL
- John Volin, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Ex-Officio member

*\*Senate Member 2019/2020*

The FSC met seven times during the academic year. Detailed minutes from all meetings are available on the Senate website. We focused on the potential implications of several initiatives on faculty workload and/or academic freedom.

#### **Major Items of Discussion**

##### **Sabbatical Leave for Non-Tenure Track Faculty**

We returned to the 2018-2019 task of making a recommendation for a sabbatical leave policy for non-tenure track faculty.

Topics of discussion included: a summary of current By-Laws and policy practices; the purpose of sabbaticals; information on peer institutions' policies; categories of non-TT faculty (job descriptions); SOM and SODM, whose faculty would likely NOT be included, if expansion is recommended; implications for changes (if any) to the University By-Laws.

The following statement was approved unanimously (3/2/2020; then submitted to the SEC).

### **FSC Response to the SEC: Sabbatical Leaves for Non-Tenure Track Faculty**

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) tasked the Faculty Standards Committee (FSC) with investigating whether non-tenure track faculty were eligible for sabbatical leaves.

The University By-Laws (Section XIII L 1) and current practice are not in sync with respect to the eligibility of non-tenure track faculty to apply for sabbatical leave. The By-Laws do not restrict sabbatical leave to those on the tenure track. Rather, they simply state that individuals are eligible if they meet the following: full-time teachers, assistant professor/equivalent rank or higher; continuous full-time service for at least 12 of the 14 semesters preceding the leave. In addition, the By-Laws are clear that “[s]abbatical leave is a privilege to be applied for in each case and is in no instance to be considered an earned perquisite.” Faculty must make a case for “the advancement of knowledge or professional improvement of mutual benefit to the University and the individual.” Before a request goes to the Provost or appropriate Vice President, the written application must be approved by the department head, and by the dean or director. The department head must “certify whether or not the work of the department can be carried on if the leave is granted” and that leaves are not expected to be granted “if they must be taken at the expense of the students or of the regular departmental program.”

Given this, the Faculty Standards Committee of the University Senate recommends that, to be consistent with the existing By-Laws, the University should not categorically reject applications for sabbaticals from non-tenure track faculty. Rather, the University should consider applications for sabbatical leaves from all eligible faculty members, including non-tenure track faculty, and evaluate those applications using the considerations outlined above.

### Entrepreneurship

Radenka Maric and John Volin led a discussion of implications (workload, academic freedom) of Public Act 19-154. Volin described University efforts regarding hiring and entrepreneurship, as well as progress on an internal report to be completed by the end of December 2019.

### The President’s “Doubling Research” Initiative

Maric and Volin led a discussion of the “doubling of research” goal espoused by President Katsouleas. They discussed areas of improvement and strategies related to hiring and productivity. They noted that the President was interested in scholarship across the University, not only research expenditures. FSC members raised a number of

questions related to hiring: Target of Opportunity (TOPS) hires, cluster hires, Innovation Professors, spousal hires, non-tenure track lines, and making use of a joint portal system across Connecticut. We also discussed research support and infrastructure needs, graduate fellowships, growing the post doc ranks, promoting collaborative research (and questioning how student productivity was being measured in current metrics), as well as more general metrics to be employed in assessing this initiative.

### University-wide Definition and Assessment of Teaching Excellence

We had a number of discussions as to what UConn wants, in terms of teaching excellence (evidence-based? inclusive?). Current language in the academic plan is broad. With life transformative education, there could be some overlap. Advising and mentoring are also important.

Most Departments have not implemented SET+ systems. Currently, it is required – but there is nothing specific demanded.

We discussed whether to revisit any past years' discussions of the student evaluation of teaching (SET), resources that are available for SET+, whether PTR files were (now) routinely showing assessments beyond SETs, the need for clarity on SET+ for promotion to Professor, and the relative expectations of Departments and Department Heads (vs. candidates) in implementing assessments other than SETs.

Members debated the relative advantages (i.e., additional insights) and disadvantages (e.g., potential misuse, esp. with small or selective samples, as these comments are not required and response rates vary greatly) of requiring that SET open-ended comments be shared beyond the individual faculty member. The FSC concluded that there were enough concerns with requiring this and thus decided against it. However, all members present endorsed the ability for a faculty member to choose to share the full set of comments with relevant parties.

### Policy Statement Reviews

FSC reviewed and commented on several documents that were sent to us by the SEC.

- Reappointment, Multi-Year Appointment, and Promotion Form for Clinical, In-Residence, & Extension (CIRE) Faculty Members & Lecturers.
- A draft of the Office of the Provost Guidelines on Secondary Appointments.
- PTR implications if the Board of Trustees passes an automatic 1-year clock stoppage for pre-tenure faculty.
- Office of the Provost, Internal Guidelines on Department Head Appointments