

March 2021 Minutes

Faculty Standards Committee of the University Senate

Monday, March 1, 2021 (2:00 – 3:30 PM, WebEx)

Committee charge:

This committee shall continuously review University policies and practices relating to tenure, academic freedom, workloads, rank and promotion, remuneration, retirement, and other matters affecting the faculty and shall propose any desirable expression of Senate opinion on these matters, including proposals to the Trustees for modifications in their rules and regulations on these matters.

Following members were in attendance:

Lisa Holle, Chair, Pharmacy Practice
Marysol Asencio, El Instituto
Dan Burkey, Engineering
Elizabeth Jockusch, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology
Vicki Magley, Psychological Sciences
Betsy McCoach, Neag
Linda Pescatello, Kinesiology
Paula Philbrick, EEB, Waterbury Campus
Sarah Woulfin, Educational Leadership
Cristina Wilson, School of Social Work
Preston Britner, Human Development & Family Sciences
Sam Dorman, USG Representative (
Kathleen Holgerson, Women's Center
Lewis Gordon, Philosophy
Martina Rosenberg, CETL
Jeffrey Shoulson, Senior Vice Provost, Ex-Officio member
Spencer Sonnenburg, Graduate Student

2) Old Business

- Feb 2021 Minutes approval
- Update on Report to Senate on Enforcement of Deadline for Research Proposal Submissions Policy status – President-appointed working group provided report to President Katsouleas. Today at University Senate, working group chair Tony Vella will present brief high-level summary and full report will be posted on the University Senate website. OPVR will hold 2 town halls before acting on any of the recommendations by the working group: March 31 and April 27th.
- Emeritus By-Law Revision – Senate endorsed at February 8, 2021 meeting. Vice-Provost Shoulson reported it was presented to BOT for consideration and moving ahead. Lisa reported that Provost Lejuez asked for our input on whether

the Retirement Committee was still needed with these changes and wanted FSC input. Committee discussed

- Approved the By-Law changes knowing this committee still existed so that seems important for any requests outside of the automatic emeritus status (eg, administrators, staff, faculty). This year might have more requests if any retrospective status is applied to those already recently retired
- Important for faculty to be involved in process of evaluating emeritus status
- Could be ad hoc committee or one that meets once or twice yearly after the deadline for requests to minimize any unnecessary faculty time
- Lisa to convey these thoughts to Provost Lejuez
- New Distinguished Professor titles
 - Titles used for Recruiting/Retention –
 - Lewis provided an overview of his recommendation, which included creating a Dean's Level distinguished professorship category that could be used both for recruiting and retention of faculty. This title could be awarded by Dean after reviewing potential faculty recipients after consulting with Dean's Council and diversity/equity administration with School or College. Advantages of another distinguished faculty title other than current University or BOT titles are that this helps for marketing (eg, UConn has x distinguished faculty), fundraising for endowed chairs or other gifts; individual has symbolic title, which could be useful if making a lateral move or being recruited by other institutions with similar titles. This professorship could potentially be tied to some modest award (eg, course release, RA/TA support). Important if approved by FSC to move ahead that Deans weigh in on the process.
 - *Next steps*: Lewis to meet with Vice-Provost Shoulson to discuss some logistics and develop a written proposal that FSC can discuss and vote at April meeting. If approved then would get Deans input
 - Provost Titles Faculty Alignment with Strategic Initiatives
 - Vicki provide an update from the working group. The working group has met once and has had some preliminary discussions. There is some overlap with above and will need to be thoughtful about these initiatives, particularly when communicating to faculty. Consideration is being given as to whether the 2 strategic type professorships could be combined into 1 package. Need for more information on goal of these professorships – are they meant to support and build upon and expand work already completed or for future promised work. Additionally, it will be important to discuss sustainability of these professorships beyond administration turnover. If we could, this might make us a

frontrunner rather than catching up to peer/aspirant universities.

- *Next steps:* Vicki will meet with Provost to get some more guidance and workgroup continue to meet and develop a proposal
- SET+ Working Group Update –
 - Martina reported that scheduling prevented workgroup from meeting but the workgroup will be focusing next discussions on 1) clarify why we use SET currently; and 2) practices of PTR committees when reviewing teaching excellence – are they similar or differences. Spencer shared results about a survey conducted by the University Graduate Student Senate, which revealed that students did not feel that they clearly understood what the SETs were used for and that some options to inform students about SET could include tutorial about why SETs are used and what they are used for within the University, mandatory requirement for SETs
 - *Next steps: Workgroup will continue to meet and provide update at next meeting*
- BOT Distinguished Professor Process Review – no new update

3) New Business

- Requests from Provost Lejeuz
 - SET 2021 potential change for online/distance learning classes – Provost Lejeuz requested input from FSC on whether questions should be added to Spring SET 2021 that would better represent online/distance learning classes. The response was needed the week of February 18th; so Lisa reached out to the Faculty Standards Committee members, our SET+/revamping workgroup (which includes FSC and other university faculty members), and the Future of Learning Revising and Refining Evaluations and Assessments workgroup to gauge thoughts on adding or revising questions to Spring 2021 SETs that might better address asynchronous or distance learning courses and reported the following summary back to Provost Lejeuz.
 - Concerns with changing the SET instrument now include
 - could create a situation in which the working conditions/expectations for evaluations have changed, opening up possible grievances if faculty don't like/agree with how SETs are interpreted/used
 - changes the validity of using the SETs for teaching evaluation from year to year
 - should only be done if questions were revised based on reliability and validity
 - doesn't address the greater problems associated with SETs (eg, best method for assessment, bias for women/other marginalized groups)

- Might just be addressing consumer/student satisfaction and gathering information that could be formative rather than for teaching evaluation
- Recommendations for Spring 2021 SET
 - Do not include new/revised questions as part of evaluative part of SETs; the calculation of the median scores and should not be included in PTR packets
 - Could include new/revised questions for formative purposes only that faculty could OPT IN to include as part of optional SET questions (rather than added across the board) or as another survey that faculty could offer during the course
- Committee discussed at length the value of SETs; concerns that faculty are still operating in “crisis” mode and this should be considered when considering SET evaluation this semester; online teaching (if designed appropriately) should be assessed the same way as in-person teaching; however this may not be the case for our current online teaching given the pandemic and faculty may have been required to use this format as opposed to designing an online course appropriately.
 - Retirement Committee – see above
- Update from Working Groups – Lisa
 - COACHE Survey – developing plan to release survey information Spring 2021
 - Faculty Equity Retention workgroup –survey to be sent to Dept Heads/Deans to understand faculty who had retention offers and outcome as well as those who left university without retention offers; qualitative interviews being conducted with Dept Heads and outside universities to gain some best practices
 - Civility Workgroup – initial meeting to discuss past efforts and how to consider moving ahead
 - COVID-19 Related Work Issues Workgroup – meet in early December; aligning idea developed during work group meeting as and suggestions placed under three umbrellas:
 - a. Ideas we can put into place without financial recourses. (short term)
 - b. Ideas that face cultural/policy/organizational barriers (long term)
 - c. Ideas that require resources (funding, time, people) (long term)
 This information and recommendations for the spring will moved to the Provost and the HR Governance Council for review and then to the Deans and other divisional leaders.
 - Future of Learning Committee – workgroups draw on what we’ve collectively learned from the dramatic shift to online and distance-learning modalities in response to the pandemic as we begin to plan for a post-COVID UConn – reports due in April 2021. Workgroups include focus

on: 1) big-picture guidance; 2) expanded online academic activities; 3) enabling cross-disciplinary team and co-teaching; 4) revising and refining evaluations and assessments; 5) technology needs to support high quality distance learning

- Senate By-Laws update – proposed by-law changes will be forthcoming most surrounding wordsmithing/editing

3) Announcements

The Faculty Standards Committee of the University Senate will hold a forum on Faculty Promotion, Tenure & Reappointment on **Friday, March 19, 2021, from 3:00pm-5:00pm**. The program will be held via WebEx.

Reminder of Future FSC Meetings

- April 5, 2021
- April 26, 2021