

Annual Report

Faculty Standards Committee (FSC) of the University Senate

April 2022

The FSC membership for academic year 2021-2022 included:

***Lisa Holle, Chair, Pharmacy Practice**

*Valarie Artigas, School of Nursing

*Bede Agocha, CLAS, Africana Studies Institute

Preston Britner, CLAS, Human Development & Family Sciences

*Dan Burkey, Engineering, Associate Dean

Douglas Degges, Art and Art History

*Masha Gordina, CLAS, Mathematics

Kathleen Holgerson, Women's Center

*Elizabeth Jockusch, CLAS, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology

*Betsy McCoach, Neag, Educational Psychology

*George McManus, CLAS, Avery Point

*Vicki Magley, CLAS, Psychological Sciences

Linda Pescatello, CAHNR, Kinesiology

Jack Powell, Undergraduate Student Government Representative

Martina Rosenberg, CETL, Faculty Development

Jeffrey Shoulson, Senior Vice Provost, Ex-Officio member

Note: Graduate student representative and another USG representative unassigned

**Senate Member 2021/2022*

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.*

The FSC met eight 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 that related to tenure, rank and promotion, retirement, and faculty workload and/or academic freedom.

Major Items of Discussion

University-Wide Task Force to Operationalize Evidence of Teaching Excellence Beyond SET ("formerly known as SET+)

The Faculty Standards Committee (FSC) has identified problematic issues within the use of our current teaching evaluation process, whereby current SETs are overemphasized as evidence of teaching effectiveness and although holistic teaching evaluation efforts have been repeatedly discussed over a period of years, actual implementation is scattered, and varies in comprehensiveness and buy-in. Thus after several discussions about how to make some progress on this issue, the FSC brought a motion to the University Senate related to this issue.

- Phase out the current SET+ nomenclature and policies – they have proven to be confusing and do not address the key issues identified with the current SET.

- Create a task force to be formed and charged by the Provost that includes all relevant stakeholders (Provost's office/administration, senate, AAUP, ODI, OIRE, faculty, students), and clearly identify to whom the task force's recommendations will go
 - Considerations should be given to a manageable size of the task force (10-12 members)
 - Suggest task force be assembled spring 2022; major work next year, with a report of recommendations to the Provost and University Senate by end of 22/23.
- Create a standing committee distinct from the taskforce charged with monitoring effectiveness, evaluating the impact, identifying potential concerns of the SET and teaching evaluation strategy beyond SET, and recommending regular revisions to the Provost's Office going forward members serving for a set term (eg, staggered 3 year) and distributed representation of units over time.
- As an expression of shared governance and facilitation of buy-in and accountability, the communication strategy to the broader community of UConn instructors should be transparent, provide mechanisms for frequent input and recognize time spent on the thoughtful engagement of contributors.

This motion was endorsed by the University Senate at the March 2022 meeting. The Provost's office is working on convening the task force with input from FSC.

Interpreting Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) Results: Guidelines for Deans, Department Heads, and Faculty

In April 2011, the University Senate approved FSC-developed guidelines for appropriate use of teaching evaluations: https://oire.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/35/2017/09/FE_Univ_Senate_SET_Guidelines_Fa12.pdf

During 2021-2022, FSC reviewed and updated these guidelines based upon several new factors:

1. The collective bargaining agreement between the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees and the AAUP explicitly prohibits reliance on SETs as the only evidence of teaching effectiveness.
2. Although an overall score on an individual teaching evaluation can be an indicator of teaching performance, research shows that SET results are only moderately correlated with teaching effectiveness and can be influenced by factors that are not under the control of the instructor and are unrelated to teaching performance, such as course level/topic/field of study or instructor's race or ethnicity, primary language, gender/sex or age, as a few examples
3. SETs are student ratings intended to represent the collective views of a group of students who have experienced the learning environment created by a faculty member. Student ratings are not a measure of student learning.

The FSC brought a motion to the University Senate to approve the updated guidelines for deans, department heads and PTR committee faculty on interpreting SET results at the May 2022 meeting; approval pending

UConn Provost Nutmeg Professorships

A FSC workgroup developed a proposal titled the UConn Provost's Nutmeg Professorships that would aim to recognize faculty members who have successfully engaged in the often hidden work that helps others excel that often goes beyond usual academic responsibilities. These inspirational individuals will

be recognized for the impact of their efforts to create opportunities or improve outcomes for others. Note that these Professorships are to be differentiated from the Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor awards, which allow for greater depth of focus in advancing the mission of the university in teaching, research, and/or service with demonstrable impact. The proposal is currently being reviewed by the Provost's office.

Bi-Annual PTR Forum

- Held Tenure-Track Promotion, Tenure & Reappointment Forum on Friday, April 8th, 2022, from 9-11am via WebEx. Invited AAUP leadership to provide introduction and recommendations. Administration provided guidance during first hour and break-out sessions for specific Schools/Colleges was held during 2nd hour
- Held Clinical, In-Residence, Extension (CIRE) Promotion & Reappointment Forum on Friday, April 8th, 2022, from 1-2:30pm via WebEx. Invited AAUP leadership to provide introduction and recommendations. Administration provided guidance during first hour and question and answer period held for remainder
- Continued high attendance with this break-out and virtual forum. Plan to continue to hold virtually yearly. Both sessions were recorded.