

April 27, 2020

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Seth Weinberger, Chair of the Faculty Advancement Committee on behalf of the members of the FAC (Monica DeHart, Jan Leuchtenberger, Steven Neshyba, Amy Spivey, Seth Weinberger, and Laura Behling [*ex officio*])

RE: 2019-20 Annual Report

This year, the Faculty Advancement Committee (FAC) will have completed **52** reviews (with an additional two third-year associate Head-Officer-Only reviews, as allowed under the *Faculty Code*, completed by the Provost):

Type of Review	Number and Status of Evaluations	Did not Use Canvas Site
Tenure	1	0
Tenure and promotion to Associate	5	0
Promotion to Associate/Clinical Associate	3	0
Promotion to Professor	11	0
Three-year Assistant	8	0
Three-year Associate/Clinical Associate	0	0
Five-year Professor/Clinical Associate	19	2
Three-year Instructor	5	0
Open: 25 Closed: 11 (all streamlined open)		
Total	52	2

The FAC has forwarded evaluations for tenure, tenure and promotion, and promotion to Associate Professor or Professor to the President. Some of these cases were considered by the Board of Trustees at the February 2020 meeting; some will be considered at the May 2020 meeting.

The FAC met for a total of 37 hours from October through December 2019 and will have met 56 hours for the Spring 2019 semester. Additionally, the FAC met with departments for an additional 6 hours. FAC members estimate that they each spend roughly 10-15 hours per week reading files and preparing evaluation letters in addition to time spent in meetings. As described in previous annual reports, we

welcome a discussion as to whether the 1 unit release per year is sufficient for this level of service, while emphasizing that the work itself is vital, educational, and inherently inspiring.

SUMMARY OF KEY OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The FAC recommends that the Faculty Senate and/or the Professional Standards Committee consider the grounds on which the Faculty wishes appeals of FAC decisions to be possible and to clarify the language of the *Faculty Code* to reflect that determination.**
- **The FAC recommends that the Faculty Senate and the Faculty carefully deliberate about what it means to achieve the rank of Professor at the University of Puget Sound.**
- **The FAC recommends that the Faculty and/or the Professional Standards Committee revisit the utility of the streamlined Third-Year Associate Reviews and consider revoking this option.**
- **The FAC recommends that the Professional Standards Committee revisit whether Third-Year Associates should be exempt from assembling a file.**
- **The FAC recommends that the Professional Standards Committee eliminate the discrepancy in the decision to choose a streamlined review.**
- **The FAC recommends that the Professional Standards Committee consider a Faculty Code amendment that would set the due date for third-year promotion files to a spring submission schedule and require a third semester of evaluations.**
- **The FAC recommends that the Faculty Senate charge the Professional Standards Committee to review and consider expanding requirements for class visits.**

KEY OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Appeal Process: The FAC believes that the language in the *Faculty Code* (Chapter 3, Section 6) is unclear. Chapter 3, Section 6a(2)(b) states that “a formal appeal of the evaluation conducted by the Advancement Committee is limited to questions of fairness, completeness, or adequacy of consideration by the Advancement Committee in conducting the evaluation.” It is the FAC’s opinion that this language that seeks to “limit” the grounds of an appeal is intended to only allow evaluatees to appeal on procedural grounds, for example on suspicion of bias, conflict of interest, or other such issues of procedural equity. It is the FAC’s opinion that the Faculty does not intend to allow evaluatees to appeal the judgment of the FAC, as doing so would potentially subject every negative recommendation of the FAC, which is an elected body, to the judgment of an unelected hearing board that lacks the institutional knowledge and experience of the FAC. **The FAC recommends that the Faculty Senate and/or the Professional Standards Committee consider the grounds on which the Faculty wishes appeals of FAC decisions to be possible and to clarify the language of the *Faculty Code* to reflect that determination.**

2. Standards for Promotion to the Rank of Professor: The FAC continues to be concerned about the lack of clarity, direction, and intent from the Faculty regarding the standards and expectation for promotion to the rank of Professor. While the FAC believes that it can appropriately and effectively interpret the language of the *Faculty Code*, particularly the language concerning “distinguished service,” the FAC is concerned that evaluatees lack a clear understanding of what is understood to constitute

“distinguished service.” While the FAC is aware that recent motion to amend this language in the *Faculty Code* has been shelved due to the on-going pandemic, it notes that the proposed change from “distinguished service” to “significant service” does nothing to address this concern and, in the eyes of some FAC members, may even make expectations less clear. **The FAC recommends that the Faculty Senate and the Faculty carefully deliberate about what it means to achieve the rank of Professor at the University of Puget Sound, whether promotion to that rank is understood to be earned by fulfilling one’s contractual obligations or by going “above and beyond,” and how to clarify for evaluatees what are the standards for promotion.**

3. Head-Officer-Only Third-Year Associate Reviews and Streamlined Reviews. The Advancement Committee notes that the move to a streamlined review for the Third-Year Associate Reviews has had a prejudicial effect on some evaluatees by depriving them of useful feedback from the FAC about their progress in meeting the standards required for promotion to Professor. By receiving feedback only from their departmental head-officer, evaluatees do not necessarily receive accurate advice, particularly about their progress based on the standard of “distinguished service.” **The FAC recommends that the Faculty and/or the Professional Standards Committee revisit the utility of the streamlined Third-Year Associate Reviews and consider revoking this option or, at a minimum, explicitly warning evaluatees about these implications.**

Additionally, the FAC has discovered discrepancies within the *Faculty Evaluation Procedures & Criteria* (the “buff document”) in terms of procedures governing streamlined reviews at both the Third-Year Associate review and Professor/Instructor ranks. With regard to the former, the FAC notes that while Professors and Instructors using the streamlined evaluation procedures must put together a file which is made available to departmental colleagues and the FAC (see p. 27 of the *Faculty Evaluation Procedures & Criteria*), Third-Year Associate Professors ostensibly need not put together a file (see p. 25), if they are following the evaluation procedure for 1st and 2nd year Assistant Professors. Given the concerns expressed in the previous paragraph, **the FAC recommends that the Professional Standards Committee revisit whether Third-Year Associates should be exempt from assembling a file.**

With regard to Professors, p. 3 of the *Faculty Evaluation Procedures & Criteria* establishes that “Professors at any year of service in that rank may elect, *with the concurrence of their head officer and the dean*, to have a ‘streamlined’ review; Instructors who have served 17 years or more in that rank may elect, *with the concurrence of their head office and the dean [Provost]*, to alternate full and ‘streamlined’ reviews.” However, p. 27 of the same document removes the dean [Provost] from the decision: “*The head officer*, as described in Faculty Code Chapter III, Section 5, *determines whether a full review or a “streamlined” review is warranted and reports that decision to the Dean.*” It is the opinion of the FAC that the Provost, as a member of the FAC with knowledge of a candidate's prior evaluation and any concerns therein, should be involved in the decision to select a streamlined evaluation. **The FAC recommends that the Professional Standards Committee eliminate the discrepancy in the decision to choose a streamlined review.**

4. Preparing for Promotion to Associate Professor at the Third Year: As noted in our 2019 report, the FAC encourages assistant professors to consider carefully whether they wish to go up for promotion to Associate in the third year if they are eligible. If they choose to do so, they should have early conversations with their Head Officer to ensure that their first and second year reviews (and the Head Officer letters from those reviews – especially the second year letter) provide them with the type of information and guidance that prepares them to apply for promotion in their third year. **The FAC**

recommends that the Professional Standards Committee consider a Faculty Code amendment that would set the due date for third-year promotion files to a spring submission schedule, in order that feedback from the second-year evaluation letter can be considered and incorporated into an additional semester of teaching, and require a third semester of evaluations.

5. Improving the Pattern of Class Visits: Patterns of class visitation for evaluatees vary widely by individual and by department. An interpretation of the *Faculty Code*, Chapter III, Section 4.a.(1)(b) – page 46, further explained in the Professional Standards Committee “User Guide” (page 11) notes: “PSC affirms that adequate visitation requires at least two visits by each of two faculty members and recommends at least four separate class sessions be visited across more than one semester.” In the opinion of the FAC, departments that only conduct the bare minimum number of visits, or close to the minimum, are neither able to contextualize student comments nor give evaluatees useful advice with which to improve their pedagogy. Particularly as faculty raise concerns about sources of bias in Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) forms, the Advancement Committee re-emphasizes that a greater number of visits, spread across semesters and courses is desirable. This is true both in evaluations that are formative (where there is no change in status but where providing feedback to the evaluatee is crucial) and those that are summative (e.g., assessment for the purposes of tenure and promotion). We continue to see too many clusters of visits to the same few class sessions in the early Fall semester for tenure files, and we see too many visits occurring in the Fall semester for other files. Every Head Officer receives a chart of candidates for tenure two years ahead (and, for all other reviews, one year ahead) in order to facilitate an ongoing pattern of class visits. It is especially important for pre-tenure faculty to have ample opportunity to gain colleague feedback prior to the tenure review.

Information provided by visits is most helpful to both the FAC and the evaluatee when visits are spread evenly across classes and courses, and take place in the semesters in which student evaluations are also collected. Doing so means that evaluatees have the benefit of earlier feedback (when they are better able to incorporate it into teaching or use it as the basis of reflection in their personal statement). If issues are identified through student evaluations in a course, then there are also faculty observations of that same course offering, providing an additional perspective.

Recognizing that graduate and undergraduate team-teaching scenarios differ, the Committee is concerned, as well, about the efficacy of co-teaching or team-teaching counting as class visits for purposes of evaluation. We believe that the frame of reference may be different for teaching as opposed to evaluation, and request that the PSC consider (in consultation with graduate program faculty) an expectation that (particularly in pre-tenure or tenure evaluations) co- or team-teachers visit a course taught by the evaluatee other than the one in which they are involved in design and delivery.

In light of our concerns, and the concerns of colleagues over the evidence of bias in student evaluations of teaching, the FAC again requests that the Faculty Senate charge the Professional Standards Committee to review and consider expanding requirements for class visits.

6. Senate Liaison to the Advancement Committee: At the request of the FAC, the Senate assigned, for the first time, a Senator to serve as liaison to the Advancement Committee. The FAC believes that this is an important avenue of communication through which the Advancement Committee can address real-time concerns to the Senate. **The FAC requests that the Senate continue to appoint a liaison to the Advancement Committee.**

GENERAL ADVICE FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Advice to Colleagues

The FAC observes that the lack of student evaluations in lab classes remains problematic, particularly hindering the ability to gauge teaching in files where laboratory instruction is a significant portion of an evaluatee's teaching load. The FAC has previously suggested that the Professional Standards Committee invite faculty input on this topic, and encourages departments to be involved in this process to ensure that suitable forms for their laboratory-based classes are approved, should this formal step be taken.

In evaluating the scholarly work of an evaluatee, the FAC reminds colleagues that the Committee is generally less able to assess the quality of an evaluatee's scholarly work than the evaluatee's departmental colleagues. **Thus, it is especially important that colleague letters and departmental deliberations comment on the quality of the products, their contribution to the field, and the scope of the audience (regional, national, international).**

Advice to Head Officers

The FAC reminds Head Officers that the deliberative letter – informed by individual colleague letters and deliberative discussion – should address “the needs of the department, school, or program and the university” as a criterion for tenure reviews (see Faculty Code, Chapter III, Section 3.d). The Code explicitly calls for “demonstrated need” for the position.

In change of status reviews, the Head Officer's summary of deliberation letter (along with the FAC and President's letter) are forwarded to Trustee members of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board and need to reflect the formative and summative substance of the departmental discussion. **Head Officers who write especially terse summary of deliberation letters, with expectation that content is conveyed by way of the open file letters, may, by a truncated approach, do a disservice to the evaluatee as the file moves forward to the Board.**

We recommend that Head Officers be identified a year in advance of the evaluation, particularly when department chairs, directors, or deans are up for review; the Head Officer needs to ensure that there is an adequate set of class visits. The Provost's Office provides the information about who is up for review one year in advance (and two years in advance for tenure evaluations).

The Advancement Committee expects that, in accordance with the Faculty Code, Chapter III, Section 4.d.(1), “No later than four months after receiving the report from the Faculty Advancement Committee, or notification of action by the Board of Trustees in cases of tenure and promotion, the Head Officer meets with the evaluatee to discuss the results of the evaluation.” Such discussion not only allows for the clarification of individual teaching, scholarly, and service expectations moving forward, but also promotes acknowledgement of FAC feedback that may be of larger departmental concern. The FAC encourages fulfillment of this portion of the code, as it is an important part of the evaluation process.

The Committee appreciates that many Head Officers have this year provided a chart of class visits at the beginning of deliberative summary letters (who visited which classes and when) in order to document clearly all class visits conducted by colleagues; **the FAC encourages this practice by all Head Officers as we would otherwise struggle to discern accurately the ongoing pattern of class visits.**

In the preparation of Head-Officer-Only letters written for Third-Year Associate Professor reviews, the FAC would like to encourage Head Officers to offer evaluative guidance with respect to departmental (as expressed in departmental guidelines) or university (as expressed by the Professional Standards

Committee and the *Faculty Code*) expectations, as the candidate prepares for their next review period. Given there is no C.V. or evaluation statement required for the HOO file, and having observed the care with which the FAC reviewed evidence of sustained professional growth in promotion files, the Provost recommends greater attention by Head Officers to the purpose of the Three-year Associate review in preparation for the future promotion review.

Advice to Evaluatees

The FAC again encourages evaluatees, in accordance with the Faculty Code and *Faculty Evaluation Procedures & Criteria* document (p. 18), to include a list of professional objectives, both short-term and long-term, in the personal statement. We also encourage evaluatees to include information about their teaching philosophy and how it relates to what they do in their courses, given the centrality of pedagogy-driven methods in our broader mission.

The FAC affirms the usefulness of evaluatees including in their file copies of scholarly materials (publications, conference papers, proposals, letters from editors, etc.) that evaluatees are citing as evidence of professional growth. **The Committee encourages evaluatees to describe progress made on scholarly or creative projects since the time of the previous review, in addition to discussing the content of that work.** Such an approach allows the Committee to more readily ascertain “sustained growth.” **The Committee observes across a number of files calls from evaluators for evaluatees to make clear their roles in co-authored or collaborative work.** Department, school, or program Head Officers can also assist the FAC in understanding how “author order” for collaborative work is to be interpreted in the specific field. Departments could also add such information to departmental guidelines during their next cycle of review by the PSC.

FAC members have the prior Advancement Committee’s evaluation letter available to them and treat it as important context for their review of the current file. **We encourage evaluatees to review this letter and to include a discussion of it in their personal statement, particularly how they may have addressed any concerns that were raised.**

Evaluatees undergoing Third-Year Associate Professor reviews are allowed but not required to submit materials for their file, given that these may be conducted as Head-Officer-Only reviews. The Advancement Committee notes that an unintended consequence of this process is that without additional information provided (CV, statement, scholarly material or teaching evaluations) it is difficult to consider the Three-year Associates as candidates for teaching or research awards. What is more, evaluatees are limited to the advice of their Head Officer, rather than the FAC, as to the appropriateness of their service and professional growth as regards to their eventual promotion to Professor. Thus, the FAC would like to encourage evaluatees to submit a file if they would like to be considered for awards. The FAC invites the faculty to consider an amendment to the Faculty Code to incorporate the possibility of a Three-year Associate Professor choosing a Head-Officer-Only, a streamlined review, or a regular review.

The FAC is tasked with judging the strengths of evaluatees who work in different departments and who often have differing academic roles and even teaching workloads due to release units, sabbaticals, and other university contractual duties. Clear delineation in the file of release time and teaching load during the period of review, by the evaluatee, the Head Officer, or both, preferably in *chart form* would help ensure more accurate interpretation of the file. In addition, where the number of student evaluations is small, a description of reassigned time and what was accomplished would be informative in the FAC’s overall equitable consideration of the file. The FAC notes and appreciates that many faculty have begun

including such a chart, and **we would like to encourage every evaluatee to include this chart as a standard part of every file submitted**, in the same way that Head Officers are asked to include a chart documenting classroom visits.

Fall 20xx courses	Units	Spring 20xx courses	Units
PG 103	1	Sabbatical	1
lab	1	Sabbatical	1
Chair release	1	Sabbatical	1

The Advancement Committee urges evaluatees to offer a **qualitative** description of their advising and service work rather than simply listing or affirming it in their statement. Especially in cases of promotion to Professor, where the *Faculty Code* requires evidence of “distinguished service,” it is crucial that the evaluatee highlight **the nature and impact** of their service contributions. It would also be helpful if evaluatees explained the nature and impact of their contributions when their service is off-set with course releases from their teaching load. Because the *Code* does not stipulate the specific number, type, or nature of service commitments that would constitute “distinguished” service, **it is incumbent upon the evaluatee to describe the quality of their service and how they see that work meets the standard.**

Dissemination

The FAC has concerns that the important ideas contained in this report will not receive as wide an audience as is optimal, despite it being made available to faculty through web-based mechanisms. We have particular concerns that some of the individuals who would most benefit from access, chiefly, junior colleagues, may not know of its existence or how to access it. Indeed, even more seasoned colleagues who are serving as first-time Head Officers may not know of the importance of reviewing this report and related documents when they assist evaluatees in preparing their files. Accordingly, we seek permission from the Faculty Senate to send out a user-friendly form of the information contained in this report directly to the faculty through email or through dissemination to department chairs, with the intention that it would be given directly to the faculty. The intention is to allow us to send a “love letter,” named as such to better gain faculty attention, but also to convey that it is intended to help the evaluation process be more useful for the Advancement Committee and less stressful for evaluatees and department members who are evaluating them. The Committee will take acceptance of the content of this annual report by the Faculty Senate as permission to disseminate such a document, although we are open to feedback about how the Senate would prefer for this to happen.