

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes for 12/3/2019

Present: Sara Freeman, Gwynne Brown, Nick Brody, Andrew Gardiner, Kristin Johnson, Chris Kendall, Alison Tracy Hale, Heather White, Megan Gessel, Andrew Monaco, Collin Noble, Sarah Shives, Peter Wimberger, Kristine Bartanen.

Brown called to order 12:05 pm

We discussed the question of how best to reflect the considerations of the Senate regarding the Curriculum Task Force in the minutes. The Senate resolved to make Curriculum Task Force vote totals available on Soundnet or a link in the minutes. **Minutes of 11/26/18 were M/S/P.**

Updates – ASUPS and the Student Senate are discussing how they provide funding to groups to attend off-campus events and gap funding for students to attend conferences. They are asking questions about how to think about the lines that are being drawn among the different activities e.g. how is Environmental Challenge different from Ultimate Frisbee? They are working to address budgeting and communication, so have not supported some things that they supported in the past.

Reports from Standing Committees: Committee on Diversity – working on Question 6 in the Departmental Curriculum Review to send to the Curriculum Committee, focusing on clearly curricular issues of course content and design. COD chair will visit the chairs' meeting tomorrow to discuss the survey the COD will soon be sending to chairs in order to find out what departments are doing, in areas beyond curriculum, to advance the goals of the Diversity Strategic Plan. COD is also working on questions for the Diversity Survey about mentorship.

Report on SET Subcommittee

Senator Brody provided a report from the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) subcommittee: They have been reviewing the literature cited by last year's Professional Standards Committee, as well as reviewing new literature. It is clear that there are no clear solutions to bias in teaching evaluations. Evaluations don't correlate with anything we can measure about student learning. Bias exists in all forms of evaluation. Puget Sound's approach is perhaps ahead of places that rely heavily on quantitative analyses of teaching. The subcommittee is working on the following things:

- 1) Survey faculty and students. The summative and formative uses of evaluation were summarized. The committee is interested in how students view and use the evaluations. How do faculty use teaching evaluations for formative and summative purposes?
- 2) Change the evaluation form. Grappling with the question of whether evaluations should be course-focused or instructor-focused?
- 3) Work with departments and the FAC to talk about uses of teaching evaluations.
- 4) Talk to students about how evaluations provide valuable feedback. Students often don't know how they're used.
- 5) Create set of best practices for use of SETs in evaluation. For us they are not the primary mechanism, whereas in many places they are.

Questions were asked:

How soon will this be implemented? It has to go through PSC, Senate and Faculty, so it will not be next year.

Could the SET committee also talk about best practices for doing observations? What aspects of observation are important to look for in trying to assess learning? This task probably lies outside of the charges to the SET subcommittee. There is less research on observation than on data about evaluations related to bias.

It's important for students to have a voice. What kind of work is the committee doing to understand how students both understand and view evaluations? We discussed the role of SETs as a relatively safe place to file complaints.

Student evaluations differ from first to last year. Will the subcommittee stratify their analysis of the student survey by year?

Refinement of Code Language for Promotion

One of the big issues in faculty discussion about the revision of the Code was demonstrated scholarly achievement between tenure and full. The language as revised leaves that achievement open to any time. Does the activity have to happen since tenure?

We discussed the difference between "achievement" and "activity," with the thought that "activity" was more inclusive than achievement, and that "achievement" seems to ratchet up the requirement. Activity is more open ended – it might, for example, include conferences, manuscripts, work with students. Some thought that "achievement" was better as it tethers us to our academic scholarship. Others interpreted activity in different ways. Do departments decide what an achievement is? The point was made that the difficulty of publication differs across disciplines, and even among fields within a discipline. We returned to the question of the original issue, which was the ambiguity of the old language and whether the old language applied only to scholarship and teaching, and distinction only to service. There was continued discussion of what different words mean: Significant? Activity? Achievement? Does the new version devalue service relative to scholarship? The addition of "since promotion to Associate..." would make the timing less flexible and arguably changes the seasons approach. The Senate agreed we should get something in front of the faculty so that the full faculty can further debate the relative merits of activity/achievement and the question of timing.

**Amendment to add "since promotion to Associate" ... and change "achievement" to "activity."
M/S/P 6/4/3**

The revised proposed language reads: Promotion to the rank of full professor requires a candidate to have maintained excellence in teaching and demonstrated significant scholarly activity since promotion to associate. Within the category of service, candidates for promotion to the rank of full professor must provide evidence of a continued and significant contribution to the university.

The petition by the Coalition for Divestment was introduced and will be taken up at the first meeting of Spring semester.

Meeting adjourned 1:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Wimberger

Appendix A

A brief history of work to date

For several years, the Faculty Advancement Committee has noted (in its annual report to the Faculty Senate) discrepancies in how departments interpret the phrase in the Faculty Code regarding “distinguished service,” a requirement for promotion to the rank of (full) professor. The Faculty Senate charged the Professional Standards Committee (in around 2015-2016) to render an interpretation of the language. Upon surveying departments chairs, the PSC determined that departments were split in their interpretations: some applied the modifier “distinguished” only to service, while others believed that “distinguished” applied to other categories of review. Consequently, the PSC did not feel confident rendering a decisive interpretation, for to do so would have been to impose a culture change upon half of the faculty.

That left the option of revision of the Code. Because the PSC is the body that interprets the Code, the Faculty Senate determined that it should not also be charged with writing the Code. For this reason, the Faculty Senate took on the responsibility of crafting language to present to the faculty. In AY 2016-2017, in collaboration with the Faculty Senate, the Office of Institutional Research, conducted a survey of the faculty and three focus groups—one each at the rank of assistant, associate, and full professor.

In fall 2017, a committee of the Faculty Senate (Jacobson, Kessel, Kukreja, L. Livingston, MacBain, and Wilson) convened to draft language based on the findings from the survey and focus group data. The committee saw a wide range of perspectives in the survey results, but nevertheless saw a few ideas that it believed would be important to consider in revising the Code:

- the revision should clarify an expectation that applicants for promotion to full should both meet a minimum bar and provide evidence of an upward trajectory in each category of review;
- the revision should convey the idea that each career has seasons (to borrow the Provost’s language) and that, while applicants for promotion to full are expected to have demonstrated significant achievement in each category of review, they are not expected to do everything at a significant level all the time;
- the categories of review should be simplified.

The committee developed language, which it took first to the Professional Standards Committee and then, upon incorporating the PSC’s recommendations, to the Faculty Senate. After some discussion, the Faculty Senate revised the language once more. The Faculty Senate approved its own revisions of the language and voted to take the revised language to the full faculty for consideration.

The tenor of our deliberation

A concern was voiced in the Faculty Senate that faculty members at the assistant and associate levels could feel reluctant to speak candidly during the conversation of the full faculty for fear of being misinterpreted or unfairly judged. The Faculty Senate asks participants in the discussion to entertain all points of view and to invite, in particular, the input of those who stand directly to be affected by a change to the requirements for promotion or the schedule of implementation of the change. The Faculty Senate asks, too, that participants commit to the generous interpretation and respectful consideration of one another’s ideas.

The text of the motion

Procedurally, it feels important to the Faculty Senate that the implementation of the change be debated independent of the language of the revision itself. Therefore, the motion has two parts: part one concerns implementation and part two concerns the proposed revision.

PART I. IMPLEMENTATION

If the faculty and Trustees vote to revise the Faculty Code regarding promotion standards to the rank of full professor, the revised language will apply to tenure line faculty members who join the campus in the academic year following approval of the revised language. (For example, if passed in AY 2018-19, tenure line faculty who join the faculty in AY 2019-18 will be subject to the revised language). Faculty members who are on the tenure line prior to passage of the measure will be evaluated on the standards that existed in the Code when the faculty approved the measure.

The faculty requests that the Professional Standards Committee note this implementation measure in the Faculty Evaluation Procedures and Criteria document (formerly known as the “buff” document).

PART II. PROPOSED LANGUAGE FOR REVISION TO THE FACULTY CODE (at III.3.e)

“Faculty promotion shall be based upon the quality of a person's performance of academic duties. Because the university seeks the highest standards for faculty advancement, mere satisfactory performance is no guarantee of promotion. Appointment in the rank of associate professor and professor normally requires a doctoral or other equivalent terminal degree.

Decisions whether to promote shall be based upon the quality of the faculty member's performance in the following areas, listed in order of importance:

- (1) teaching and related responsibilities, including the mentoring and advising of students;
- (2) professional growth;
- (3) participation in service a) to the university, and b) to one's profession or, in ways related to one's professional interests and expertise, to the larger community.

Promotion to the rank of full professor requires a candidate to have maintained excellence in teaching and demonstrated significant scholarly achievement. Within the category of service, candidates for promotion to the rank of full professor must provide evidence of a continued and significant contribution to the university.”