

UNIVERSITY REVIEW COMMITTEE
Illinois State University

Friday, October 20, 2017
3 p.m., Hovey 401D

MINUTES

Members present: Michael Byrns, Sam Catanzaro, Diane Dean, Kevin Edwards, Doris Houston, Sheryl Jenkins, Rachel Shively, Sarah Smelser

Members not present: Angela Bonnell, Joe Goodman

Others present: Bruce Stoffel (recorder)

Note: In these minutes “URC” refers to the University Review Committee at Illinois State University; “Caucus” refers to the Faculty Caucus of the Academic Senate at Illinois State University; “ASPT” refers to appointment, salary, promotion, and tenure policies of Illinois State University; “ASPT policies” refers to Faculty Appointment, Salary, Promotion, and Tenure Policies effective January 1, 2017; “AFEGC” refers to the Faculty Academic Freedom, Ethics and Grievance Committee at Illinois State University; “DFSC” refers to department faculty status committee; and “SFSC” refers to school faculty status committee. References in the minutes to “DFSC” are intended to refer to both DFSC and SFSC.

I. Call to order

Chairperson Diane Dean called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. A quorum was present.

II. Approval of minutes from the October 6, 2017 meeting

Michael Byrns noted that the spelling of his name should be corrected throughout the draft minutes. Byrns then moved approval of the minutes with that correction. Sarah Smelser seconded the motion. The motion passed on voice vote, with six members voting aye and one member abstaining (Sheryl Jenkins).

III. Updates

Working group on teaching evaluations

Note: This working group is hereinafter referred to as the “2017-2018 working group on teaching evaluations” or the “2017-2018 working group” to distinguish the group from its predecessor, the spring 2016 working group on teaching evaluations.

Smelser reported on behalf of her working group colleagues, Michael Byrns and Rachel Shively. Smelser said working group members have reviewed the spring 2016 working group report compiled by Christopher Horvath and Andy Rummel and agree that the report is well written and compelling. She reviewed the two tasks addressed in the report. Task 1, Smelser said, was to consider whether the term “student reactions” to teaching performance should continue to be used in the document or replaced with some other term. Horvath and Rummel recommended continued use of the term “student reactions.” Task 2, Smelser said, was to consider whether multiple approaches to evaluating teaching performance should be weighted equally by DFSCs and SFSCs. Horvath and Rummel recommended against mandating equal weighting of teaching evaluation methods, recommending instead that each unit be allowed to decide how it wants to evaluate teaching performance and how it wants to value different teaching performance evaluation methods. Smelser said the 2017-2018 working group concurs with Horvath’s and Rummel’s recommendations.

Smelser then referred to Appendix 2 of the ASPT policies (starting on page 60). She said the 2017-2018 working group has noticed that self-reflection and self-evaluation are not among the teaching evaluation factors listed in the appendix nor is there mention of faculty responses to course evaluations. Smelser read aloud a passage from the spring 2016 working group report in which Horvath and Rummel recommended a broader

approach to evaluating teaching performance that would ideally involve consideration by DFSCs and SFSCs of more than just student evaluations of courses taught by the faculty member during the performance evaluation year. Smelser said the 2017-2018 working group suggests adding to the paragraph on page 61, under the heading “Factors Used for Evaluation of Teaching,” language about taking a holistic approach to evaluating teaching performance. Byrns explained that the working group suggests adding that wording to encourage DFSCs and SFSCs to view a faculty member’s teaching performance in context. Smelser said it may also be appropriate to note that external factors, such as bias, may impact student reactions to teaching performance. She suggested mentioning biases generally rather than listing specific types as Horvath and Rummel did in their working group report.

Kevin Edwards noted that Appendix 2 of the ASPT policies permits a unit to use course evaluations and syllabi review as the two methods of evaluating teaching performance. In doing so, Edwards said, units can meet ASPT requirements without considering the numerous other teaching evaluation factors listed on pages 61-62. Edwards suggested bringing into alignment the second and third sentences of the paragraph beneath the heading, “Factors Used for Evaluation of Teaching” (“Adequate evaluation of teaching requires consideration of a variety of factors concerning these activities” and “Departments/schools must use two or more types of factors to evaluation teaching performance, one of which shall be student reactions to teaching performance.”) An alternative to doing so, he said, would be to delete the third sentence (“Departments/schools must use two or more types of factors . . .”). Byrns agreed. Jenkins expressed concern that if the reference to two or more types of factors is deleted, some faculty members may unnecessarily try to address all 15 teaching evaluation factors in their performance evaluation documents.

Dean asked committee members if many departments are using just one other method of evaluating teaching performance (other than course evaluations). The majority of committee members responded in the affirmative. Jenkins said her unit uses peer evaluations of teaching. Doris Houston said she has learned from a faculty colleague in another unit that her unit considers course evaluations when evaluating teaching performance but nothing else. Byrns reported that his unit relies primarily on course evaluations. He said it would be better if units considered the context of those evaluations, such as whether the faculty member is new at teaching and how many courses the faculty member is teaching. Doris Houston agreed, adding class size as a potential contextual factor. Smelser also agreed, stating that if a faculty member is only considering the numbers from course evaluations, the faculty member is not thinking about how to grow as a faculty member.

Rachel Shively reported another issue raised by the 2017-2018 working group on teaching evaluation: inconsistencies in the Likert scales in course evaluation forms used by units at the University. On some evaluation forms, Shively said, the number 1 is considered a high rating and on some forms the number 1 is considered a low rating. Byrns said this inconsistency might penalize some faculty members teaching General Education courses, because students familiar with evaluation forms used in their department or school might mark their responses without first studying the Likert scale being used in the General Education course evaluation, which may be different. Dean said the inconsistency might also affect any university-wide study of course evaluations, perhaps even a study conducted in connection with equity review. Shively asked if there is a way to standardize the Likert scales. Catanzaro noted that Illinois State has a long-standing decentralized approach to such matters, allowing each unit to establish its own evaluation policies as long as they are consistent with university-wide policies. Jenkins cited as an example use of different course evaluation forms in her college for courses taught by faculty members and by graduate assistants. Edwards suggested, as an alternative to mandating standardization through ASPT policies, that benefits of standardization be communicated to departments. Catanzaro agreed, suggesting that the Provost could talk with the deans about the matter.

Bruce Stoffel asked 2017-2018 working group members if they have identified passages in ASPT policies other than in Appendix 2 that may need to be altered if changes being discussed by the committee are made to Appendix 2. Byrns responded that there are five or six brief references to evaluation of teaching performance in the ASPT policies (referencing passages on page 18 and page 32 as examples). He added that none of those would need to be altered.

Houston asked how any changes made to the ASPT policies regarding evaluation of teaching performance would be incorporated into CFSC standards and DFSC guidelines. Catanzaro explained that if URC decides to

recommend to the Caucus that the ASPT policies should be so revised, the changes would be approved by the Caucus in spring 2018 at the earliest. Those changes would take effect January 1, 2019 at the earliest. Colleges and departments would then have fall 2018 to determine if changes to their ASPT documents would be necessary to align with the revised ASPT policies. URC would approve any such changes to CFSC standards. Houston added that departments and schools would also have to check alignment of their guidelines with the revised college standards.

Dean asked members of the 2017-2018 working group if they would be willing to draft changes to ASPT policies based on this discussion and bring the draft to the next URC meeting for a vote. Smelser said the working group will do so.

Ad hoc equity review committee

Houston, one of two URC representatives on the ad hoc equity review committee, reported.

Note: Dean also represents URC on the ad hoc committee, while Catanzaro represents the Provost's office on the committee.

Houston discussed references to equity review in ASPT policies over the years and changes in those references from the 2012 version of ASPT policies to the 2017 version. She read aloud the pertinent passage from both versions, explaining that ASPT policies now mandate that URC oversee a university-wide equity review every five years. She added that designated portions of the equity review are to be conducted annually. Houston said ASPT policies provide no guidance as to what factors should be considered in an equity review. She said it is the role of the ad hoc equity review committee, whose formation had been recommended by URC, to decide what equity review means at Illinois State and how equity review should be conducted. Catanzaro said there is no historical precedent at the University for performing equity review to guide the ad hoc equity review committee. He noted that the only related initiative of which he is aware is an effort about 10 years ago to adjust faculty salaries for under-recognized merit.

Houston disseminated a table (see attached) compiled by Susan Kalter, in her capacity as chairperson of the ad hoc equity review committee, based on discussion at the initial equity review committee meeting held on October 10, 2017. Houston explained that policies under the purview of URC are listed on the left side of the table and dimensions of potential inequity are column headings. She said the column headings reflect two distinct points of view regarding dimensions that could be studied. One is compression/inversion. The other involves demographic factors (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity). Houston explained that the red shading on the chart denotes factors about which the University is not legally permitted to collect data. The yellow shading, she said, denotes factors about which there is uncertainty whether the University can legally collect data. Houston reported that URC has been asked to provide feedback regarding the table. She said the ad hoc committee will convene again on October 24, 2017, and may discuss the table then.

Houston reported having recommended to Kalter that the ad hoc committee start its work by conducting a scan of comparator and aspirational institutions for any work on equity review at those institutions. Houston said she has also recommended that the ad hoc committee review literature regarding equity review. Catanzaro reported that near the end of the first equity review committee meeting, one committee member suggested conducting such a benchmarking analysis. Catanzaro said he has subsequently talked with Kalter about how such an analysis might be done. He said one option being considered is establishing sub-teams of the ad hoc committee to conduct this work, perhaps having one sub-team review IBHE comparator institutions and another sub-team review aspirational institutions.

Dean recommended broadening the term "marital status" on the table to "family status" or adding that term, because literature suggests that family caregiving impacts one's work. Shively asked if the ad hoc committee considers department affiliation a potential equity issue or a control factor. Dean responded that the ad hoc committee has considered that issue but has not yet decided whether to study equity just within a unit or also across units. Houston added that it is also important to consider differences across disciplines. Edwards offered that the ad hoc committee may want to consider addressing compression and inversion separately. He said both are important but may need to be addressed in different ways.

ASPT disciplinary articles

Dean reported. She said the Caucus has completed its review of the suspensions article and will begin discussion of the dismissal article at its next meeting (October 25, 2017). Dean said, if the many editorial issues raised by the Caucus thus far are set aside, she believes there are two substantive issues the Caucus will need to address. One is whether a partial suspension should be considered a sanction, as recommended by URC, or a suspension, as some Caucus members have suggested. She added that the Caucus may decide that partial suspension should be considered a disciplinary action separate and distinct from sanctions and suspensions. The second substantive issue, Dean said, is whether matters that now come before AFEGC should also be addressed through ASPT disciplinary processes. Another issue to be addressed by the Caucus, Dean said, is whether decisions of the Provost regarding suspension may be appealed to the President. Dean explained that URC has recommended that the President consider appeals in dismissal cases but not in suspension cases.

Catanzaro asked Dean if the Caucus has decided whether to circulate the disciplinary articles to all faculty members once the Caucus has revised the articles based on its discussions this fall. Dean responded that she has not yet heard whether circulating revised articles is planned. Houston noted that the director of her unit received the disciplinary articles currently being considered by the Caucus from the Academic Senate office and has in turn circulated the document among faculty members in the unit. Houston added that her school director has asked faculty to send any feedback regarding the articles to the Academic Senate chairperson. Houston suggested that URC members might consider periodically updating their unit colleagues regarding issues being considered by URC. Jenkins said she has been sharing information with tenure track faculty in her college. Dean said she has offered to update her department colleagues. Smelser said her unit colleagues have not yet asked for updates.

Study of ASPT policies regarding service assignments

Because the pre-announced meeting ending time was nigh, Dean deferred discussion of this agenda item to the next URC meeting.

IV. Review of University Policy 3.2.4: Salary Adjustments

Dean also deferred discussion of this agenda item to the next URC meeting.

V. URC review of college (ASPT) standards

Dean also deferred discussion of this agenda item to the next URC meeting.

VI. Adjournment

Jenkins moved that the meeting adjourn. Byrns seconded the motion. The motion carried on voice vote, all voting in the affirmative. The meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sheryl Jenkins, Secretary
Bruce Stoffel, Recorder

Attachments:
Table of equity review issues and factors, compiled by Susan Kalter, Chairperson, Ad Hoc Equity Review Committee, undated

"Quiet" support									
Release time									
Course load									
Service load									
Sanctions/ suspension/dismissal aggregated									

The rows above are the areas of ASPT jurisdiction that we need to decide whether we want to and can study

The columns above are the types of equity that we need to decide whether we want to and can study

Items we may need to control for in one or more boxes above:

- time in rank;
- time at University;
- CIP code (what subdiscipline a particular faculty member belongs to);
- departmental affiliation;
- former chair/director/dean/other admin who kept base salary after 5 years of admin service;
- local policies in salary or other distributions;
- scholarly productivity/teaching productivity/service productivity over time as explanation for differentiations
- scholarly productivity/teaching productivity/service productivity during "dry" years? Or is this one of the things we WANT not to control for, at least for some of the data runs over the 5-year repeatable cycle?

External comparators are not within the scope of most rows, but are critical for compression/inversion if we choose to monitor it

WHEN should each portion be scheduled in the 5-year repeating cycle?

Things we may find, may need to find, or may want to keep in mind

Race/gender/other diversity of the chairs of ASPT committees as a possible factor

Whether ASPT processes are helping or hindering creation of a healthy pool of internal candidates for chair/director and other administrative roles

Timing of changes to promotional increments and mid-year salary increases putting certain faculty who were assistants at a disadvantage