

UNIVERSITY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

1 PM, Zoom teleconference

Minutes

Members present: Sam Catanzaro (non-voting), Kevin Edwards, Rachel Shively, Melissa Oresky, Yoon Jin Ma, Nancy Novotny, Joe Goodman

Absent: Chad Buckley, Diane Dean, Frank Beck

- Call to Order
Shively convened the meeting at 1:07 P.M.
- Discussion followed by email vote.
 - Shively - is the plan to combine the two versions of the memo? - Catanzaro summarizes the events that have happened since the last time our committee met, discussed, and voted to approve the first version of the memo. Several things were brought up, some of those should make it into the new version of the memo.
 - Is it the case that the Faculty Caucus that they are done and want the URC to do an editorial review and endorse the memo so that it can be sent out?
 - Catanzaro - How should we proceed? Shively - let's go through the big 4 areas and discuss them based on what we have seen in the comments that Catanzaro and Jan sent out.

- **From the March 23, 2020 memo draft:**

We are aware of four important questions:

- 1. How will these exceptional circumstances affect the length of my probationary period and the evaluation of my application for tenure and promotion?*
 - 2. How will the unusual circumstance of transitioning all teaching mid-semester to alternative formats affect the evaluation of teaching performance for Spring 2020?*
 - 3. How will the cancellation of conference presentations affect the evaluation of my productivity?*
 - 4. How will the various State and University responses to the pandemic (including work-from-home and shelter-in-place) affect the ASPT calendar?*
- **How will these exceptional circumstances affect the length of my probationary period and the evaluation of my application for tenure and promotion?**
 - *ISU ASPT policies provide the option for a "stop-the-clock" request under exceptional circumstances that delay progress toward tenure. The disruptions due to this pandemic certainly would qualify as "exceptional." Therefore, the existing policy addresses any need for faculty whose research agendas are disrupted by lack of access to labs, archives, travel, research subjects (animal or human), etc. We also note that the disruptive effect of the transition to online/alternative format teaching, and the possibility that peer review processes will be slowed all throughout the international academic community, may also adversely impact scholarly productivity.*
 - *At the same time, some faculty may be less affected than others, and their progress toward promotion and tenure may well lead them to choose to apply on schedule. Thus, we are not automatically extending all probationary periods, but we encourage faculty to consider this option, and we encourage departments and schools to support probationary faculty in exercising their right to make such a request. We will be providing guidance on "stop-the-clock" procedures later this semester*
 - **Thoughts about the feedback:** Goodman - the longer that we hold off sending this out, the more detailed questions are going to come up. People are at an all-time high anxiety/stress and folks need reassurance. We have an excellent track record of fair processes. Holding onto this document is just increasing anxiety levels. Shively - Does the existing memo give the assurance that people want to see? Goodman: I think so. Catanzaro - Let me ask the question - is there anything that we should add/change to the statement. In particular the use of the word "encourage?" Is that word strong enough? Gives example of different cases of stop the clock requests to differentiate situations in which stop the clock decisions related to COVID-19 would or wouldn't be warranted. Shively, reading some of the comments, they seemed to reflect some worry about whether to trust department's judgement in this case. Catanzaro - should we change it along the lines of something like "*we expect department*

to support requests within the parameters of existing policy"? Discussed a comment in Senate along the lines of not supporting a lowering of standards for T&P in favor of a liberal use of stop the clock. Melissa, I think that it works either way. Shively: I am in favor a change along the lines proposed above. Shively - another comment that could be addressed - advice to pre-tenure faculty about how to allocate their time. Keeping in mind that we don't want to get too specific trying to address every possible contingency. Goodman - I think that this is something left up to the chair. Shively - so maybe cover this along the lines of the language encouraging chairs to take this kind of thing into consideration. Kevin - have we addressed the issue of opting in vs. opting out. Shively says that opting in feels better, the rest of the committee agreed.

- **How will the unusual circumstance of transitioning all teaching mid-semester to alternative formats affect the evaluation of teaching performance for Spring 2020?**
- *In short, student reactions to Spring 2020 courses should not adversely affect ASPT evaluations of faculty. While ASPT policies require that student reactions to teaching performance be considered in evaluations, they do not require that every course in every semester must be included. Those departments and schools (or Colleges) who have local ASPT policies explicitly require submission of student reactions for all courses every semester may relax such a requirement knowing that to do so will not violate University policies. In general, ASPT committees are strongly encouraged to focus their evaluation of teaching performance on artifacts such as teaching philosophies, reflections on teaching or student feedback, syllabi, sample assignments, peer evaluations where available, and other items listed among the illustrative examples in Appendix 2 of the ASPT policies. Our specific recommendations are three-fold:*
 1. *Departments/schools should collect student reactions/feedback (ratings and/or qualitative comments) in some reasonably consistent manner that is appropriate to the discipline;*
 2. *Submission of such feedback for ASPT evaluation should be optional for individual faculty; and*
 3. *Faculty who choose to submit student reactions/feedback for ASPT consideration should also provide a brief reflective statement that addresses how the faculty member is going to use the feedback to set goals for improving their teaching. For these faculty, the focus of the evaluation by DFSC/SFSC should be on the faculty member's use of the feedback to improve their teaching, rather than on the content of the student reactions.*
- *It is important to note that the Office of the Provost is also developing guidance for departments and schools on how to conduct surveys this semester of student reactions to teaching performance. While this aspect of the question is not necessarily an ASPT policy interpretation, we do believe it is important to obtain student feedback so faculty can learn from this experience, and to do so in a way that yields useful feedback to faculty. In the fall, we will run workshops for ASPT committees that will provide guidance on the evaluation of teaching that emphasizes evidence and artifacts other than student survey responses, including reflective statements on survey responses. CTLT will provide faculty with tools for writing reflective statements that support their professional growth.*
- Shively - concerns raised were about sample size (being small), agreement that students should have a voice, but is still in agreement with proposal that it should be up to faculty to be allowed to opt in or out. Goodman - likes the original language. Feels that that language covers this adequately. Catanzaro - reiterates that how we use information is up to the levels of departments and that much of this discussion falls outside of ASPT policy. I'm okay with changing "should not" to "must not" language. Much of this is about procedure rather than policy. Catanzaro - back to the memo, any other language changes needed? Shively - some comments seemed to suggest that some departments require the collection every semester and used in evaluation. Catanzaro - that's a department procedural issue. It is tricky to mandate procedural guidelines to ensure that chairs aren't affected if they have access to evaluations collected, even if faculty have opted out of student reflections. Catanzaro discussed that these are issues that will be discussed during the ASPT workshops/training given in Summer/Fall. Shively - suggested that we could include a reminder that there are appeal processes that can be used. Goodman seconded that suggestion. Catanzaro likes this as well, keeping it as a general statement (rather than any laying out any specific situations). Goodman - the key is to reassure faculty that things are being handled appropriate following existing ASPT guidelines. Shively - so we are leaving it up to departments but encouraging that departments maintain an outlet for student voice.
- **How will the cancellation of conference presentations affect evaluation of my productivity?**
- The key issue is that the paper/poster/presentation, if accepted, has already undergone whatever review process the conference uses. Because the review process is what validates a scholarly contribution, an accepted but cancelled presentation "counts" as if the presentation had actually been made. Many scholarly conferences publish online or hard copy conference programs, providing some degree of dissemination. The CV can cite or link to that dissemination. (The American Psychological Association has already provided guidance on citation in APA

format, available at <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/canceled>- If the same (or substantially same) paper later gets presented in another venue, the responsible thing to do is somehow make that clear on the CV and in any ASPT submission, as appropriate to the discipline

- **How will the various State and University responses to the pandemic (including work-from-home and shelter-in-place) affect the ASPT calendar?**
- We do not anticipate any need for adjustment of the Calendars for ASPT processes listed in Appendix 1 of the ASPT policies. We note that the ASPT appeals processes for both annual performance evaluations and tenure and promotion are proceeding on schedule this semester, with committees reviewing materials and meeting to discuss those cases virtually.
- Shively - agrees with Catanzaro 's response this morning that changing ASPT calendar on a permanent basis isn't something that should be tackled now. It should be reserved as a discussion for later. Worries that it would just lead to greater confusion to try to make changes now. Goodman - agrees, any changes to normalcy are disruptive. Let's stay with what we have and is well understand now. Novotny - thought that there are good points motivating the change but that this is not the time to try to make these large-scale changes.
- Shively - we are getting close to the end. With the guidance already in the memo, we shouldn't need to change the calendar.
- Also, there was a question about merit raises. Any discussion about this (e.g., calendar year vs. average over 3 years for merit pay). Goodman - I think that the biggest concern is how many students we are going to have next year (rather than worrying about how much of a raise I will get). But he understands that different departments do things differently, and this may be a larger issue in those departments. So perhaps it is important to include some language along these lines. Edwards - at what point with DFSC/CFSC/SFSC will know whether they are going to have merit raises to consider? Catanzaro - even in years with zero raises, the evaluation process still is conducted so that when raises are available, that information can be used to partition merit raises. I think that we do need to do these evaluations regardless of whether there is raise money available. Goodman - perhaps language along the lines that annual evaluations are "developmental" Catanzaro - evaluations have two functions - formative (developmental) and summative (evaluative). Maybe this is an opportunity to shift the balance of how these are used. I can work on some language along these lines.
- Shively - what kind of timeframe are we working with? Catanzaro - I will circulate an updated version of the first memo, with track changes by the close of today. Is it reasonable to have feedback by noon on Friday? Shively - sounds good. Catanzaro - then I will polish it up by Friday afternoon, send it to Susan and distribute it early next week. Group agrees to this plan.
- Catanzaro - thanks for all of your work, for showing up for this late notice meeting.