

Minutes of Senate Faculty Affairs Committee Meeting

Date and time: March 16, 2021 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Location: Zoom

Present: Helen Cahalane, Lorraine Denman, Tom Diacovo, Gosia Fort, Irene Frieze, Suzanna Gribble, Christine Jackson, Robin Kear, Marty Levine, Patrick Loughlin, Vinayak Sant, Tom Songer, Amy Tuttle, Lu-in Wang

Absent: Chris Bonneau, Micaela Corn, Vicki Gamble, Sandra Guzman, Ashley Hill, Keith Reimink, Jay Sukits, Preeti Venkatesan, Seth Weinberg, Frank Wilson

Call to order—The meeting was called to order by L. Denman at 11:04 am.

1. Introductions

- a. Gosia Fort from the University Senate joined the meeting today

2. Announcements

- a. *ULS library update*: I. Frieze mentioned the letter to B. Epstein suggesting they look into the situation for Health Sciences librarians on 1-year contracts. No responses from anyone copied on the message. D. Salcido will raise the question with the HS faculty in April, this was conveyed through a follow-up email Irene sent to a few faculty senate representatives. G. Fort said she would raise some of the issues relating to the continuing 1-year contracts for faculty librarians at HSLS at the regular meeting of the Senate Officers and the senior administration.
- b. *Digital accounts update*: I. Frieze working with computing committee as family of faculty members who have died want to know what happens to their University accounts. The specific answer, for now, is that if a faculty member dies and the University is notified, there is a message that goes into your email account saying the account is no longer active, the message directs you to different accounts if it is a personal or University-related subject. Questions about data sets on Box, OneDrive, etc. what happens to the digital materials also arise. Some new policies about data storage and access are being written, timeline is unclear. Computing committee is working on a statement on the current procedure.
 - i. T. Songer pointed to departments and units that procedures and guidelines related to data storage. How the computing committee would find the information could be difficult.

3. Updates from Vice-Provost Wang

- a. Going live next week with resources for chairs on the annual review process. Including FASC guidelines. Series of videos about the review process. Discussion sessions for chairs to share experiences. The FASC had drafted the guidelines for the annual review of faculty. I. Frieze pointed out that we were pleased to see our recommendations being implemented.
- b. The Provost Advisory Council on Promotion and Tenure. Pilot year reviewing tenured associate to full professor cases. Committee will meet and review in May.
 - i. P. Loughlin asked when the candidate submits dossier, do they all eventually go to provost? Only approved promotions get to Provost. Denials do not go to the Provost,

and a case may be denied at the department or school level. If faculty appeals the denial it will reach the Provost level. Detailed policy available, including a faculty panel. Larger schools have an appeals “pool” where a five faculty appeals panel is generated randomly from eligible faculty to serve on the committee. AS appeals can either have an appeals panel or Provost can choose to adjudicate the case herself, Provost decides the direction.

- c. New committee formed for reviewing the non-discrimination policy will meet next week. Tom Diacovo is on the committee; I. Frieze noted that the Faculty Affairs Committee had made formal complaints about the previous draft policy statements and asked that Tom read those over. A link to articles in the University Times was provided by Robin Kear where these concerns were outlined. See <https://www.utimes.pitt.edu/news/nondiscrimination-policy> and <https://www.utimes.pitt.edu/news/letter-editor-senate>
 - i. L. Denman asked what type of review this is. L. Wang said it is focusing on CS 7 and CS 20, but a comprehensive set of questions the committee will look at with respect to what the policies are, best practices, etc. Seems like a thorough review of the policy.
- d. L. Wang will express faculty concerns to Vice-Provost McCarthy regarding the G grade policy that students were notified of via email last week.
 - i. Concerns raised by the committee included:
 - 1. Communication, once again, went to students first. Full faculty have still not been informed.
 - 2. The “passing grade” can possibly cause issues with taking the next course in a sequence or other areas like scholarships, financial aid if the NG reverts to something like a D-
 - 3. Significant effort is put into managing G-grades like contracts, alternative assignments, following up with students. This is not a time neutral endeavor for faculty.
 - 4. What to do with G grades if the instructor is no longer at Pitt.

4. Assessment of teaching

- a. A document drafted by Dietrich School Council was posted on Dietrich School website about assessment of teaching. No announcement made regarding the guidelines. Faculty raised concerns about how to interpret the document. Through some communications, L. Denman learned these are *suggestions*. The list is attempting to identify other ways to move beyond using OMETs as a measurement of teaching. How can we equitably support a varied approach to evaluating teaching that doesn’t put considerable pressure on continuing faculty to conduct items listed in the document. Discuss in FASC alternatives to the OMET that faculty can support.
 - i. P. Loughlin, important to draw the distinction between use of OMET and student satisfaction versus teaching effectiveness.
 - ii. S. Weinberg shared in an email with FASC about what dental medicine does
 - iii. S. Gribble shared that through steering/mentoring committees for first 6 years in BIOSC faculty are evaluated. Doesn’t mean that the same level or attention to the evaluation is given. Have considered use of Weiman’s teaching practice inventory and the COPUS tool.
 - iv. V. Sant described how in pharmacy the evaluations are also connected with the curriculum committee to review the courses as well as teaching effectiveness.
 - v. H. Cahalane, school of social work uses the traditional OMET review for teaching assessment

- vi. P. Loughlin likes the question “what would you tell the next class of students” helps feedforward information of how to succeed in the course.

5. April/May meeting

- a. April 6, 2021 @ 11 am on Zoom.
- b. May date to be determined, tentative for May 11.

6. Agenda items for future meetings

- a. Review the COACHE survey. L. Denman will reach out to Amanda Brodish to see if there is data related to AS faculty to be reviewed by FASC.
- b. Thoughts on how to support faculty after the long stressful year and how to get back on track with “normal” topics and initiatives the committee typically considers and works on.
- c. Update on non-discrimination policies from T. Diacovo

Meeting adjourned at 12:19 pm