

UNIVERSITY REVIEW COMMITTEE
Thursday, October 15, 2020
9:00 AM, Zoom teleconference

Minutes

Members present: Sam Catanzaro (non-voting), Kevin Edwards, Rachel Shively, Nancy Novotny, Frank Beck, Miranda Lin, Borinara Park, Chad Buckley, Ron Guidry
Absent: Melissa Oresky

- Call to Order
 - Buckley convened the meeting at 9:03 A.M.
- Review and approval of minutes of 9-30-20 URC meeting
 - Edwards - strike the highlighted portion
 - Guidry moved that the meeting minutes be approved without the audio transcript. Edwards seconded. Motion passed with seven voting in favor, one abstention
- Brief welcome to our new member (Dr. Guidry, our representative from the College of Business), and quick introductions of the other members
- Update of Faculty Caucus discussions of COVID impacts
 - FC is meeting Wednesday evening (10/14/20) to consider two topics:
 - Allowing departments to use an abbreviated annual productivity report form for 2020
 - Suspending the requirement that evaluation of teaching include student reactions for 2020

Catanzaro- update from Faculty Caucus meeting. (see document in Teams site, motions and Catanzaro's notes

- 1st motion - allows units to make adjustments to standard formats of their annual productivity reports. This is already policy, but this makes it explicit. This is determined by departments/schools.
- 2nd motion - makes the inclusion of student feedback optional (up to individual faculty members). This is a departure from the stated requirement of student reactions as one piece of information. This is a continuation of the policy exception granted in Spring 2020. This amounts to an extension such that the exception applies to the entire year.

Catanzaro- would like to recommend that when faculty decide to submit student feedback for their annual evaluation, the faculty member should consider to also include a short reflection that contextualizes the student feedback, reflects upon what the instructor learned, and briefly describes plans/goals for future teaching.

Beck - this motion only alters things for this year, right?

Catanzaro- yes.

Beck- And the plan is that the URC is returning to revisions of ASPT revisions following COVID related work.

Catanzaro- yes.

Guidry - is the big issue that folks are concerned about with the student feedback due to impact on future raises?

Catanzaro- yes, that is part of it.

Guidry - at a prior university, grades weren't released until after feedback was completed resulting in higher participation rates.

Catanzaro- that's part of a longer-term conversation. The current piece is part of the current emergency context.

Edwards - If a department already has this data and uses it to calculate departmental averages etc, can it be fully withheld from consideration by an D/SFSC? How do they operate if particular faculty then opt out?

Catanzaro - the details will need to be worked out locally (at unit level). Part of the chair/director's job is to exercise judgement. The information can still be used by chairs to evaluate faculty performance outside the ASPT process, for other uses like suggestions about teaching and identifying exceptional performance.

Edwards - it could be useful to include this non-ASPT use as part of the guidance from URC.

Guidry - if a faculty member doesn't include evals, does that come with an assumption that they weren't included because they weren't good?

Catanzaro - we have to trust that D/SFSC's won't make that assumption.

Maybe we need to also include that "student feedback should not be factored in at all" explicitly in the memo.

Catanzaro - will draft a memo of recommendations and post it on the Teams site for URC members to review and provide discussion/feedback. This needs to get out very quickly because of where we are in the timeline.

Buckley- should we wait until after the caucus meets again and discusses this in more depth?

Catanzaro - we have to see how that plays out. He will start drafting the memo now and make adjustments as warranted following the Faculty Caucus discussion.

Beck - if we move the date, does that shift other dates? e.g., when the DFSC has to turn things in, when the appeals need to happen, etc.

Catanzaro - yes, it seems like that has to be part of the conversation.

- Also an email arrived just prior to this meeting. Faculty Caucus is exploring the potential need to hold an additional meeting to discuss the possibility of changing the timeline for faculty productivity reports so that faculty have more time to put together their materials.
 - Part of why this deadline is in place is to allow for the processing of this information to put things into place (budgeting, scheduling, raises, etc.).
 - There is also a sense that some would like to shift the review period from calendar year to academic year. If this is a short-term adjustment? Is this a long-term shift? These issues may be coming, and may be something for our URC to discuss. Recommendation is to add this to the 5-year ASPT guidelines (rather than to rush this through). This issue was discussed more in the URC's discussion of long-term agenda items.
- Academic Affairs Planning Process
 - Catanzaro - a quick update. Provost has initiated planning for the post-COVID university. Catanzaro is leading one regarding ASPT policy. That group will look at possibilities and draft a white page of recommendations for the next revisions and for what depts/schools can start working on. Catanzaro gave a brief review of current composition of that subcommittee. In advance of this meeting, Catanzaro asked for a

volunteer from this committee. He thanked the several of members who volunteered. Miranda Lin will be joining the subcommittee.

- Catanzaro - discussed broader scope of the goals for the other subcommittees and the Spring Administrator's Retreat. Some of the outcomes of these planning efforts may impact your role here on the URC or as a faculty member
- Longer-Term items for URC agenda
 - Evaluation Calendar – Calendar Year vs. Academic Year
 - This issue is on the agenda for Faculty Caucus on November 4. The URC will plan to discuss the issue meeting following the FC discussion (do we want to discuss it in advance of that meeting as well?)
 - Beck - Asks what the role of the URC is as this conversation will move forward. He asks whether the committee's role will be to evaluate a proposal that is put forward by the senate.
 - Catanzaro - they would approve revisions that are made. If this group had some thoughts about pros and cons, that is something that could be discussed here and communicated to the faculty caucus.
 - Beck - expresses his support of a shift to academic year, because faculty tend to think in terms of academic years. But I'm not clear about how that fits with salary incrementing, because that takes time to iterate through the system (budgeting, allocating raises, etc.)
 - Catanzaro - agrees that is the big question. He hasn't yet had a chance to map out what that timeline might look like, coordinating it all, including the budget piece. It would probably be a real challenge to have raises start at beginning of academic calendar.
 - Beck - this would also have D/SFSC's having to work into May and June. Would that require compensation for those faculty?
 - Shively- How much of a priority is this issue? Are there others asking for this? There recognition that the Senate chairperson is very supportive of this change.
 - Shively- what is our timeline on the 5-year revisions? Has it shifted due to COVID?
 - Catanzaro - yes. He hopes that there isn't too much more COVID related policy changes that need to happen. So the URC should be able to return to those discussions, bringing all lessons learned/highlighted by the recent context. The need to make rapid contextual adjustments to policy related to emergencies should decrease, which should allow the URC return to discussion about making these changes.
 - Edwards - question about calendar issues. We recently did a survey, got feedback and made changes. Should we approach the calendar issue using a similar approach?
 - Catanzaro - that's a good suggestion.
 - Catanzaro - what I'm hearing from this group is a fine distinction between any "one-time" vs. "long-term" changing of the calendar. This is an opportunity to consider it on the short-term (e.g., do the evaluation over an 18-month period this time out, which would put

evaluation for the current cycle with evaluation on academic year. Then consider whether to continue with academic year), but see if that affords an opportunity to shift it long-term. But we need to think through all of the fallout from that.

- 5-year Revisions of ASPT Policies – depending on resolution of COVID related changes, this item may not be resumed until spring 2021
 - Carry over of sub-group discussions from last year

- Revisiting our meeting day/times to accommodate new member
Novotny - There are a couple of those dates that I would have to leave early.
Shively - and 9 AM, right.
Cutting - yes.

- Any other business?
 - None

- Adjournment
 - Edwards moved that the meeting be adjourned. Beck seconded. Motion passed with 8 voting in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:04