University Review Committee

Minutes: 28 January 2022

Members present: Roberta Trites (non-voting); Frank Beck, Chad Buckley, Kevin Edwards, Miranda Lin, Melissa Oresky, Bo Park, O. Erin Reitz, Joyce Walker.

Absent: Ron Guidry.

Began 9:30

Agenda: reviewing Faculty Caucus’ feedback on proposed ASPT revisions

The University Review Committee has forwarded Sec. I-VIII revisions to Senate.

Senate feedback was considered regarding conflicts of interest (I.B). Should faculty be able to challenge an FSC member on conflict of interest grounds? URC's language says this could be a basis for appeal, but we hope that spurious claims of conflict can be avoided; the procedural details will be specific to each unit.

Senate also added language on minority reports, and requested that unit's ASPT documents be publicly posted and kept current. These are on the Provost site and URC can help to ensure they are kept up to date. URC only reviews College ASPT and not Departmental ASPT docs.

IX.C, hiring new faculty with tenure: considered the suggestion that this can only happen if the faculty is coming from a "comparable" or higher-ranked institution. URC considers that this is not a workable solution since overall rankings do not reflect the quality of each unit or faculty member at that institution. URC revised to clarify that the other institution's Dept standards and the faculty's productivity should both factor into this decision.

Pre-tenure mid-probationary review: debated the policy concerning whether these are forwarded to the CFSC along with tenure application. Trites indicated that no such document can ultimately be held back from the CFSC if they want it. Others expressed that these are written for the benefit of the faculty member and may include material that is important for their feedback in year 3-4, but could be prejudicial at tenure time some years later. Annual reviews already provide that fine-grained record of progress needed for tenure evaluation. Revised language to indicate the departments have latitude in determining how the reviews are used. Discussed the rationale for requiring these reviews at the University level, largely to ensure all units provide sufficiently detailed feedback on scholarship in a timely manner.

Requiring external review letters for promotion: Addressed Senate concerns. Discussed that this is important to maintain the credibility of ISU on the national stage. Some faculty have raised concerns that there are not enough people in the country with the expertise to review their work, especially for emerging fields. But since peer-reviewed publication is expected, in principle there should always be reviewers available for promotion letters as well. In some cases, lack of ISU support for research (e.g., scarce travel funds) makes it difficult for faculty to raise their profile sufficiently to be confident about implementing a new external review process. Candidates should be able to specify and exclude potential reviewers; revised language to require this. The Chair, with candidate input, should provide a statement of context (teaching load etc) to go along with the request for a review, so that faculty are evaluated with appropriate consideration for how much time they can devote to scholarly activity.

Next meeting: 11 Feb 22

Adjourned at 11:09 a.m.