

Minutes for the Oct. 14, 2019 meeting of the BFC Faculty Affairs Committee

Members present: Israel Herrera, Jane McLeod, Karen Banks, Alan Bender, Paul Coats, Alyce Fly, Cody Kirkpatrick, Ted Miller, Cindy Smith, John Talbott, and Eliza Pavalko

Plans for criteria and processes for promotion to Teaching Professor

The College Policy Committee has approved a policy about such promotion.

In departments in the College that do not create policies about promotion by the end of this semester, per standard practice, the College Policy Committee's promotion policies will instead be used.

Several questions were raised about the promotion review process for Teaching Professors and how faculty responsibilities change, if at all, following promotion.

Can additional responsibilities be assigned to Teaching Professors that are not assigned to Senior Lecturers? Would having additional responsibilities be different from the situation for tenure-track faculty?

Will there be salary raises associated with promotion to Teaching Professor?

The VPFAA clarified that Deans/Executive deans make salary decisions. The sizes of salary increases, and the extent to which they are rather guaranteed, may vary from school to school.

How formal versus informal could and should the promotion process be? How much work needs to be involved by the candidate and by the evaluators? The VPFAA clarified that the promotion review process would work the same way in the lecturer ranks as it does in the other ranks. This involves the preparation of a dossier that is reviewed at the unit level and then by the campus promotion committee (and then by the Vice Provost, Provost, President, and Board of Trustees).

Plans for the campus promotion-advisory committee

In addition to the eight or so Professors on that committee, there have been two Clinical Professors and two Senior Scientists. The Clinical Professors are the primary reviewers for cases of promotion in the Clinical Faculty category, and the Senior Scientists are the primary reviewers for cases of promotion in the Scientist category.

The VPFAA's plan is that in the future, two Teaching Professors will be added to that committee, to serve as primary reviewers for cases of promotion in the Teaching Professor/Lecturer category. Until we have Teaching Professors, Clinical Professors on that committee will serve as the primary reviewers for such cases.

Academic freedom and long-term contracts for NTT instructional faculty

Questions were also raised about the extent to which NTT instructional faculty have academic freedom and, more generally, about lecturer rights and responsibilities. What is the meaning of academic freedom for NTT instructional faculty? How free do NTTs feel to voice concerns and to teach what and how they see fit?

It was noted that policy ACA-32 states that all academic appointees, including visiting, adjunct, acting, and part-time faculty have full freedom of instruction and all rights and responsibilities associated with the concept of academic freedom.

The advantages and disadvantages of five-year rolling contracts (as compared to fixed-term contracts) were discussed. Some committee members expressed the view that long-term contracts that are five-years in length and rolling could help NTTs to be more confident about their academic freedom. Another benefit of having five-year, rolling contracts may be that they would encourage giving more attention to the hiring of NTT instructional faculty, treating such hiring with similar seriousness as tends to be given to the hiring of tenure-track faculty. Other committee members noted that rolling contracts would require an annual review which could be experienced as burdensome.

It is not clear how many NTT instructional faculty are aware of what sort of contract they have. It is not clear how many have ever even seen any sort of contract. Faculty in some units (especially faculty who switched units in the College in recent years, due to reorganizations within the College) currently have well-defined MOUs (memoranda of understanding), though.

Some committee members expressed concern that, no matter the type of contract, units can find ways to pressure faculty to quit. For example, a department chair could greatly increase or significantly change an individual's teaching responsibilities.

Revision of the BFC document "Principles and Policies on Tenure and Promotion"

Hopefully, comments from academic associate deans will be received by Oct. 25, prior to the FAC meeting on Oct. 28. At that meeting, we will finalize the proposed changes to the evaluation criteria. They will then be presented to the BFC on Nov. 5.