Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee Minutes
18 September 2020 Meeting

Zoom

Present: Carey Balaban, Nick Bircher, Jane Cauley (Secretary), Abbe de Vallejo (Co-Chair), Maria Kovacs (Co-Chair), Chris Bonneau, Barry Gold, Ergin Kocyildirim, Kirill Kiselyov, Karin Warner, Mark Paterson, OJ Ostrosky, Jessie Van Swearingen, Chloe Page, Stephen Jacobus, Lu-in Wang (Vice Provost Academic Affairs, Marty Levine(University Times), Lori Molinaro, Kris Davitt (Office of Policy Development), Elizabeth Mulvaney, Douglas K. Reed (Center for Vaccine Research), Tyler Tennery (Office of Policy Development).

Excused: John Wallace (Vice Provost Faculty Diversity and Development)

Absent: Monica Costlow, John Kirkwood, Helen Petracchi, Kelly Tatone, Ann Thompson,

Meeting was called to order at 11:31 AM by Abbe de Vallejo. There was a quorum of at least 7 voting members at the start of the meeting.

OPEN SESSION

1. Introduction of new members and visitors:
   a. Chloe Page, postdoc representative replacing Agustin Cruz
   b. OJ Ostrosky, graduate student representative replacing Amada Leifson
   c. Professor Lu-in Wang, Vice Provost Academic Affairs, Chancellor-appointed liaison to TAFC
   d. Professor John Wallace, Vice Provost Faculty Diversity & Development, Chancellor-appointed liaison to TAFC
   e. Tyler Tennery and Kris Davitt, Office of Policy Development
   f. Dr. Douglas Reed, Associate Professor, Center for Vaccine Research and Department of Immunology
   g. Marty Levin, University Times

2. The minutes of the previous meeting (July 16, 2020) were approved.

   a. Discussion led by Carey Balaban who had collated all comments.
   b. Kris Davitt described the purpose for the new policy. Pitt’s policy was not up to industry standards and had not been updated since 2005. She is a Pitt employee and reports to Chancellor Gallagher, but she also reports UPMC President Jeffrey Romoff.
   c. General TAFC consensus is that the overall document is good and TAFC supports it.

   However, the following suggestions were made:
   i. Gifts must be “consistent with University’s mission”. This language is vague and not clear.
   ii. Must emphasize academic independence and academic freedom. State explicitly that Donors/Gifters will have no influence on faculty activities, academic programs, and research priorities.
   iii. Must acknowledge Joint governance explicitly in the document.
iv. Need to add a section about the “pre-vetting” process that occur at the unit level before the proposal of Gift/Naming goes to SVC PAE.

v. Remove the word “unduly” in the Appendix statement.

4. Announcements: None

CLOSED SESSION

1. Jane Cauley left the meeting and Elizabeth Mulvaney covered for reporting the minutes.
2. Denial of tenure case: Awaiting new appeal board to be appointed.
3. Requirement of a unit to publish in a select list of journals: Reviewed Summary document of 3 TAFC members who investigated the issues. Changes were suggested; as a matter of general policy (not specific to a unit), the revised document will be on the agenda for the Faculty Assembly meeting November 4, 2020 and will be presented by Chris Bonneau.
4. SOM Case involving publication of an article by Pitt faculty regarding the implications of affirmative action. Article was viewed as not in line with UPMC and Pitt’s mission; UPMC called for a retraction. Faculty was disciplined (removed from administrative role as fellowship director and was stripped of teaching and research mentoring activities) without due process. Several groups/individuals became involved in a dialogue including the SVC of Health Sciences (SVCHS) and AAUP. TAFC met with SVCHS and presented options and is awaiting response from SVCHS.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane A. Cauley