Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee Minutes
10 May 2021 Meeting

Zoom

Present: Carey Balaban, Nick Bircher, Barry Gold Jane Cauley (Secretary), Abbe de Vallejo (Co-Chair), Maria Kovacs (Co-Chair), Chris Bonneau (President Univ Senate), Ergin Kocyildirim, Kirill Kiselyov, John Kirkwood, Mark Paterson, Chloe Page, Lu-in Wang (Vice Provost Academic Affairs), Lori Molinaro, Elizabeth Mulvaney, Ann Thompson (Vice Dean SOM); John Wallace (Vice Provost Faculty Diversity and Development), Rakesh Sindhi, Jessie Van Swearingen, Donavan Harrel (University Times)

Absent: Karin Warner (excused), Stephen Jacobus, Helen Petracchi

AGENDA:

Open Session:

Roll Call – Meeting started 3:04 – Quorum met

1. Approval of minutes of February 9, 2021 meeting unanimously approved
2. Policy on Gifts and naming (Carey): approved by Faculty Assembly and Senate;
3. Kirill: representative for TAFC on University-wide ad hoc committee reviewing 3 policies on harassment (CS07), sexual misconduct (CS20) and Title IX (CS27) summarized ongoing discussion:
   (a) Title IX and sexual misconduct likely to merged into one policy.
   (b) Mandatory reporting: Not universally agreed by the committee members;
   (c) Committee responsive to TAFC recommendation for the constitution of a faculty panel that would review complaints/allegations against faculty as prescribed by AAU guidelines
   (d) Academic freedom: Kirill pushing to follow AAU guidelines;
   (e) Balancing due process vs protecting the victim.

4. The issue on the use of a “Journals List” as tool in faculty evaluations and promotions was presented to Faculty Assembly in November 2020. There were many concerns raised, especially stifling of faculty creativity and non-representation of journals in specialized fields. TAFC subcommittee drafted a resolution so that faculty assembly could consider bringing this issue to the administration. Discussion followed.
   Action Item: Carey to send edits to Abbe in one week.

5. Revision of Existing Grievance Policy: Discussion
   (a) Policy very vague;
   (b) Kiril: Under AAUP guidelines, when a grievance is filed, TAFC should be involved at the beginning and throughout the entire process; Right now TAFC involved too late in the process;
   (c) Chris Bonneau: The charter for a committee to review the policy has not been signed off; it needs to be routed thru TAFC and faculty assembly.

CLOSED SESSION

1. Voting faculty and pro-tem faculty members stayed on the meeting.
2. Appeal of a faculty for denial of promotion tenure has been resolved. The case went back to a review committee that ended up recommending promotion/tenure.
3. Faculty who authored a peer-reviewed “white paper” opinion publication with implications on affirmative action. Article was retracted by the journal with urging from UPMC. Without due process, faculty was censured by administrators, stripping off the faculty’s Pitt teaching and research mentoring activities. This case is now in litigation. TAFC will continue to reach out to the faculty member.

4. Appeal of faculty sanctioned by Dean for charges on Sexual harassment (CS07) and sexual misconduct (CS20). The faculty never warned about allegations in their annual evaluations. Title IX office did not give faculty member detailed report. Faculty appealed. The Provost dismissed the CS20 charge but the CS07 sexual harassment charge remained. Faculty requesting formal apology and dismissal of remaining charge. TAFC co-chairs will follow up with the Vice Provost.

5. Faculty complaint about denial of consideration for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor. A subcommittee was constituted to investigate if there is case.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane A. Cauley