

Minutes of Senate Faculty Affairs Committee Meeting

November 2019

Date and time: November 12, 2019, 9:30-11:00 am

Location: Cathedral 826

Present: Lorraine Denman, Irene Frieze, Suzanna Gribble, Laurie Kirsch, Marty Levine, Morgan Pierce, Juleen Rodakowski, Tom Songer, Jay Sukits, and Amy Tuttle

Absent: Yodit Betru, Helen Cahalane, Scott Glaser, Patrick Loughlin, Seth Weinberg, Frank Wilson

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by I. Frieze at 9:32 am.

1. Introductions. All committee members and others present introduced themselves.
2. Approval of October minutes. The committee discussed the October minutes, two items in particular:
 - a. S. Gribble incorrectly spelled J. Sukits last name
 - b. J. Sukits did not approve of the word “unanimous” when discussing the date for the December meeting, he had departed the meeting to teach class. Therefore, the minutes will reflect that unanimous votes include only those committee members present.
 - c. The committee confirmed the December meeting date as Tuesday, 10 December @ 9:30 am.
3. Non-Tenure Stream (NTS) nomenclature. L. Denman discussed agenda item 4a. The committee proposal for appointment stream adoption was presented and approved at Faculty Assembly on November 5th. The vote was not unanimous but strongly in favor. Some of those present saw the title changes unnecessary but did not have an issue with Appointment Stream nomenclature.
 - a. The primary question that resulted was the process of benchmarking salaries at Pitt with other institutions. Effectively, how can we be certain that benchmarking is done accurately.
 - b. The committee wondered what the next step in the process will be?
 - c. L. Denman asked L. Kirsch if the lecturer category is used in AAU salary benchmarking. The contact person for this information is Stephen Wisniewski, Vice Provost for Data and Information.
4. Non-discrimination policy. I. Frieze updated the committee on the status of the Non-discrimination policy.
 - a. S. Weinberg and I. Frieze attended a meeting with the policy office and the office of diversity and inclusion. The two issues that were presented by them were:

- i. 1st Amendment issue because policy prohibits any discriminatory comment from anyone and you are a mandatory reporter. The broad definition of discriminatory is concerning.
 - ii. Mandatory reporting is of concern because it will kill classroom discussion and places NTS faculty in a difficult position given the contractual basis of their employment.
 - b. K. Humphrey, Senior Vice Chancellor for Engagement, pulled the Non-Discriminatory policy from the November Faculty Assembly.
 - c. The Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Advocacy (EIADAC) committee and the Student Affairs committee both approved this policy.
 - d. I. Frieze reported that another meeting the week of November 18th was to take place with an attempt at re-writing the policy. An update will be provided in December.
 - e. M. Pierce asked if graduate teaching assistants are mandatory reporters. I. Frieze (and others) affirmed.
 - f. J. Sukits commented that this policy, as written, opens up areas for lawsuits and will stifle free speech. The University, if sued, would be able to place blame on the faculty for not reporting.
 - g. L. Denman commented that she supports the Office of Diversity and Inclusion but is concerned for further marginalization of NTS faculty and graduate students.
 - h. L. Kirsch suggested the FASC speak with EIADAC committee to find out why they supported the policy as written in early November (prior to any revisions to come).
- 5. Digital Access Policy. L. Denman provided an update on the digital access policy, which was one of three policies (in-state eligibility, non-discrimination, and digital access) open for comment in August 2019. This policy was also presented at the November Faculty Assembly meeting.
 - a. All digital media production should be accessible to those with disabilities.
 - b. The committee supports working toward improving accessibility, but are wondering who is responsible for making products accessible (departments, schools, individual faculty) and who will monitor the products to check for accessibility features?
 - c. At this time, the policy was tabled at Faculty Assembly to make changes to the wording in the policy.
 - d. S. Gribble commented that faculty are likely to stop recording lectures, concerns over promoting use of open education resources that may not have accessibility features that cannot be controlled by the faculty.
 - e. L. Denman believes this will be burdensome on the faculty.
 - f. I. Frieze suggested the committee draft a statement to the policy office to state concerns. L. Denman agreed to compose an initial draft.
 - g. The committee then discussed the role of Disability Resources and Services, the ability to make small/easy updates to materials (color, size of font) to make more accessible. Also, it was noted that Canvas has a button that can identify accessibility issues.
- 6. Annual evaluation letter. I. Frieze updated the committee that an updated draft of the annual evaluation letter instructions for deans is being worked on with the Tenure & Academic Freedom committee. It is in its early phases, a draft will be brought to the committee.
- 7. Provost Office updates.

- a. L. Kirsch updated the committee on faculty development opportunities
 - i. First Monday workshops are popular, Ann Thompson will lead the next one on December 2nd on identifying and mitigating implicit bias.
 - ii. The Annual Diversity Luncheon will be held on November 19th where the Provost's Diversity in the Curriculum Awards were announced and presented. Paula Davis was the featured speaker.
 - iii. Other workshops continue, information can be found on the Office of the Provost's website: <https://www.provost.pitt.edu/faculty/career-and-professional-development-faculty/professional-development-faculty>
- b. The OFCCP (Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs) completed an audit of recruiting and hiring practices. Any violations that were noted had to do with recordkeeping. In response, ODI and HR are improving recordkeeping through use of Talent Center to collect EEO data. Other practices are being put into place:
 - i. All positions will have a job ad, including visiting and part-time positions. Clear minimum requirements for a position must be present in the ad wording and ODI has to approve the ads.
 - ii. The process is communicated on the ODI website and more information continues to be put out.
 - iii. L. Kirsch indicated if there are specific questions regarding the hire of a particular individual or case, contact ODI.
- c. L. Kirsch is the chair of the Provost's Advisory Council on Instructional Excellence. This committee has been working on recommendations to the Provost for complementing the use of student opinion surveys administered through OMET with other assessment approaches to provide better feedback and mitigate potential bias within the student opinion surveys. The recommendations have been accepted by the Provost and will go to the Council of Deans.
- d. The School of Medicine successfully petitioned the Provost to expand the tenure clock for all School of Medicine faculty to 10 years. An ad hoc committee on Promotion and Tenured was convened by the Provost in March 2019. In her charge, the Provost asked the ad hoc committee to consider whether other schools and regional campuses should be allowed to extend their tenure clocks. The recommendation from the committee and discussed with the Provost is that schools and regional campuses may opt in and submit a petition for the change, similar to the process used by the School of Medicine. This item remains under discussion.
- e. The ad hoc Committee on Promotion and Tenure was also charged with recommending how to establish a University-level promotion and tenure review committee for all promotion and tenure cases for tenure-stream, tenured, and appointment stream faculty. The University-level review committee comprised of faculty from across the University replace the University-level review that is currently done by the Vice Provosts. The spirit behind this new review committee would be to help normalize the review process and increase transparency. Faculty would have another mechanism to learn about what happens across the University.
 - i. The ad hoc committee is not recommending changes at the school and regional campus level. As is the case now, the process for an individual review starts with the school or regional campus. After a dean or regional campus president makes a recommendation on a case, the case

would be reviewed by the new University-level review committee. The committee's recommendations would then be forwarded to the Provost.

- ii. T. Songer asked if this would add to review period length. L. Kirsch pointed out that there is currently a University-level review in the Office of the Provost, which generally is completed within one month. The Chancellor's Office also reviews tenure and promotion cases, and these reviews generally take a month to complete.
 - iii. Multiple committee members expressed concern regarding the logistics and how much effort this would require for the faculty reviewing the cases. L. Kirsch agreed that information distribution information (specifically the volumes of materials) and developing an efficient process would have to be considered. She also indicated that the ad hoc committee is recommending that the University-level review committee be comprised of 4 subcommittees.
8. Fact finding for professional development. L. Denman updated the committee on efforts to identify what opportunities exist for NTS in different schools for faculty professional development and professional leaves. A document for A&S has been generated by Denman and S. Gribble. *Committee members are encouraged to send their information to L. Denman, she will add this information.*
9. Priorities for next meeting. I. Frieze inquired about agenda priorities for the next meeting. L. Denman suggested that we look at where things stand with current initiatives and plan for spring semester.

Meeting adjourned at 10:53 am