

Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee Minutes
25 January 2017
Cathedral of Learning 156

Attendance: Jane Cauley, Barry Gold, Seth Weinberg, Chris Bonneau, Maria Kovacs, Abbe de Vallejo, Laurie Kirsch, Rakesh Sindhi, Willa Doswell, Treviene Harris, Frank Wilson, Geovette Washington, Jennifer Seng

Excused: Nick Bircher and Nick Mance, Rose Constantino, William Federspiel and John Kirkwood

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 PM by Maria Kovacs.

1. The minutes of the previous meeting (October 18, 2016) were approved.
2. Updates.
 - a. There was a discussion concerning faculty that have both Pitt and UPMC appointments, and how their Pitt freedom to pursue their academic goals can be protected. TAF identified a subcommittee to address this issue. They will meet with Dr. Ann Thompson (Vice Dean, **School of Medicine**) to better understand the academic relationship between Pitt and UPMC.
 - b. There was discussion of the draft policy on “Consensual Relationships.” There was basic agreement that the document needed clarifications. Everyone agreed that relationships between a supervisor and a subordinate (e.g., faculty and student) should be prohibited. The section dealing with consensual relationships between individuals where no supervision or evaluation is involved was more problematic since this type of relationship was prohibited only if it resulted in a significant disruption to the academic and/or professional environment or hindered the fulfillment of the academic mission. It was argued that this statement was vague, could be used to enable harassment of employees and such behavior should not be allowable regardless of the cause. Geovette Washington, Pitt’s Chief Legal Officer, who attended the meeting is going to edit the document based on the discussion.
 - c. There was discussion concerning the Provost’s memo of November 16, 2016 concerning Annual Reviews of Faculty and Related Salary Decisions. The document represents a major improvement as it requires for the first time that policies be developed that follow a set of university wide guidelines. There is also a well thought out appeal process. There remain some points in the memo that are of concern. It was felt that the 20% salary reduction in a given year is too severe. The other major concern is the use of salary support as a criterion of scholarship. In the report of the Provost’s ad hoc committee to review salary reductions, it was stated that “the annual review of faculty should consider the balance of **research/scholarship, teaching, and service**, as defined by the mission of the University and the faculty member’s academic unit, and as appropriate for the faculty member’s role and rank.” Salary support is never mentioned in the ad hoc committee’s report to the Provost since it is an economic concern that is not related to scholarship or research.
3. New cases: no new cases have come to the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane A. Cauley
Secretary, TAF Committee