

Report of the 2018-19 Faculty Personnel Committee

Membership and Case Load

The 2018-19 FPC consisted of 12 members:

Jack Boss, Chair (Professor, School of Music and Dance/Music Theory)
Marcin Bownik (Professor, Mathematics)
Shankha Chakraborty (Professor, Economics)
Dejing Dou (Professor, CIS)
Sangita Gopal (Associate Professor, Cinema)
Vsevolod Kapatsinski (Associate Professor, Linguistics)
Marilyn Nippold (Professor, College of Education/SPECS)
Donnalyne Pompper (Professor, School of Journalism and Communications/Public Relations)
Ofer Raban (Professor, School of Law)
Michael Salter (Professor, College of Design/Art)
Carol Silverman (Professor, Anthropology)
Jiao Zhang (Associate Professor, College of Business/Marketing)

Jack Boss, Shankha Chakraborty, Marilyn Nippold, and Donnalyne Pompper also served as the subcommittee for Expedited Tenure Reviews.

We would like to thank our liaison with the Provost's office, Ellen Herman, and especially Sonja Runberg, who did all the administrative heavy lifting to make our committee run smoothly. The committee reviewed 40 promotion and tenure files from across campus. Of our 40 cases, the breakdown was 1 case for tenure only, 2 for expedited tenure, 21 for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, and 16 for promotion to Full Professor.

The committee's work began during Fall quarter with an expedited case, but our main workload was carried out in 12 meetings between Feb. 6 and May 23, and we discussed two cases via email in the second week of June (during finals week, as various committee members were leaving campus for the summer). Committee attendance was generally strong, and though we continued the practice of recusing members on cases from their own units, we were able to make a quorum of 8 members on every case. Each committee member reviewed long files for each case on which he or she voted, and each of us wrote 3 or 4 committee reports summarizing individual cases. After discussion (lengthy in some cases), we revised the reports and sent them with our votes to the Office of the Provost. Our reviews were generally positive—which says something good, I think, about the quality of faculty at our institution.

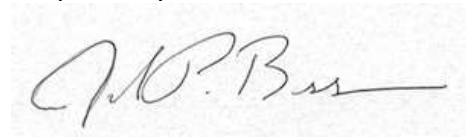
As our committee did its work, there were a few issues that came up repeatedly that made it a bit more challenging, and after reading a few committee reports from years past, it seems that some of them are old problems. We will summarize these issues here, so that P and T committees in the various units can consult our report to help them improve their working processes and foster better communication between them and the FPC.

- 1) **External reviews.** Every tenure and promotion case is supposed to have at least five letters written by experts in the candidate's field from outside the University of Oregon. Ideally, these letters are substantial, 2-3 page reviews of the candidate's scholarly or creative work, and are written by people who are "at arm's length"— letters from the candidate's adviser or another professor they may have studied with are not very useful, nor are letters from someone that the candidate co-authors with frequently. We received a number of letters that were either too short and superficial, or weren't at "arm's length," and in some cases those letters cast doubt on an otherwise strong case.
- 2) **Departmental expectations for research or creative activity.** Our committee was extremely conscientious about taking the items on the candidate's CV and comparing them with the criteria for promotion given in the department's P and T document. Our main concern in evaluating research was "does the candidate meet the bar that *this particular department* has set" (We didn't set our *own* bar, in other words.) When the P and T documents specify hard numbers, as many do, like a book and two or three articles for example, it made our job easier. But we realize that such quantification isn't possible or desirable for every field. In cases where the P and T guidelines are more qualitative than quantitative, it's important for the FPC to have good, hard evidence of some kind that a faculty member's work has "brought them into the forefront of their field"—items like citation records, or statements from the external reviewers about how the candidate's work has been useful to them in their own teaching and research, are helpful.
- 3) **Co-authorship.** One of the disadvantages the FPC has (compared to a unit personnel committee) is that our members come from a wide variety of disciplines with a wide variety of expectations regarding co-authorship of articles, book chapters, etc. For FPC members in fields with different co-authoring practices (or who never co-author articles at all), it's important to have some idea of the role that each of the authors played in the publication—some CVs we looked at included a couple of lines below each entry to indicate who came up with the idea for the project, who gathered the data, who did the writing, who did the editing, etc. That kind of detail made our work much easier.
- 4) **Course evaluations.** This item has to do more with an adjustment that all the P and T committees, both unit-level and University-level, will have to make next year. For the past two years, most every department and college letter the FPC saw began its "Teaching" section by listing the candidate's average numerical scores: "Professor X's course evaluation scores ranged from 4.7-5.0, with several courses receiving perfect marks." Next year, we won't be able to make those kinds of statements, so each committee will need to think about how to summarize the information received from the student course evaluations—maybe it will take the form of a list of strengths and weaknesses, elaborated by specific comments from the students and from the candidate's own responses.
- 5) **Expedited tenure review.** We'd like to ask the Senate (informally; perhaps a formal proposal could be made next year) to consider whether expedited tenure review could also be made available for new hires at the Associate Professor level (right now, we limit it to Full Professors). We had a number of incoming faculty "stars" at the Associate

level, including one in the School of Music and Dance, a violinist with an undeniable national reputation as a teacher and recruiter. For candidates like him, it seemed like the more streamlined process would have been more appropriate.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present our committee's work and our suggestions for making the promotion and tenure process even stronger and fairer.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Boss", is centered on a light gray rectangular background.

Jack Boss
Professor, School of Music and Dance
Chair, Faculty Personnel Committee