

Report of the 2015-16 UO Faculty Personnel Committee

Membership and Case Load

The 2014-15 FPC consisted of twelve members:

Leonardo Garcia-Pabon (Professor, Romance Languages)
Leslie Harris (Professor, Law)
Qusheng Jin (Associate Professor, Geological Sciences)
Steven Matsunaga (Professor, Accounting)
Ronald Mitchell (Professor, Political Science)
James Schombert (Professor, Physics)
Laura Lee McIntyre (Professor, Education)
Peter Lafer (School of Journalism and Communication)
Ronald Mitchell (Professor, Political Science/Environmental Studies)
Doris Payne (Professor, Linguistics)
Esther Hagelocher (Associate Professor, Architecture)
David Frank (Professor, Clark Honors College - English), Chair

The committee considered a total of 62 cases during AY 2015-16:

Associate Professor with Tenure: 32 Full Professor: 19

Tenure Only: 11

Work Chronology

The committee met in the fall for an orientation with Provost Scott Coltrane, Senior Vice Provost Doug Blandy, Vice Provost Ken Doxsee, and Pam Palanuk, Administrative Director for Academic Affairs. Vice President for Equity and Inclusion Yvette M. Alex Assensoh provided insight on the standards the committee should consider to promote institutional equity and inclusion in tenure and promotion cases. The committee met throughout the academic year, with most of work conducted in the late fall, winter, and early spring. Unless recused, all committee members read all files in their entirety. Each committee member was responsible to serve as lead author for six to seven reports on individual cases in advance of discussion. The lead authors presented their draft to the committee for the purposes of deliberation and then revised as appropriate in response to the committee review. All cases were reviewed by David Frank, FPC Chair, and then sent to Academic Affairs.

Overview: Most of the 62 cases the FPC reviewed this year were strong, many meeting and exceeding the standards set by the candidate's disciplines and those of the AAU. The committee did confront several complicated and a handful of truly difficult cases. In general, the FPC was impressed by the quality of the files and the competence of Academic Affairs in preparing the cases for review.

*Issues and Recommendations**1. FPC Workload*

The FPC considered 34 cases in 2004 and 62 cases during the 2015-2016 academic year, with the same number of committee members. The workload for the committee has almost doubled in twelve years. The Strategic Framework calls for the university to hire an additional 80-100 faculty members, which will increase the workload for the FPC over the next several years.¹ The Committee on Committee's report on university committee workloads concluded that the FPC requires much more time than any other university committee. Research active full professors are reluctant to stand for election to the FPC because they will have less time for their research and teaching. This year, there were three open slots on the FPC ballot that were filled by the Senate Executive Committee, not through a vote by the faculty.

Beginning in 2005, every chair of the FPC in his or her yearly report has stated that FPC members or the chair should receive a course release or some compensation to account for importance of the committee and the time faculty members must commit to a careful and thorough review of the files. The chairs include colleagues who are internationally known for their research and have served or have gone on to serve as department chairs, deans, and in the provost office.

The current and three former chairs of the FPC met President Shill and Provost Coltrane in October 2015 to discuss the status of the FPC and made a formal request for compensation. In response, the Provost has recognized the need to acknowledge the unique importance of the FPC:

October 3, 2016

Dear FPC Members,

In recognition of the significant time commitment made by members of the UO Faculty Personnel Committee, and acknowledging input from past committee members and chairs, I will be providing supplements to FPC members' Academic Support Accounts. Following each year of service, the Chair will receive \$3,000, the Chair-elect \$2,000, and each other member a \$1,000 supplement to their ASA accounts.

With appreciation for all you do for our university,
Scott

The FPC is grateful for the support offered by the provost. The committee will continue to discuss the problem of workload.

¹ https://provost.uoregon.edu/sites/provost1.uoregon.edu/files/strategic_framework_-_final_w_memo_and_app.pdf, p. 6.

2. FPC Charge

The charge of the FPC is to advise the Provost on all tenure and promotion cases. In collaboration with the University Senate, Academic Affairs, and the Deans, the FPC should craft a better developed charge that reflects the aspirations of excellence outlined in the Strategic Framework 2015 Institutional Priorities.² Given these priorities, what advice should the FPC offer the provost on all tenure and promotion cases? Should the FPC simply review cases to determine if the proper procedures were followed and that the judgments offered by the departments, deans, and referees were consistent with the department's promotion and tenure documents? Should the FPC judge departmental promotion and tenure standards if they do not meet the expectations of the university outlined in the Strategic Framework? These are questions the FPC debated; they deserve further consideration.

3. Form of FPC Advise

The provost has suggested that the FPC reports need not rehearse the basic facts in the files under review. He invited the FPC to write shorter reports that offered him and Academic Affairs the considered judgment of the FPC. During the 2015-2016 academic year, the FPC did work to create succinct reports without sacrificing attention to the particulars of each case. The FPC should continue to improve the format used to offer its judgments.

4. Metrics of Assessment

Harry Wonham, FPC Chair, 2014-15 rightly called for departments "to explore information resources that might enhance their ability to quantify scholarly impact and significance in ways that seem appropriate for their disciplines. "Best Practices" on this issue will differ widely among fields, and yet the FPC would like to see more thoughtful use of relevant metrics in internal evaluations of scholarly/creative impact and significance." We encourage deans and department heads to engage their faculty to improve the standards used to judge scholarship, teaching, and service.

Scholarship. In general, departments do set forth and explain the standards used to assess the scholarship of candidates for tenure and promotion. Department heads, deans, and the faculty should continue to develop these standards and explanations of these standards and, when appropriate, how they meet the expectations of the AAU.

Teaching. The university relies heavily on teaching evaluations to assess instruction. Research continues to challenge their validity.³ Peer reviews are often problematic. The university should revisit the role of teaching in a research professor's portfolio and how instruction should be assessed.

² <https://provost.uoregon.edu/strategicframework>

³Bob Uttl, Carmela A White, and Daniela Wong Gonzalez, "Meta-Analysis of Faculty's Teaching Effectiveness: Student Evaluation of Teaching Ratings and Student Learning Are Not Related," *Studies in Educational Evaluation* (2016). In press, on line: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0191491X16300323>

Service. Assistant professors are assigned very modest service obligations. Academic Affairs has, in the past, expected candidates for full professor to offer a record of "non-trivial" departmental, college, and university service. The role of service in a professor's portfolio deserves campus-wide discussion.

5. The meaning of "peer-review"

As professor Wonham observes, "A related difficulty for the FPC lies in the different ways in which the term "peer-review" is used by units across the university. Some disciplines appear to use the term casually to refer to scholarship that has been reviewed for publication by someone other than the author (e.g., an editor in the case of an invited contribution to a critical anthology or encyclopedia), while others assume that "peer-review" denotes anonymous (or even "double-blind") evaluation by credible scholars in the field. The FPC acknowledges that such differences in usage are unavoidable, and yet we encourage department heads to provide the committee with relevant contextual guidance on this issue." Our experience this year suggests that professor Wonham's observation is still relevant.

5. The Question of Time Frame.

In most cases, professors are evaluated on evidence offered of scholarship and teaching developed during the duration of their University of Oregon contracts. In a limited number of cases, the FPC engaged cases in which the letter of appointments stipulated that evidence of the candidate's scholarship and teaching before arrival at the UO was to be considered. We appreciate the clarity of these statements and urge department heads and deans to pay significant attention to the time frames of evaluation in their letters of appointment.

6. Institutional Equity and Inclusion.

Most candidates do provide a three to six-page personal statement on their contributions to institutional equity and inclusion. We were impressed by the commitment of the candidates to the values of diversity. Two candidates did not submit these statements and we learned from Academic Affairs that candidates "should" offer these statements, but that "should" does not mean "must." In light of this ambiguity, Academic Affairs did not insist that the two candidates provide statements on equity and inclusion. We urge the University and United Academics to rectify this anomaly.

7. "Early" Promotion and Timeline for Promotion to Full Professor.

There is some confusion about the timeline expected of candidates for promotion to full professor. Are associates expected to wait six years, regardless of their records, before they can submit their cases for full professor? The Provost believes that a candidate's body of work rather than a preordained timeline should be the priority. This expectation should be adopted as a university-wide norm.

The FPC thanks Pam Palanuk for her gracious, intelligent, and professional administrative

assistance. Senior Vice Provosts Doug Blandy and Susan Anderson provided wise answers to our questions, and Vice Provost Ken Doxsee oversaw the preparation of 62 complicated files, doing so with care and precision.

Respectfully submitted,

David Frank
Professor
Clark Honors College
FPC Chair, 2015-16