

Emailed on January 24, 2014

To: Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Instruction

As you may be aware the Personnel Policies Committee is charged with monitoring the new promotion and tenure process. With the completion of the first cycle of the new tenure and promotion policy the committee feels that it is appropriate to review the functionality and practice of the process. The committee would like to meet with both Dean Scoufos and VPAA McMillan to review the process and identify any needed changes to the policy. If possible we would like to meet toward the end of February (Week of February 17th or 24th) so that any changes can be made prior to the start of the next cycle. The committee has received some feedback from the process as noted below.

1) From the feedback to the Senate so far, it looks like the Dean of Instruction is using more or less the same form letter as in the past for the “decision letter” that goes back to the applicant/committee/chair. In particular it’s still using the phrasing “Should your request for promotion ultimately be denied, the president or his designee will provide you with the reasons for your denial once the process is complete.” There was some concern that this statement didn’t reflect the full range of information the applicant will get back with the new policy (the narrative evaluations from the different levels, which hopefully will go into both strengths and weaknesses).

2) The Senate did get later feedback that an applicant actually received a narrative evaluation from the Dean of Instruction already (the initial feedback was from a committee member who only saw the “decision letter”), so it looks like the first issue really is just one of the phrasing in the “decision letter”. When we were writing the new policy we didn’t intend the applicant to get the evaluations until later (so they wouldn’t be able to appeal elements of the evaluations at later stages), but there’s nothing in the way we wrote it that prevents them being sent out earlier if an evaluator wants to. It’s something we might want to check for consistency on in the future.

3) There was positive feedback on how one of the “decision letters” from a department chair was phrased. It included the statement “I have generated a narrative evaluation of your portfolio which will be placed in your portfolio and forwarded to the next step in the promotion process. You will be able to review this narrative evaluation at a later step in the process if you reach the point where you are considering an appeal or withdrawal of your request for promotion or tenure.” Even though ideally everyone knows the details of the new process, the faculty member (and the Senate) thought communicating the process and details was helpful and increased confidence that the policy was being followed.

These issues appear to be relatively minor and may warrant a clarification of intent rather than an actual change in policy. We look forward to working on this issue with you.

Halet Poovey
Chair Personnel Policies Committee