

Faculty Senate Meeting
Minutes of
December 7, 2017

William Self, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. The roll was circulated for signatures.

MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of November 16, 2017 was made and seconded. The minutes were approved as recorded.

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Lucretia Cooney, Associate Director, Faculty Excellence
Jana Jasinski, Interim Vice Provost for Faculty Excellence
Katie Wyche, Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications, Faculty Excellence
Karla Amaro, IT Business Analyst, Faculty Excellence

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

REPORT OF THE PROVOST

None.

NEW BUSINESS

This meeting was scheduled for the sole purpose of discussing Resolution 2017-2018-7 Faculty Senate Bylaw Change, University Promotion and Tenure Committee and Procedures. The resolution will be up for possible amendment and vote at the January meeting. The resolution is open for discussion.

Dr. Scott provided an overview and answered questions raised at the November meeting. The resolution was developed after thorough discussion, research, and consideration of various alternatives by the University Promotion and Tenure Committee and the Personnel Committee. We started by considering the most important role of the Promotion and Tenure Committee. Research on how other universities handle promotion and tenure varied around the country. The committee examined UCF cases over the past four years. We also did a comparison between university recommendations and the provost's decisions over the past four years. There were only fifteen cases that were different. Fourteen were promotion to full professor, of which twelve had negative recommendations by the committee and positive outcomes by the provost. This suggests that the solution proposed would have little to no chance of changing this. Ohio State, Michigan State, Minnesota, Washington, Texas, Syracuse, and other universities don't have a review by a university committee. Some of these universities review cases referred to a committee by the provost, which is part of our proposal. Regarding the position of

the United Faculty of Florida (UFF) Chapter leadership, the contract only requires notification for an opportunity to discuss changes to proposed criteria, not to process or procedure. The University Promotion and Tenure Committee as an advisory committee, makes recommendations to the provost and the provost makes the final decision. Faculty Excellence would modify the UCF Regulation, which is open to review by the university community, including UFF. The option presented preserves the primary role of the committee, which is to sort through the mixed or split votes. This option also has the biggest impact on committee workload and the least chance of having committee members insert bias into the process.

Comment: A colleague in my department suggested instead of bypassing the committee, give the committee the ability to waive the right to review unanimous cases. That way, the change isn't a permanent change to what might be a temporary problem. Specifically, line 34:

“... Tenure Committee ~~will~~ may bypass the committee and be forwarded directly from the Dean's review to the Provost until such time it is no longer necessary.

The language on line 43 for “assigned” would also need to be changed.

Comment: There are many cases where committees have to review extensive information by sampling. They assign people to review certain files and flag any files that the whole committee needs to review. That could be one way of handling the workload without changing the bylaws or Regulation. The university level committee exists because a couple of colleges only have one department or have a small number of departments and want someone else to review the files, and in general to raise the standard across the university. There could be instances where a person bypasses the committee with unanimous votes, however, later issues arise that wouldn't be raised at the college level, but should have been caught at the university level. I question if the change is necessary since the committee can set their own rules.

Comment: The idea of sampling wouldn't require a bylaw change, but would require a change in the UCF Regulation, which requires committee members to review all files.

Dr. Self would like to determine if any colleges had all applicants with unanimous votes for 8 years in a row. What fraction of the colleges would the university review?

Question: Do we still need a university committee? The university has a wide range of disciplines. The departments and colleges should decide on their faculty. I'm also concerned about the fairness if one group gets a bypass.

Response: The Personnel Committee discussed whether the university needs the committee or not, but felt this was not the time to debate the question.

Comment: I haven't seen any evidence that any unanimous votes from the department and college resulted in the university committee denying promotion or tenure.

Response: I think there are some cases.

Comment: With the varied professions, if I were on the committee, I would defer to the expert from the appropriate college. In unanimous cases, I would not question the validity of the college and not question the college's decision.

Response: You need objectivity of the committee, especially for small units. Different biases can filter up through the department to the college level. The university committee weeds out the politics.

Response: The proposal gives the committee more time to review the mixed or split votes and those cases that interpreted the criteria differently.

Question: Does this resolution preclude an applicant from asking for a review for a unanimous vote?

Answer: The Personnel Committee discussed the option, but could not identify how losing the ability would hurt the candidate.

Question: What about allowing the committee to request a file is reviewed?

Answer: The committee discussed this too, but this would result in members reviewing all the files.

Comment: Many organizations handle large workloads with a reasonable number of people. There may be instances where a department and college don't want the extra review because the faculty member is valuable even though they might not meet the standards for research or service. If the college only has one department, the university committee is the only oversight for review.

Comment: Faculty candidates going through this process should know what the process looks like from the beginning. It has to be transparent.

Question: Do any senators with experience on the University Promotion and Tenure committee have any comments or opinions?

Comment: The workload wasn't an issue two years ago with only 42 applicants. Last year there were 79 applicants, and 63 this year. The number of applicants will raise dramatically by 2020.

Comment: We could review all the unanimous applicants, just not at the same level of detail as the mixed or split votes. If the cursory review raises a flag, then it can be reviewed by the whole committee.

Comment: I support streamlining the process. If we support faculty governance, we must have faith in our colleagues within the department that know the criteria the best, to make the right decision.

Comment: I had a conversation with the previous chair of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, and he fully supports the resolution.

Comment: This is a permanent solution for a temporary problem that emphasizes the number of applicants. The influx of applications is a temporary influx.

Response: It can be changed in the future.

Response: This isn't a temporary problem. The College of Medicine plans to grow massive numbers of faculty and departments with Medical City. The workload for the committee will only increase in the long term.

Comment: We can think of this as a clarification of the role of the committee. The primary role of the committee is to help the provost sort through the mixed or split votes. This would be a permanent solution to a permanent charge.

Question: Does the provost have any thoughts or opinions on this subject?

Answer: This is a faculty committee issue. I spend less time reviewing the unanimous applicants versus the mixed or split votes, where I read every page. I think this is more about taking the time to review what needs to be reviewed. We've hired over 520 new faculty in the past three years and are hiring 120 this year. We have an 8-year pipeline ahead of us and the number of faculty will continue to grow.

No other discussion. Dr. Self reminded the senators to bring enough copies of an amendment to the January meeting or email the Faculty Senate office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.