

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Nov. 11, 2011

In attendance:

Paul Abegg (PA)

Brad Barry (BB)

Jen Ciaccio (JC)

Ami Comeford (AC)

Rob Cowan (RC)

Varlo Davenport (VD)

John Goldhardt (JG)

Jerry Harris (sec.) (JH)

Dianne Hirning (DH)

Jie Liu (JL)

Jack Lounsbury (JL)

Russ Ross (RR)

Matt Smith-Lahrman (MS)

Betty Stokes Crane (BSC)

Dennis Wignall (DW)

PA: Thank you for coming today and thank you to the sub-committee for coordinating all this tremendous work, and I'll turn the time over to them in a minute. We need to be thinking about the degree equivalency model that we looked at, which is modeled after USU policy. We'll address that in December, so please be thinking about it. If anyone has lost it, I'll resend it. Now I'll turn time over to VD & DH.

VD: The first thing is: my presumption at this point is that nothing is off the table based on our discussion two meetings ago. We developed this policy, which was a reaction to the one Martha wrote; this is what we came up with. The next thing we need to do is meet with Martha to marry the two proposals. There are some questions that need to be answered so we can go forward. They're there in front of you (handout) in a sequence, and we can go through them. So #1: the purpose (reads aloud from document).

PA: I like the latter option.

VD: Is that a consensus?

JG: It works for accreditation, but it's a hoop to jump through.

MS: The only reason to do this is for accreditation.

PA: Well, and the lawmakers.

DW: The Board of Regents demands it.

MS: But we didn't do this because we wanted to help each other out!

DW: But we *can* design is as a supportive program rather than one that is coercive/punitive.

MS: And we need it to be between the two.

DH: We just need to decide if we *want* to make it into something more.

JC: What is the minimum that accreditation demands?

VD: I don't know.

DW: That's a good way to put it—I read it that there just has to be something there.

MS: And it's important to the Board of Regents.

JC: But there's no "You must have A, B, C, etc."

DW: Not from an accreditation point of view.

VD: The Board of Regents version is a very benign document. There are some general guidelines, but my thought was that whatever we develop, it would be a good idea if it had some toughness & internal policing so there wouldn't be another policy imposed on us later.

BB: Question #1 seems tied to the things we provide as we go through the process—we need to see what we can and need to bring to the process but without creating huge binders of material. This seems to leave a door open for that.

VD: Did you all get to look at the PTR thing on the back of that proposal? That's USU's check-off list. It's pretty simple.

BB: But if I'm going through review and you're my committee, there's a list of things I *must* bring and a list of things I *ought* to bring.

DH: It's not a list of things...

BB: Bring a vita, which can be gotten from the portfolio on-line, previous professional plans, and those seem like a good idea. (Reads under "Procedure," bottom of p. 2). Then student evaluations, peer reviews, and the part that concerns me is "and any other info."

VD: In Theater, we have one faculty member whose teaching is one-third of their assignment; the other aspect doesn't fit under any of those categories. Should we strike that?

JC: Well, you want the ability to put in stuff if you did something fabulous.

RC: That's why it's optional.

JC: Maybe instead of limiting what can be put in, there can be a limit on what it takes to pass. If you show X, Y, and Z, you get a pass. If we communicate the requirements to pass review, if we put it in pass-fail terms, it won't get out of control.

VD: Can we work through the first couple of questions? If (1): Yes, it's about development, then the review should be of tenured faculty by tenured faculty, or should it be administrative?

DW: Not administration. The department chair only serves to form the committee.

RC: But we have small departments where the chair might be a person's best spokesman!

DW: Then we go to the division and the most closely aligned content areas.

JC: I can tell when someone's a good teacher whether or not I understand what they're teaching. If it's good enough to give someone tenure, why not to review them afterward? The RTP committee is made up of everyone, not just people that know you.

DH: #8 ties into #2—that's what we're talking about.

MS: As long as they're all tenured professors and not administrators, why is that a problem?

DW: Here's an example: if I'm on a committee for a health care person, and they have a weakness (which is why the committee was formed), then the person will be working with the committee to address that. I'm not in a position to make sound recommendations because I don't know the content.

DH: I thought that was something to be addressed *within* the department and the department head to create the professional development plan...?

JC: So how many committees are we forming here?

RR: That's the concern from my department. Looking at part 1 again, it'd be nice to have support for those who need it—if we identify a problem, *then* we form the committee.

DW: In Communications, we have four tenured people in the department and 10-12 that aren't. So right now, we should be writing policy without being concerned about having every tenured person involved—that's not realistic. How many tenured people are there in Business, English, etc.—that'll be a better litmus. All we want now is a policy to address the current situation.

JC: But why would anyone sign on to be on this committee if they have to meet over and over and over again...?

DW: Here's how I envision it: the department chair notices a weakness that hasn't been addressed. We should be reviewing ourselves and addressing change as a professional responsibility, but if the chair notices something, it means the faculty member doesn't know how to address the issue.

MS: But we're talking about something different—the every-five-year review. Now, if there are weaknesses found by that, *then* a committee can be constructed to deal with it.

JC: This makes is sound punitive against those that don't want to change. But this is supposed to be for the *average* faculty member that would be happy to change.

RR: This should be a simpler review than the tenure review—just to see if people are maintaining professionalism. It should be straightforward *unless* something is identified.

DW: AAUP points out the problem with the name "post-tenure review," which makes it sound more complex and involved—other names have been suggested.

RR: I'm afraid we're moving toward something as heavy as RTP review.

VD: Two things: (1) this level of work at the U of U or USU—if this is going to be very time-consuming, then it's ammunition for moving toward a lighter teaching load.

DW: At the very least, there should be release time to serve on these committees. This flexibility can be built into the policy: if there are many people up for review every five years, the committee isn't top-loaded from within the department.

VD: Also, it's a mechanism—not necessarily the best one, but just for the sake of having one. Is that something we should explore more? (#3 on list). Because that, then, in this model, establishes the criteria.

MS: This calls for an every-year thing—that's more work again!

JC: Chairs of large depts. doing this for large numbers of people.

VD: There's release time for that. I understand what you're saying, but this is *a* tool and *a* model—if there's a better one...

BB: Could this be the second layer that MS is talking about? Martha's would be the first layer.

VD: That's interesting...

MS: Why can't it be simple? Every five years, tenured faculty goes through a "tenure light" review; if there are problems, that's the trigger to move on to something more.

JC: But they'd have to be *big* weaknesses; everyone has small ones!

MS: Right, but if there are big problems, the 2% raise doesn't kick in until it's addressed. Not another five years, but a one year plan with the chair and committee.

DH: In Martha's version, didn't it say "some time within five years" based on professional development and the nature of the deficiency?

PA: Yes.

DH: That provided some flexibility.

MS: Administration doesn't have to know the weaknesses—it never has to go there until after 4-5 times of the person not addressing their problem.

JC: But the chair talks to the dean, the dean to Donna, etc.

DW: The control to address that is that if it's faculty-oriented, it's far less punitive.

MS: And I agree with that.

VD: What administration knows how to do and evaluate is mostly teaching. In the example I was talking about, the teaching is a minority of his position. There's no mechanism that administration has with which to evaluate his off-campus work. The annual review allows for a more customized evaluation of the faculty member, and that provides the basis of the rigor—that we are being looked at regularly by someone: the department chair that knows the field.

RR: But we already have all these other evaluations! Should there be another one for these kinds of people? Our "tenure-light" evaluation should be based on evidence *already* being collected from these other evaluations. If something is identified then, *then* we need to get our statements, letters, etc. I'm pretty sure that most people don't look through all the documents I gathered for my review, but go straight to the student evaluations. If the criterion for PTR is professionalism, then we're already gathering the evidence for that and we just need to put in place a mechanism to review it. But for everyone every year—that's a *lot* of work! The review will suffer as well.

VD: The review is "is this person teaching satisfactorily? Is s/he doing scholarly research? Service?" I had a faculty member doing a lot of service work, but needed to do more teaching, and I had to tell him to pull back. If this is happening, then I take these five documents and hand them to the PTR committee, and it's done.

PA: Who are the committee members?

VD: People as close to the dept. as possible.

BB: So the chair fills out a form and hands it to the committee?"

BSC: When I look at development, I would appreciate another tenured faculty actually observe me in the class and lab.

MS: That's peer review.

RC: I'd have a problem with that in that the faculty member isn't always qualified to review you.

BB: Chairs aren't always, either.

PA: So is it this group's issue that this might bog down the process? Is that the consensus?

BB: Unless this is layer 2.

DH: This is something we could work on down the road so people feel like they have a defined purpose.

JC: For now, we need to put in place the process has the least amount of work, and then we can change it down the line.

RR: For most people, most of the time, a check-off is sufficient. I'm just worried about having a heavy process for everyone *all* the time.

JC: So for now, we get the shortest, least-offensive process put in place, then take a year or two to get exactly what we want, and *then* change it.

BB: This assumes that the average faculty member is doing a good job. A lot of this is happening naturally. But maybe a second layer would help.

VD: My question is: does the trigger of the second layer happen at the discretion of the chair?

MS: No, the "tenure-light" committee.

PA: The person leading that group would do it.

DW: The department chair will see every evaluation, so that's the natural person to identify a weakness. If that identification is made, then the chair sets up the committee and then backs away.

MS: Don't chairs do this anyway?

DW: Yes, we just include it in this policy. The chair just doesn't make the decision about the final outcome.

VD: Maybe we need codification of what you say *should* be happening but isn't.

MS: I second JC's motion.

JC: Because this has to be done next week, right? We could be at this for years! So the least offensive, least sticky, bare-bones minimum that we must do for right now, and then seriously work on a revision.

DW: That was the subcommittee's thinking, too.

JC: Being a teaching institution, it's a big difference between what you want...

DW: Yes, we've taken out language that discusses research.

JC: But it's more than that—"research" doesn't just change to "teaching." At a research place, you only teach 1-2 classes/semester; the rest is flexible time, at least. There may be 50 people in a department. There's a big difference in how PTR would be done there rather than here. Their size makes it more efficient.

VD: Having watched this in action at USU, in their branch in Vernal, which is tiny, it can work there, too. The question in my mind is then: if we want to say this as simply as possible, then it is what: every five years starting next year with the performance of 20% of the faculty to be evaluated by a committee of their peers? Using whatever the PTR committee uses?

BB: Using already-existing materials—evaluations.

VD: I'd be OK with that as long as "other pertinent information" would be added.

PA: That's already in place. But some people have huge binders and others don't.

JC: I'd even be willing to say "Here's your evaluations and top five other things."

DW: That creates internal bias.

VD: I thought from our last discussion that we were evaluated on whether or not we're doing what we were hired to do.

PA: Martha's version includes job description. That's something else we need to address down the line.

VD: So the yardstick wouldn't be arbitrary, which it currently is.

MS: We don't have to decide what goes into the portfolio. Right now, this language you're trying to come up with, we don't have to do that.

PA: What BB said reinforces the material we're already generating on the e-portfolio—it kills two birds with one stone.

VD: If I have a frustration with this, it's that we're just checking off a box, and I don't see a mechanism to support other faculty members.

JC: I agree, but we don't have time to build that right now. We can fine-tune and add professional development, etc. later.

MS: Yes, that's the "stage 2" thing.

RR: Martha said that the review is every six years—in the sixth year the review is done.

DW: There is a slippery slope here: tenured faculty will have the perception that they have to go up for a tenure review—prove that they are tenurable every six years—that "tenure" is not a permanent designation. I'm uncomfortable with that.

MS: You still have tenure, though.

DW: But that isn't clear.

JC: Then put in a statement that there isn't anything the PTR committee can do that would revoke tenure.

BB: It could be just a matter of language—like in item #2, eliminate words like "validate" that suggest that.

DW: I would argue that that's in there for faculty that are innovative, etc.

PA: Then reword to say "teaching excellence."

AC: If we're just checking off "satisfactory" or not, that skeletal process—what happens when someone says there's a problem if we don't already have a means to address it? I don't see how we can create a skeletal policy that doesn't have a point. Accreditation might see that.

JC: So the skeletal policy would be there, but if they fail, then X.

AC: I don't think we can do these separately.

VD: In assigning a job description, it's been "you're teaching X, Y, and Z this year." And that works.

PA: Is that in writing?

VD: Inasmuch as it goes to Laurie. I like the idea of having in there some negotiation of what I'm doing; that it's not all dictated.

MS: Can't we just have a sentence that if a member fails, a program will be assembled by the department chair to address it within a year.

AC: That's where the procedural aspect of this needs to be in place. How that takes place—how involved the department chair is is part of our discussion.

BB: For tier 1, we want Martha's version, for tier 2, here's VD and DW's version.

DW: It seems like the two policies have some internal adversarial perspectives, and that's a problem. That's why we need to somehow marry them into one document.

BB: Can't it just be part 1 and part 2?

VD: I have no idea how to proceed on that.

DW: Martha's document involves lots of involvement by the RTP committee, which is branch of administration.

JC: We make our own, faculty-only committee of people that are not up for review.

DW: Yes, that's the marrying process, to make it not competitive.

BB: So Martha's policy with some changes, and ours with some changes, and make it two layers.

DW: We have two layers: the five-year plan, and the "if problems emerge" plan.

DH: Martha's policy—the terminology may be adjusted.

PA: She seemed open to that.

DW: Another thing: we have to be careful of a multi-designation semantic Likert scale.

JC: I have no idea what that means...

DW: Satisfactory, more satisfactory, really satisfactory, etc.—at what point does the 2% come in?

JC: Yes, that is simple.

RR: Everyone likes idea of faculty-driven professional development assistance—the question is: just who does that? If it's for a small number of faculty, rather than for *everyone*...

JG: On other campuses, the focus is on improving teaching.

PA: Are we all comfortable with the 2% incentive?

DW: How does that not come down to faculty in a department making salary decisions?

JC: But it's in addition to the 2% we already get.

BB: The first one is made at PTR level.

PA: It sounds like majority of us are OK with that. What about the 5–6 year time frame? And the content to be evaluated and combining of two documents—is it safe to say it'll be the material we're already gathering?

DW: On a year to year basis, you're already being looked at for those things. At the six year point, it should be a slam-dunk if there's no evidence of deficiency.

PA: Then we need to fit in the job description, to give us a point of reference.

DW: I support a role description because it objectifies the criteria, and that can be negotiated with the department chair. That also helps define the member's role in the department. It's not just teaching assignments because that opens the door for subjectivity. If you are armed against accusations of doing something other than what us in your description, then there would be no reason for the PTR committee to question anything. In a sense, the workload for doing this is abbreviated.

JC: If the first tier is just the stuff in the portfolio, then if there's a question, the faculty can whip out the additional stuff.

VD: If a weakness is found, that then triggers an annual review *until* the problem is addressed. If a problem is identified, it's better to address a problem sooner than later.

JC: Let's say my dean comes into my class and says my performance sucked—isn't he already working with me on this? He'll come back and re-evaluate later.

DW: But that's not part of this policy.

VD: In my mind, the "trigger" is if it can't be dealt with between the chair and the faculty member. Only then is a committee formed as an additional resource that the chair isn't involved with.

BB: It sounds like the chair makes the decision to pull the trigger.

VD: Which is what *already* happens.

JC: Then why put it into this thing? If my chair or dean finds deficiencies, they already tell me how to deal with it. That puts a lot of pressure on every visit.

PA: Is it feasible to leave that out?

VD: Sure.

PA: So our timeline is: sometime between now and Nov. 15th, the subcommittee can flesh this out and work with Martha to come to an agreement. Should it be posted on our site or the policy site?

JC: Both.

PA: OK, I'll let Martha know. The intent is to bring in *all* faculty next Thursday, and we'll do a vote on it by the 23rd.

VD: What if the faculty votes no?

PA: We're hoping the discussion we're having here reflects what they would be concerned about.

AC: What exactly is the subcommittee going to do? We'll have a PTR committee as tier 1; the committee will determine if it's satisfactory; if it's not, then an annual professional development process is triggered headed by the department chair, and that gets reviewed every year until the problem is addressed; if it's not addressed, then it goes to administration.

VD: No, to the chair, who decides where it goes next.

AC: OK, so we're taking Martha's language to create this committee—are there other problems in the subcommittee's documents?

JC: We're getting rid of the "trigger."

AC: But the PTR committee *is* the trigger—we're just changing who the trigger is:

PA: So it's peer-driven, not administration.

JC: The chair and dean can't trigger early PTR review.

VD: OK, I can see that.

AC: Who would the committee consist of? Purely departmental? Division level? That seems to be an issue we didn't resolve.

VD: It opens up the male-female balance on the committee.

DH: And if the department is large enough to populate a committee.

AC: Can the faculty member recommend reviewers?

JC: I think it says it's half and half.

PA: Administration picks two.

AC: How many from the department, from the division, from administration, etc.?

VD: What if the chair picks two and the faculty member picks one, but the decision has to be unanimous?

AC: That doesn't complicate things!

RC: I think this is moving toward a Ph.D.-defense-style committee, with an outside member to ensure it isn't rigged.

AC: That's something BB was concerned about.

VD: I like the idea that it's between the committee and the faculty member and the chair is outside that process because the decisions are being made by faculty.

PA: How many people are on the first committee?

JC: It needs to be similar to the RTP committee.

VD: We can explore that.

JG: I think 3–5 would be good, and if there aren't five in the department, then it goes to the division level.

JC: But isn't the first tier committee campus-wide?

DH: That's what Martha has—it's the RTP committee, but we're talking about it being more localized.

JC: So there would be a huge number of committees? At some point, this would be every year!

VD: If it's on a lower level than campus-wide, then it's less work.

JC: But more people.

VD: *Is* there another level down from that?

JC: No...so what's the issue with having one committee for the whole campus?

AC: Workload.

JC: But if their job is just to check off items on list...

PA: But then we're back to the issue of people being qualified to assess people in their fields.

JC: Well, then two committees—arts and sciences, for example. I would not feel out of place reviewing someone in health sciences or physics...

VD: We need to consider what affinity groups are.

PA: There's a graph Ed Reber sent out last year that might help with the categories.

AC: I also think the workload issue will be—material in portfolios can be overwhelming for divisions. It would be better to define exactly what we want to look at, with additional material as determined by the division, so the door isn't open just for faculty member to pile in lots of stuff.

JC: All those other things—if you get the trigger to the second tier, *then* you can flood them with other stuff.

AC: I like the simplification idea, and we can do that by listing what we expect to see in order to assess if additional support is needed.

VD: So some sort of enabling language.

PA: Can it be couched in broad concepts like “community service”?

AC: This was a problem with the RTP process, too—we need to be very specific.

VD: We could ask a committee to come up with a model portfolio...

AC: Then there isn't subjective weighting of other material thrown in.

PA: We can take the list from Martha's document and adopt what we want from it so we're not recreating another whole file.