

Faculty Affairs Committee
Minutes
May 13, 1996

Present: Anthony D'Costa, Kären Landenburger, Belinda Louie, Jill Purdy

I. Old Business

A. Comments on Search Processes:

Comments from faculty members were compiled by Jill Purdy and shared with the committee. The committee discussed a variety of issues including search committee membership, voting rights, and procedural issues. The committee recommends that the following statements be added to the implementation procedures for searches:

1. Program directors shall not serve on search committees within their own programs.¹
2. All members of search committees shall have equal status and equal voice regardless of rank or program affiliation.
3. All members of the search committee and all eligible members of the program faculty shall have one vote in recommending candidate(s) to the program director ("the recommendation vote").
4. Criteria for selection of candidates shall be established by the program faculty prior to the commencement of the search. The committee is responsible for interpreting and upholding the criteria established by the program faculty.
5. The program director shall share the results of the recommendation vote with the dean.
5. The recommendation vote shall occur by secret ballot.
6. Proxy votes must be submitted to the chair of the search committee prior to the commencement of the meeting at which the recommendation vote is taken.

B. Comments on the Privacy of Teaching Evaluations:

Concerns about the distribution and reporting of teaching evaluations have been raised in several programs on campus. UW policy states that qualitative evaluations ("yellow sheets") are private and to be viewed only by the faculty member. Quantitative evaluation summaries are considered public information and can be obtained by any member of the public through the Office of Educational Assessment. However, faculty have the right to choose whether their teaching evaluations are reported directly to their program directors.

In making recommendations, the committee's first priority was the need for procedures to ensure the integrity of the teaching evaluation process. Our recommendations attempt to achieve balance between privacy rights and the need for information that supports program evaluation.

¹The committee originally agreed that program directors should not serve as chairs of search committees within their programs. After consultation with the Dean, the proposal was changed to exclude program directors from serving on their own program's searches in any capacity.

The committee recommends the following procedures:

1. Secured lock boxes should be placed in each campus classroom building. Students who administer teaching evaluations should be directed to place completed evaluation forms in a sealed envelope and drop the envelope in the locked box. One staff member (preferably from the dean's office) should be designated to collect teaching evaluations from the locked boxes and put them in the campus mail.
2. Results of teaching evaluations should be returned from the Office of Educational Assessment (OEA) directly to faculty members in sealed envelopes. Copies of faculty evaluations should be sent to program directors from the OEA only at a faculty member's request.
3. Program directors need access to representative evaluation data for a variety of purposes including program evaluation. Faculty members should provide evaluation data to program directors at their request to eliminate the cumbersome process of requesting data from the OEA. Efforts should be made to protect the privacy of the data (data should not be published or made available to staff or students without the faculty member's knowledge).

C. Comments on Peer Evaluations

Committee members discussed the purpose and uses of peer evaluations, and acknowledged their role in fostering collegiality, improving teaching, and enhancing learning among colleagues. We recommend that each program institute guidelines that clearly specify the acceptable forms of peer evaluation and the number of peer evaluations that should be conducted annually.

D. Comments on Collegiality as a Criterion for Promotion and Tenure

Faculty comments suggest that several faculty members oppose adopting collegiality as a University-wide criterion for promotion and tenure. Concerns were raised that the criterion could introduce arbitrariness into the tenure decision process, allowing decisions to be made on the basis of personality, popularity or political correctness. Requirements for collegiality could pose a threat to intellectual freedom. Some faculty raised concerns about how collegiality would be measured while others asserted that it was already present in promotion and tenure guidelines. The committee recommends that collegiality not be considered as a University-wide criterion for promotion and tenure and recommends that programs carefully consider the implications of such criteria.

II. New Business

1. The issue of salary equity was raised to the committee. The committee received the Dean's assurance that she is investigating this issue.
2. The discussion of collegiality as a promotion & tenure guideline raised the question of whether program-level P&T guidelines require the approval of the Faculty Assembly. The Faculty Affairs Committee will investigate the procedures for faculty approval of program-level promotion and tenure guidelines.
3. It was brought to the attention of the committee that curriculum decisions made by the UWT Curriculum Committee are still being reviewed the UWS Curriculum Committee. It was suggested that the Faculty Assembly voice its collective opinion on whether Seattle review should continue.

4. A request was made for clarification of the duties and responsibilities of the Joint Faculty Council and the Faculty Assembly. According to the Branch Campuses Handbook of Policies, "the Joint Branch Campus Faculty Council shall advise the dean on matters of faculty promotion and tenure and shall advise the dean on matters involving academic policy, including priorities, resource and salary allocation, and budgets." Given the subsequent formation of the Faculty Assembly, revision of this language will be considered by the Faculty Affairs committee.