

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes – October 5, 2021

Senators Present: Hisham Al-Bataineh, Travis Braidwood, Lucy Camacho, Mauro Castro, Jieming Chen, Michael Cherry, Steven Corbett, Zhaoqi Fan, Manuel Flores, Jeff Glick, Anders Greenspan, Kelly Hall, David Hicks, Michael Houf, Kendra Huff, Patricia Huskin, Dongwook Kim, Robert Kowalsky, Sarah Lucas, Tanner Machado, Lifford McLauchlan, Richard Miller, Kyle Milsap, Mais Nijim, Larry Peel, William Procasky, Kathleen Rees, Alexander Sanchez-Behar, Nick Sciullo, Hui Shen, Teresa Young

Senators Absent: Ammar Bhandari, Bart Ballard, Steven Chumbley, James Glusing, Christine Radcliff, Velda Soydas, Daniella Varela, Maria Velez-Hernandez

This meeting of the Faculty Senate was held through Zoom due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements. It was decided that this meeting not be recorded so that candid discussion could take place regarding the proposed changes to the Promotion and Tenure policy.

I. Call to Order and Quorum Call.

At 3:30 p.m. President Chen asked the parliamentarian, Patricia Huskin, if enough members were present for a quorum. Senator Huskin replied in the negative, but it was decided out of respect for the guests of the meeting to start the meeting and have another quorum call before any business is discussed.

II. Presentations

a) President Mark Hussey

President Hussey shared that there will be funding to make necessary updates and remodeling to the Chemistry/Biology building, but not enough funds for a complete rebuild. He also shared that the Alumni and Family week/weekend was a success.

He also mentioned that there will be a vaccine incentive rollout and to watch for details. Some examples of incentives include a parking permit raffle, and “give-aways” such as shirts, gift cards, etc.

b) Provost Lou Reinisch

Provost Reinisch brought forward a discussion focused on the topic of expanding the information available to students in the Banner schedule to include course information such as whether a course uses OER materials, has low cost textbooks, has a high research component, has high impact, etc. He said that he will be asking the Faculty Senate to assist in defining the parameters as this discussion continues.

c) 2021 Faculty Senate Distinguished Service Award

Dr. Nestor Sherman was announced as the recipient of this award for 2021. He was unable to attend the meeting, but did submit a statement of gratitude which was read on his behalf.

III. **Approval of Minutes from September 7, 2021 Faculty Senate Meeting.**

President Chen asked if we now have a quorum and Parliamentarian Huskin replied in the affirmative. President Chen then moved to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded. Minutes were approved.

IV. **Report of Officers**

a) **Senate President Chen**

Monthly meeting with President Hussey and Provost Reinisch

President Chen reported that a salary increase is proposed for Spring 2022. It will be merit based, added to the base salary (not a “one-time” payment), and will be somewhere between 1-3%.

Administration approved a temporary suspension of the Annual Faculty Lecture Series for AY 2022, to allow for the 2020 and 2021 lectures that were postponed because of COVID to be scheduled and presentations will get “caught up”.

Provost Reinisch would like the Faculty Handbook to be updated and corrected. He sees this as a priority matter.

Meeting with Chancellor John Sharp

President Chen shared the details from the meeting that the Executive Committee and the Staff Council Executive Committee were invited to earlier today with A&M System Chancellor John Sharp. Prior to the meeting Senators were asked to solicit questions from their departmental colleagues, which were then entered into a master list. The list was then compiled and shortened by the FS Executive Committee. Not all questions were able to be asked in the allotted meeting time, so President Chen gave a copy of the list to the Chancellor in hopes that he would answer them at a later time.

V. **Old Business**

No old business is pending at this time

VI. **Standing Committee Reports**

- a) **Committee on Committees** – No report
- b) **Resolutions and By-Laws Committee** – No Report
- c) **Election Committee** – No Report

VII. **Reports from Committees Reporting to the Senate**

- a) **Administrator Evaluation Committee** – No Report
- b) **Annual Faculty Lecture Committee** – No Report
- c) **Faculty Benefits Committee**
Senator Miller reported that the committee is still waiting for a response from administration regarding issues for retirees, such as email accounts.

- d) **Faculty Evaluation Committee** - No Report
- e) **Faculty Handbook Committee** – No Report
- f) **Piper Award Committee**

Senator Miller reported that the nominee is putting together the required information and the committee will meet again once this is completed.

- g) **Policy Revision Committee** – No Report
- h) **Ad-Hoc Committee on Anti-Racism and Social Justice** - No Report

VIII. **New Business**

a) **Suspension of Annual Faculty Lecture for 2022**

The timeline for the upcoming presentations, future nominations and announcements were discussed.

b) **Tenure and Promotion Change Proposal Update** (*see attached*)

Several points were openly discussed. Some of those points were that it was felt that we need to act at our next meeting and that to further delay a vote is potentially damaging to the working relationship between the faculty senate and administration. The previous report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion and Tenure was discussed and many senators felt this should be shared with the new faculty senators along with the straw poll results from the March 2021 faculty senate meeting. A lengthy discussion took place about voting on the proposed Promotion and Tenure changes as a complete document or whether we could vote on the individual proposed sections. It was decided to continue the discussion at the November faculty senate meeting.

IX. **Announcements**

- a) No announcements were made.

X. **Adjournment**

At 5:12pm a motion to adjourn was made by President Chen, the motion was seconded and passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Huskin

Faculty Senate Parliamentarian, 2021-2022

Christine Radcliff

Faculty Senate Secretary, 2021-2022

Proposed Revisions to Tenure & Promotion Process

September 29, 2021 version

Item	Current Fac Handbook	Proposed	Rationale
Mid tenure-track comprehensive review	The current major review is in the spring semester of the fourth year, allowing a faculty member two semesters (and two summers) to improve any shortcomings.	That the major review (i.e., the mid-tenure track comprehensive review) be moved to the Fall semester of the 4th year from the Spring semester of the fourth year. That the 5th year annual performance review be moved to the Fall of the 5th year to provide timely feedback to the candidate.	Probationary faculty members with identified shortcomings in the spring of the fourth year review do not have sufficient time to address and fix those shortcomings before they have to apply for tenure after the fifth year. With the proposed change, a faculty member will have three semesters (and two summers) to improve any shortcomings.
Page 18 Faculty Handbook B.5.3.5	Each tenure track member will undergo annual performance reviews for tenure continuation in their 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , and 5 th years of actual and credited service.	That each tenure track member will undergo annual performance reviews for continuation in the Spring semester of their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years and the Fall semester of their 5 th year of actual and accredited service.	
Page 18 Faculty Handbook B.5.3.6	In the 4 th year, in lieu of the annual performance review, all tenure-track faculty members shall receive a comprehensive review to determine progress toward meeting all tenure requirements in the tenure-track appointment. (and subsequent 4...)	In the fall semester of the 4 th year of the actual and accredited service, all tenure-track faculty members shall receive a comprehensive review to determine progress toward meeting all tenure requirements in the tenure-track appointment. (and subsequent 4...)	See the next page for a timeline.

Tenure and Promotion Timeline for New Faculty Members

Year X	Spring Year X+1	Summ. Year X+1	Fall Year X+1	Spring Year X+2	Summ. Year X+2	Fall Year X+2	Spring Year X+3	Summ. Year X+3	Fall Year X+3	Spring Year X+4	Summ. Year X+4	Fall Year X+4	Spring Year X+5	Summ. Year X+5	Fall Year X+5
Hired	1 st Year Review			2 nd Year Review			3 rd Year Review		4 th Year Major Review			5 th Year Review			Apply T&P
Hired with 1 year service	2 nd Year Review			3 rd Year Review		4 th Major Review			5 th Year Review			Apply T&P			
Hired with 2 year service	3 rd Year Review		4 th Year Major Review			5 th Year Review			Apply T&P						
Hired with 3 year service			5 th Year Review			Apply T&P									

Item	Current Fac Handbook	Proposed	Rationale
Faculty members have the opportunity to provide additional information	Faculty members are not allowed to add any materials to their portfolio if a deficit is brought to light by a review.	Faculty members are allowed to add materials to their portfolio during the review process. The submission date should be noted on all materials submitted after the deadline. Materials allowed to be added must pertain to research or scholarly activity, such as acceptance notice of a manuscript for publication; acceptance of a proposal for a conference presentation; or funding of a grant proposal. These documents, once submitted, will not be added to the e-portfolio, but rather, added as supplementary document(s) hyper-linked to the e-portfolio, with appropriate notation(s).	Faculty candidates should be allowed to add materials to the portfolio after submission if the materials are substantial and could not be documented at the initial submission due to lack of information from independent sources (such as publishers, conference organizers, or funding agencies). With this opportunity, a faculty candidate can receive a comprehensive review before a final decision is made.

Item	Current Fac Handbook	Proposed	Rationale
Promotion and tenure as separate decisions	Throughout the Faculty Handbook, tenure and promotion are separate processes	Tenure shall be linked to promotion from assistant professor to associate professor.	In most of the academic world, the two items are linked, but not in all.
	The separation of promotion and tenure extends into the appeal process	Tenure is included with promotion from assistant professor to associate professor. Any candidate for promotion from assistant to associate professor will be considered in a single evaluation for “promotion and tenure” and the two items will not be considered separately for these candidates.	The wording allows for faculty members who already have associate professor status to apply for only tenure.
Face-to-face meetings with the candidate	Currently, the entire decision process is impersonal and made by reading through an e-portfolio.	The dean and provost respectively shall have one-on-one meetings with each candidate prior to making their recommendation on tenure and/or promotion. Additionally, the candidate is entitled to separate meetings, up to 10 minutes long, with the department chair, the department committee and the college committee. If a request is not made by the candidate, the department chair, the department committee and the college committee can request to meet with the candidate for up to 10 minutes before making their recommendation.	This very important decision which can turn a person’s life around should not be made without a modicum of human interaction. This will allow the evaluator to ask questions and seek clarifications, even for minor points.
Promotion and tenure committee composition		If the tenure and/or promotion committee at the department level does not have enough members, the dean can consider appointing appropriate member(s) from other similar departments both inside and outside of the college. The appointing of additional member(s) will be made by the dean in consultation with department chair and the candidate. The chairs of the department and college committees should have the rank of a full professor.	

Item	Current Fac Handbook	Proposed	Rationale
External letters of review	None are currently required	Using a standard template letter, the dean will request external letters of review of the candidates for tenure and promotion. The external reviewers will be provided the candidate's C.V. and the criteria for tenure and promotion.	External reviews provide benchmarking of the institution's promotion and tenure criteria. They also provide an additional perspective on the candidate's qualifications.
Blinded letters		At least three external letters should be in the portfolio. The dean's office will redact each letter so the author and institution are unknown.	By offering the reviewer a blind review, as is done in manuscript review for journal articles, a fair review is obtained.
		The candidate should provide the names and contact information for four (4) possible external reviewers. The dean, in consultation with the chair, will pick two of the four and ask for letters of review. The dean should follow up with reminder letters.	
		The dean, in consultation with the chair, will pick three external reviewers. The candidate will have the right to eliminate one name. The dean will ask for reviews from two of the remaining two or three names. The dean should follow up with reminder letters. If three responses are not received, the dean will use either one or two of the remaining reviewers provided by the candidate. After all six requests are made (4 from the candidate's list and 2 from the dean's list), no additional requests need be made. The blinded review letters will be placed in the candidate's portfolio.	

Item	Current Fac Handbook	Proposed	Rationale
<p># in Advisory and Hearing Committees</p>	<p>Advisory: 5 members plus 4 alternates Hearing: 8 members plus 6 alternates Separate committees formed for individual grievances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committee comprising one faculty member from each college. • Hearing Committee of 7 members comprising at least one faculty member from each college. • Alternate pool of 8 members comprising at least one faculty member from each college. <p>Any committee member stepping off the Advisory or Hearing committee due to a conflict of interest or challenge becomes a member of the alternate pool. Any committee member who voted on the tenure or promotion being appealed at the departmental or college level has a conflict of interest.</p>	<p>When there are multiple appeals in one semester, it is usually the case that the same members from the pool are needed to serve on more than one committee, causing a burden on them. This is because of i) the current number currently needed in each committee and ii) each appeal having distinct advisory and hearing committees. Having a single Advisory and Hearing committee to hear all cases during the academic year provides consistency in judgement.</p>
<p>Appointment and term of committee member</p>	<p>In the fall, Faculty Senate submits to the Provost’s Office a list of 24 faculty from the different Colleges to form the pool from which the committees are formed. The term for which these faculty remain in the pool is three years.</p>	<p>Committee and alternate pool members are appointed by May 31 each year for the following academic year by the Faculty Senate. Overall membership should be roughly proportional to the number of faculty members in each college. Members serve only one year, but can be reappointed.</p>	<p>These committees have been appointed by the Provost’s office, which might appear to be a conflict of interest. So, the committees should be appointed by the senate. Appointing the committees at the end of May allows for carry-over appeals to be heard promptly.</p>
<p>Scope of committees</p>	<p>Distinct Advisory and Hearing Committees are named for individual appeals</p>	<p>The same Advisory Committee and Hearing committee (as described above) will consider all appeals, except for individuals replaced due to a conflict of interest.</p>	<p>This will remove the occurrence of a faculty member having to serve on multiple committees and ease the administrative load in the Provost’s Office. Also, it will bring equity in consideration of appeals since the same committee will review all the appeals.</p>

Item	Current Fac Handbook	Proposed	Rationale
Challenges/Recusals allowed regarding committee members	In the Advisory Committee each party is allowed two challenges; in the Hearing Committee, each side is allowed 3 challenges.	Advisory Committee: 1 challenge allowed by each party, the appeals and the university. Hearing Committee: 2 challenges allowed by each party, the appeals and the university.	Given the smaller number in each committee than currently, the number of challenges are also adjusted.
Committee chair selection and vote	Committee elects its Chair. Chair votes only in case of a tie.	Committee elects its Chair (no change). Chair of both the Advisory Committee and Hearing Committee votes	Given the time investment in the process and responsibility given to the committee chair, he/she should be given the privilege of a vote. With the proposed numbers in each committee, there will not be a tie if all members vote.
Committee report	Sent to the Provost	Sent to the President	The Provost has already notified his/her decision. The President makes the final decision.
Promotion & Tenure decisions are appealed concurrently	Currently there are separate processes and committees for promotion appeals and tenure appeals (University Appeals Committee and Faculty Grievance Committee respectively).	Tenure and Promotion appeals are submitted as one appeal, heard by the Advisory Committee and if recommended, the Hearing Committee. (Appeals concerning promotion to Full Professor are submitted to University Appeals Committee, as done now, but renamed the Promotion Appeals Committee.)	With tenure and promotion being decided jointly, they should be appealed jointly.