5-2013

Annual Report, Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee, 2012-2013

Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee

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Committee Members: Joan Davison (chair), Gay Biery-Hamilton (fall semester secretary),Ted Gournelos (spring semester secretary), Alex Boguslawski, Julian Chambliss, Julia Foster, Robert Vander Poppen, Kathryn Sutherland, Carlee Hoffmann (SGA rep), Dominique Parris (SGA rep), Dean Bob Smither

Bylaw Changes:

PSC brought one bylaw change to the faculty regarding faculty appointments.
The text of the associated resolution follows:
Resolved, to change the wording of A&S bylaw Article VIII, Section 1, "The Dean shall not recommend the appointment of anyone of whom a majority of the tenured and tenure-track members of the appointee's department or program disapproves. If a new appointment must be made when a majority of the members of the department or program cannot be consulted, the Dean may recommend no more than a one-year visiting appointment." The new wording of the bylaw will state: **"The Dean shall not recommend the appointment of anyone of whom a majority of the tenured and tenure-track members of the appointee's department do not approve."**

Rationale: The A&S faculty takes seriously its responsibility to approve new and continuing tenure track and visiting members of its academic departments. Yet although the current intent (as well as other sections of the bylaws which discuss departmental search committees) signals a departmental authority, the administration has overlooked the process at least three times in the past five years with complicating results for the departments and faculty hires (appointees) involved. The change of wording from a "majority ... disapproves" to a "majority...approve" clarifies that an administrator cannot simply appoint a new person to a department and hope the department does not object. Now the administration must seek approval prior to the appointment.

Furthermore, the new language drops reference to appointment to programs. The A&S faculty discussed the question of appointment to programs a few years ago, and the faculty soundly defeated the proposal. Further the A&S bylaws elsewhere specify appointment to a single department.

Finally, the bylaws drop mention of the exception. The exception currently reads: "If a new appointment must be made when a majority of the members of the department or program cannot be consulted, the Dean may recommend no more than a one-year visiting appointment." It is difficult to conceive of a need for such exceptions, particularly given the current availability of email and other forms of communication. As stated, when such recent "exceptions" occurred, complications developed for the departments and some hires involved. This resolution reiterates the desirability of following the proscribed procedures for appointments to departments with active departmental searches and approval.

Grant Policies:

PSC changed or clarified various policies related to FYRSTS, Critchfield/Ashforth/Cornell/Development Grants, and Student-Faculty Collaborative Grants.
FYRSTS: Working with Dean Smither, the value of FYRSTs increased from $10,000 and $15,000 to $15,000 and $20,000.

Critchfield/Ashforth/Cornell Grants: PSC established a new rule limiting total grant awards for Critchfield/Ashforth/Cornell Grants to $20,000 across a 6 year period, excepting that no one will be

denied a grant in the sabbatical year only because it would exceed the $20,000 limit. PSC believes it is critical to fund members during the sabbatical if a worthy grant is presented. PSC adopted this rule because the previous rule which permitted only 3 consecutive years of funding creating obvious inequities. For example, one faculty member might receive $5000 for three consecutive years (totaling $15,000), while another faculty member might receive $500 for three consecutive years (totaling $1,500). If the intention is to spread funding then it does not seem fair to deny the second faculty member funding in the fourth year.

Related to the change in funding to a maximum of $20,000 across a 6 year period, PSC decided that faculty members only must attach the previous 5 years of grant reports to a grant request.

PSC clarified a faculty member may apply for more than one of *these* grants in a given year. Additionally, a faculty member's total grant needs may exceed more than $5000 in a given year, but the maximum total award of all *these* grants received cannot exceed $5000. (This rule does allow for a faculty member to receive additional Internationalization funds, Distinguished faculty funds, FYRST funds, etc.) Although the total grant from *these funds* is limited to $5000, applicants still are asked on the forms to demonstrate the full cost of the project. Thus, if the project actually will cost $7000, the applicant should include these costs and the appropriate total even if PSC only awards $5000. The real cost might become relevant in the final award decision. For example, if based on the total number and amount of all requests received, PSC decides to fund all requests at 75% of their cost, then PSC might recommend a full $5000 for a proposal that costs $7000. At the same time, PSC would recommend only $3750 for a proposal budgeted at $5000. PSC also agreed that students' travel costs can be part of a grant request.

Student-Faculty Collaborative Grants: PSC and Chris Fuse, the Director of Student-Faculty Collaborative Research, agreed it is essential that every student submit an individual proposal even if the grant involves group work. This clarification will be made explicit to all applicants in 2014. At the same time, it also was agreed that the faculty member could submit a single statement for participants in group projects.

Policies Related to Review and Assessment of Faculty Members:
Annual Review of Visiting Faculty Members: PSC agreed to alter the policy on the evaluation of visiting professors. Departments previously were required to complete annual reviews of visitors which seemed onerous if a visiting position was only one year. Departments still complete annual reviews if a position is multiple years, but when a visitor is in the last year of an appointment, it now is sufficient for the Department Chair to handle the review and simply write a letter for the individual.

Merit Pay Review of Visiting Faculty, Lecturers, Instructors, and Faculty in Residence: PSC unanimously voted to support the proposal from the Dean of Arts and Sciences regarding the process for evaluation for merit raises for visitors, lecturers, instructors, and faculty in residence. In the past, these faculty members were eligible for cost of living increases but not merit pay. Following the elimination of non-merit increases, the salaries of these faculty members became frozen. The approved proposal (which subsequently was adopted by EC) requires Department Chairs to submit an evaluation of these faculty members to the Dean for consideration of merit increases.

FSAR: PSC recommended changes on the FSAR to the Dean which were adopted. The changes largely focused on providing additional options for the faculty member to add explanatory comments. Specific changes included: 1) Add "General Education" courses to the section asking whether people have

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taught Honors, RCC, or RP courses. 2) Put "Comments about Teaching" below the "Course Assignments," once again, so that any comments are immediately seen below the courses to better facilitate the evaluation. 3) Add a "Comment" section to Advising/Mentoring, so that faculty can explain their load, or what they do. 4) Add a section that asks faculty if they have applied for external grants, and have not heard whether they have received one, yet. The reasoning behind this addition is that faculty can spend a lot of time and effort on applying for outside grants, and their effort should be considered.

Policies Related to the 128/5+:

PSC Initial Recommendation: PSC addressed the 5 PLUS to determine what would constitute a PLUS. PSC agreed upon the following:

- CE courses
- RCC
- Neighborhood courses (but not W, F, Q although these were debated; PSC ultimately the Neighborhood courses required integrated learning, theme activities, incorporation of appropriate LEAP outcomes, and assessment)
- Student Trips (domestic or international)
- Tutorials, Independent Studies and Honor Theses exceeding 4/year
- Field Studies not currently counted (the committee was aware of current special status for Marine Biology and Environmental Science)

PSC decided that each faculty member would earn either the 5+ or $3500 after teaching in any one of these categories, but each faculty member could only receive the 5+ or the $3500. PSC agreed that current stipends for the RCC would be eliminated. PSC appreciated some faculty members might benefit more from this system than other faculty members, but agreed no faculty member would fare worse.

PSC recognized it could not resolve every possibility associated with the 5+, but did agree that the 5+ only applies to tenured and tenure track faculty members. PSC reasoned that lecturers are separately contracted to specific teaching tasks. PSC further concluded (although less comfortably) that this also is true regarding visiting faculty members and artists-in-residence. (If the dean wishes a non-tenure track faculty member to teach an RCC or Neighborhood, then the dean could adjust the individual contract accordingly; PSC supports the concept of such adjustments.)

EC Final Recommendation: EC decided the scope of PLUS in the PSC recommendation was too broad to be affordable. EC therefore agreed that initially the 5+ would focus upon the RCC and neighborhood courses, because they are "all college priorities" in which all faculty members have an opportunity to participate. The policy which ultimately passed the A&S faculty guarantees that at least half the faculty members in each department eligible for a release associated with a 5+ will receive the release in a given year. Other faculty members who participate in the 5+ will receive the $3500. Additional compensation for teaching activities (Honors, field study, etc.) not currently included in the 5+ will continue.

Actions:

In the fall, PSC advised the Dean of A&S and Interim Dean of CPS on the award of FYRSTS and research grants to 2013-2014 sabbaticants. PSC agreed to award no more than $20,000 in grants in the first

round to sabbaticants (so that money remained for the spring round) but also agreed to allow sabbaticants who were denied or not fully funded to reapply in the spring. In the spring, PSC advised the Dean of A&S and interim Dean of CPS on the award of research grants to other faculty members. Common reasons for denial of funding were requests more properly directed to the Internationalization Committee and failure to include either IRB or IACUC forms. PSC also advised the Director of Student-Faculty Collaborative Research on the award of grants. IT sought PSC's approval for technology grants, and the approval was granted. Finally, PSC awarded the one-time Mellon Grants.

Discussions:

Student-Faculty Collaborative Research: PSC held extended and valuable discussions with Professor Chris Fuse, the Director of the Student-Faculty Collaborative Research, regarding the application and award process. The members of PSC, particularly the student representatives on PSC, believed it is essential that every student submit an individual proposal even if the grant involves group work. PSC also suggested that student applicants would benefit from a fall or spring workshop which explained the application requirements.

CIE: PSC developed revisions to the existing CIE. The 2013-2014 PSC will continue work on this initiative. PSC decided to revise the Teaching/Course Evaluations because both faculty members and students expressed concerns about the existing questions, process, and interpretation. Suggested problems include:
- Questions assessing the faculty member are mixed with assessment of the course
- Questions are redundant
- The skewed nature of the distribution limits the usefulness of the percentiles
- Too many questions
- Too many open-ended questions
- Evaluations completed for the wrong course/person

James Zimmerman, Director of the Christian A. Johnson Center for Effective Teaching, counseled that evaluations should focus on a few critical concerns, avoid areas which peer evaluators, rather than students, are best suited to assess, and ensure students and faculty members share an understanding of questions. The student representatives on PSC worked with an SGA ad hoc committee to develop questions and suggestions. PSC agreed that the evaluations should provide information about the professor, the course, and learning outcomes for general education or the major. PSC suggests that the new CIE eliminate college averages and percentiles. PSC also suggests the new CIE should be administered in classrooms during class time. PSC's current working document is:

> **Faculty Member** (questions #1-5 answered on a Likert scale, that is rating as strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree)
> 1. This professor provides effective feedback.
> 2. This professor prepared the material and individual classes well.
> 3. This professor effectively engages students.
> 4. This professor promoted an environment in which students were respected.
> 5. This professor is willing to help me outside of class.
> 6. My overall rating of this professor is (rating from very weak, weak, somewhat weak, somewhat strong, strong, very strong):
> 7. (Open ended question) Use this space to describe the professor's strengths and weaknesses, and/or explain your ratings.

Course (#1-5 as Yes/no)
1. Did this course challenge you in a positive way?
2. Was this course interesting?
3. Did this course teach you something new?
4. Did this course change the way you think?
5. Would you recommend this course to a friend?
6. My overall rating of this course is (rating from very weak, weak, somewhat weak, somewhat strong, strong, very strong):
7. (Open ended question) Use this space to describe what made this course a positive and/or negative learning experience. You may also use this space to explain your answers.

Major/General Education Learning Outcomes
(Up to 5 questions still to be determined by relevant department or faculty)

2013-2014 Committee:

Julian Chambliss, 2012-2014, Committee Chair and at large rep
Anne Murdaugh, 2012-2014, at large rep (one year position completing Ted Gournelos' term)
Julia Maskivker, 2013-2015, at large rep
Eric Smaw, 2013-2015, at large rep
Alex Boguslawski, 2012-2014, Humanities rep
Fiona Harper, 2012-2014, Sciences rep (one year position completing K. Sutherland's term)
Kevin Griffin, 2013-2015, Expressive Arts rep
Gay Biery-Hamilton, 2013-2015, Social Sciences rep (note that Gay completed Barry's two year term and now will begin her own two year term; the bylaws permit people to serve 4 consecutive years on a committee)

Issues for 2013-2014 PSC:

1. Hold a colloquium early in the fall to discuss the ongoing revision of the CIE.
2. Propose a bylaw change to revise the passage referencing suspension of the tenure clock for childbirth or adoption so that it is consistent with the handbook which permits suspension of the clock for any dependent care/family leave.
3. Consider standardizing policies related to team teaching.