

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Faculty Affairs
October 24th, 2017
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Odegaard Undergraduate Library 320

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Call to order
 2. Review of the minutes from October 10th, 2017
 3. Quick introductions of people not able to make the first meeting
 4. Discussion on lecturing faculty and background materials, including outreach
 5. Tenure and promotion processes in non-departmentalized schools
 6. Good of the order
 7. Adjourn
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1) Call to order

Janes called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

2) Review of the minutes from October 10th, 2017

The minutes from October 10th, 2017 were approved as written.

3) Quick introductions of people not able to make the first meeting

Members not present in the previous meeting introduced themselves to the council.

4) Discussion on lecturing faculty and background materials, including outreach

Janes explained he would like to hold a general discussion of various pieces of FCFA's expected workload during the year in order to track and update on progress since the last academic year and to reach some consensus on methods for addressing selected issues.

Codifying Provost's Lecturer Appointment Guidelines

Janes reminded members of the idea to codify the Provost's Lecturer Appointment Guidelines within the Faculty Code; he asked members for feedback. One member voiced doubts that general UW faculty accept and/or agree with various provisions within the Guidelines, and noted codification might lead to exploitation of its terms (e.g. hiring lecturers below 50% time). He noted concerns over the lack of inclusion of part-time lecturers under 50% time, and suggested the Guidelines include a mechanism to allow part-time lecturers (under 50%) multi-year contracts, as well. Janes asked Jacoby to draft recommended revisions for the Guidelines in order to inform future discussions. Katz and Jacoby agreed to work on potential revisions.

Promotion

Janes gave a brief overview of the notion of mandatory promotion consideration for lecturers under defined conditions, explaining the topic was considered by FCFA during 2016-2017 and draft code language was developed at that time. He noted there was a range of opinions concerning granting lecturers the ability to “opt out” of a promotion consideration, with pros and cons related to both pathways. He asked for feedback on going forward with the item this academic year.

A member explained FCFA was trying to recognize (through this work) that UW units conduct promotion of lecturer-track instructors differently, and the main goal of the effort was to create a regular, predictable promotion process to be followed widely. Janes clarified after a question that the developed code language meant to make promotion consideration mandatory.

A member mentioned anecdotally that if a faculty member goes up for promotion and is unsuccessful, it becomes more difficult to get promoted the next time. He explained mandating promotion for a lecturer who is not ready for it may hurt their career in this regard. Another member noted the promotion process can be burdensome in relation to faculty workload, and this should be considered when discussing mandatory promotions without ability to opt out. One member recommended the related code language “encourage” promotion consideration but not mandate the review. Janes noted the concerns are noted and the council seems ready to review the related draft code language.

Hierarchy

Janes directed members to page 7 of the “Recommendations on Lecturers” report developed by the UW Bothell Lecturers Working Group (2014), specifically to subsection C. “Statement of Concern on Rank, Seniority and Privileges.” He noted the document would be sent out to members in preparation for discussion in the next meeting.

Outreach and engagement efforts

Watts, Katz, and Hazlet volunteered to join the cohort of FCFA members who engage in outreach to the university community in relation to various topics (typically via Elected Faculty Council meetings).

5) Tenure and promotion processes in non-departmentalized schools

Vigdor presented a memo he drafted on the issue (Exhibit 1). He explained five of the 15 UW units are non-departmentalized (do not have individual departments). He voiced an interest in conducting outreach relating to the topic, and noted he plans for related code revisions to be completed fall quarter.

Vigdor gave an overview of the tenure and promotion process in a departmentalized unit, explaining there are 7 “layers” of review in this process (distinguished by their color), which effectively provide a “checks and balances” system on the process and ensure opinions of a single evaluator (e.g. a dean) do

not carry undue weight. The tenure and promotion process in non-departmentalized units was displayed (Exhibit 1). One of the issues is that non-departmentalized units have no department chairs, and so this layer of review is inevitably absent. Another issue is that in non-departmentalized units, the “advisory committee or council” review layer is drawn from the ranks of faculty who have already participated in a review of the case, thus these committees do not constitute a truly independent layer of review (Exhibit 1).

Alternate procedures were considered given the differences in departmentalized and non-departmentalized units as listed in the document. Figures 4 and 5 were used to demonstrate two potential alternative methods (Exhibit 1). Options were defined as:

- ❖ Option 1: Eliminate the advisory review requirement in non-departmentalized units.
- ❖ Option 2: Make the advisory committee independent of the unit’s faculty.
- ❖ Option 3: Maintain the status quo.

Vigdor noted he is seeking evaluation of these options and hopes for some consensus; he asked for feedback.

A member explained the outside advisory committee or council may not have the knowledge to effectively evaluate the readiness of an applicant (Option 2). He recommended outside evaluators be used.

Mike Townsend (Secretary of the Faculty, Faculty Senate & Governance) explained that at least one UW faculty member believes the advisory committee provides a valuable alternative viewpoint, one that is qualitatively different from the “faculty vote” layer. A member noted there is a question of if there is truly redundancy (in the process) in practice, or if it exists in theory. A member noted even if this is true, the advisory council serves a different role in departmentalized units than it does in non-departmentalized units, which represents an inequity in what should be a uniform process institution-wide. Janes explained in a non-departmentalized unit, the advisory committee – as it is composed of the same people who have already participated in a review of the case – are forced to review their own review. He asked on what grounds they would overturn the decision they made. Janes noted he recommends Option 1 with the addition of strengthening the review committee.

Some questions were asked about the process in question. It was clarified that the advisory committee is elected. A member noted the pre-review committee (1st “layer” in Figures 1-2) is an optional step and some units do not take it.

Vigdor explained addressing the issue and the potential alternatives will involve talking to EFCs over the next couple of weeks and proposing code revisions after information is gathered and evaluated. He noted one goal might be to forward legislation to the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) before the end of the quarter.

Janes noted in conclusion that the issue has been established, and outreach to EFCs and drafting code language is now the goal.

6) Good of the order

Nothing was stated.

7) Adjourn

Janes adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Minutes by Joey Burgess, jmbg@uw.edu, council support analyst

Present: **Faculty:** Steve Buck, Joseph Janes (chair), Kurt Johnson, Aaron Katz, Purnima Dhavan, Eric Bugyis, Jacob Vigdor, Kamran Nemati, Dan Jacoby, Tom Hazlet, Miceal Vaughan

Ex-officio reps: Judith Henchy, Bryan Crockett

President's designee: Cheryl Cameron

Guests: Mike Townsend

Absent: **Faculty:** Margaret Adam, Kurt Johnson, Gordon Watts

Ex-officio reps: N/A

Exhibits

Exhibit 1 – tenureprocessmemo.doc

Memorandum

October 20, 2017

To: Faculty Council on Faculty Affairs

From: Jake Vigdor, Daniel J. Evans Professor of Public Policy and Governance

Re: The promotion review process in non-departmentalized units

This memo describes the basic goals of a tenure and promotion process, some complications of instituting a uniform process at the University of Washington, and describes potential alternatives to the status quo:

- eliminating the practice of requiring a committee advisory to the dean in non-departmentalized units, or
- reorganizing these advisory committees so that they constitute an independent layer of review campuswide.

Background

Promotion and tenure decisions are among the most consequential at any University. The process for making these decisions must be rigorous – conducive to making “good” decisions – and fair. A review process accomplishing these goals not only furthers the intellectual interests of the University, it shields the institution from liability in matters of employment law.

At most institutions, including the UW, the review process is designed to be multi-layered. As the evaluation of a scholar’s contributions is inherently subjective, a multi-layered review process ensures that the idiosyncratic opinions of a single evaluator do not carry undue weight. A multi-layered review process also builds in the potential to independently monitor adherence to procedure, ensuring that standards are applied fairly and rigorously to the extent possible.



Figure 1: “7-layer” UW process for departmentalized units. Color variation reflects independent layers of review, subject to standard caveats about the possibility of manipulation.

Because it contains a mixture of departmentalized and non-departmentalized units, the UW review process contains varying numbers of layers (see Figures 1 and 2, note that these figures are simplified somewhat from the flowcharts disseminated by Academic HR). As non-

departmentalized units have no department chairs, it is inevitable that this layer of review is absent in these units.

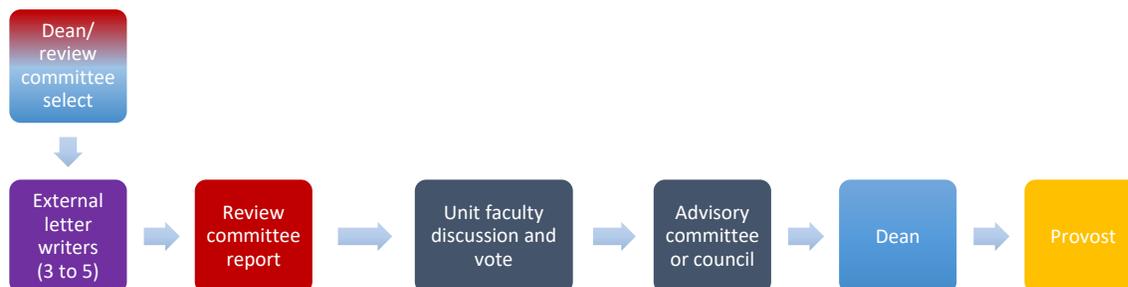


Figure 2: “5-layer” UW process for non-departmentalized units. Color variation reflects independent layers of review, subject to standard caveats about the possibility of manipulation.

A second complication in non-departmentalized units regards the role of a committee or council advisory to the dean. In departmentalized units these bodies are drawn mostly or entirely from faculty with no prior exposure to the case, and with limited expertise to judge the merits of a scholar’s work. These committees have substantial experience, however, in monitoring adherence to process. It is easy to argue that these committees or councils constitute a truly independent layer of review.

In non-departmentalized units, the advisory group is drawn from the ranks of faculty who have already participated in a review of the case. They may have more relevant expertise, on average, but given the smaller size of these units they will have a much smaller basis for assessing the fair application of standards and procedure across cases. It is difficult to argue that these committees or councils constitute a truly independent layer of review.

Defining the problem that a code revision would solve

This is more than a bureaucratic curiosity. The process as set forth in non-departmentalized units creates the risk that the idiosyncratic opinions of a single evaluator – the dean – might unduly drive the process. The dean, who bears ultimate responsibility for the decision, is permitted to select both the members of the review committee and the external evaluators. The faculty may advise the dean, but also report directly to the dean, exacerbating concerns that faculty may withhold their true assessment if the dean’s opinion is made plain. A dean favorably or unfavorably inclined to any particular candidate is in a position to significantly manipulate the process toward a desired outcome. This might be regarded as a “worst case scenario” given the expectation that deans will consider the good of the institution foremost, but procedures should be designed with the worst case scenario in mind.

Faculty code (24-54 C.) can be read as calling for an independent review of cases before the dean decides the matter, or as calling for a body of the faculty to present a rationale for an unfavorable recommendation to the candidate. Such reporting is not required following an unfavorable faculty vote or chair recommendation. As applied in non-departmentalized units,

however, the review provided by an advisory council or committee is not truly independent. Moreover, candidates may be offered opportunities to learn of negative sentiment in their review of the committee’s report earlier in the process (24-54 B.), and in their review of the dean’s initial recommendation (24-54 D.).

Case study of an alternate approach

There are many alternate procedures that might mitigate this risk. The tenure process at Duke University routes decisions from all units (excepting the Law School and the clinical departments of the Medical School) to a committee advisory to the provost, composed of 13 senior faculty drawn from several schools and colleges. This advisory committee (on which I served for three years, including one year as chair) had significant power to serve as a check on the process originating in any school or department. It could:

- route a dossier backwards to address incompleteness or failure to adhere to procedure
- solicit additional external evaluation letters
- appoint an ad hoc review committee to assess a case and produce an independent report
- ultimately present the provost with an independent vote and summary of the case. This summary was also shared with the candidate.

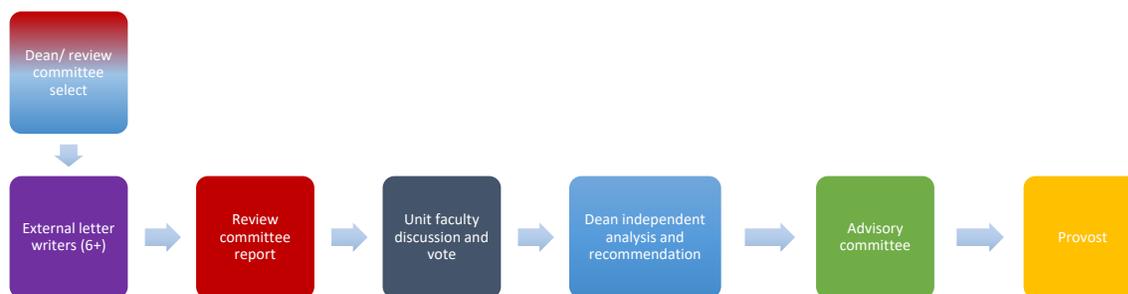


Figure 3: Duke University process for non-departmentalized units. Note that the advisory committee reports to the provost and also reviews cases originating in departmentalized units.

This reflects Duke’s “strong provost” administrative structure; here, faculty code clearly points to deans as the deciders of tenure and promotion cases with less emphasis on provost-level review. Nonetheless, relative to UW procedure there is an extra layer of independent review embedded in Duke’s process.¹

Alternatives

Option 1: Eliminate the advisory review requirement in non-departmentalized units. Given the possibility that any information regarding faculty deliberations could be conveyed by the dean

¹ Note, as well, that Duke’s process required a larger number of external letters (6 or more) and excluded letters from non-“arm’s length” writers, defined generally as those with a personal stake in a candidate’s promotion. UW procedure does not forbid the use of external evaluators with known conflicts of interest. Some individual units restrict the use of such evaluators but others do not.

in lieu of a message from an advisory committee, one option for code revision would be to rescind the 24-54 C. advisory group requirement entirely. To address the concern of insufficient independent layers of review in non-departmentalized units, a minor revision to 24-54 B. could stipulate that deans shall not select external evaluators in any unit.

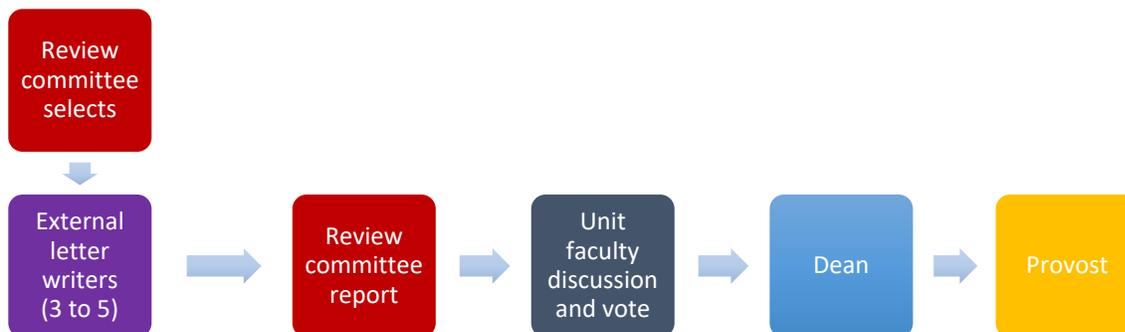


Figure 4: *OPTION 1: “5-layer” non-redundant process-omit advisory committee/council requirement entirely. Selection of letter writers removed from Dean’s purview.*

Option 2: make the advisory committee independent of the unit’s faculty. In departmentalized units, cases proceed from the department chair level to a committee drawn mostly or entirely from outside the department. This could be achieved in non-departmentalized units by instituting a committee formed for this purpose drawn from among the non-departmentalized units, or by fully reorganizing advisory committees across the University. In addition to Duke’s single-committee system, committees could be reorganized to resemble the process at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where four divisional committees review (a) arts and humanities, (b) biological sciences, (c) physical sciences, and (d) social sciences, and present their recommendations to deans. Relative to option 1, option 2 would be “messier” in terms of requiring a more complicated intervention in the code and the University’s bureaucratic structure; it would also promote greater uniformity in the review process across units.

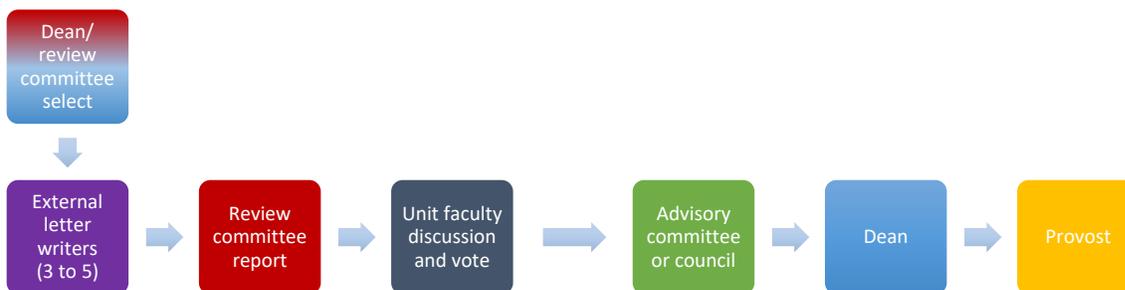


Figure 5: *OPTION 2: “6-layer” process-institute an advisory committee that is independent to the unit.*

Option 3: Maintain the status quo. This option is self-explanatory.