

Report of the Senate Committee on the Faculty and the Administration (SCOA)

2016-2017 Specific Charges

Our specific charges this year were to:

1. Review (annually) the implementation of the Faculty Handbook Conflict of Interest policies in consultation with the Office of the Provost, including ways that individual schools define, apply, and enforce the policies.

SCOA focused its annual review on possible variation of policies across Penn's 12 schools. SCOA found that most schools rely entirely on the University policies. Among those that augment University policy with school-specific guidelines, there were some ambiguities about which policy had precedence. Efforts currently underway to integrate all schools into a centralized computerized reporting system for reporting extramural research might address some of these issues.

Recommendation: Retain this established charge for 2017-2018 or consider adding it to SCOA's general charge.

2. Review policies regarding use of grant funds to reimburse childcare expenses associated with travel for purposes of the funded project.

SCOA discussed the issue of whether and how Penn faculty could be reimbursed for childcare expenses associated with travel for research purposes, in particular for attending conferences. A few schools at Penn, including Annenberg and Wharton, sometimes provide reimbursement for these expenses, but the University policy does not include childcare costs as covered expenses. A recent NIH policy clarification has highlighted this inconsistency. NIH established that grant funds can be used toward travel expenses for dependent children only if reimbursement of those expenses is permitted by the University's reimbursement policy generally for travel expenses. Thus, as long as Penn's policy disallows the expense, Penn faculty with NIH funding cannot use NIH funds for this purpose.

SCOA's preliminary investigation revealed that many other universities do reimburse these expenses, including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Brown, Cornell, University of Michigan, and Stanford. Discussion with Vice Provost for Faculty, Anita Allen, established that her office is working on developing a Penn policy to allow reimbursements for childcare expenses associated with travel related to attending conferences. Outstanding questions include: to whom such a policy would apply, whether the funds can be used to reimburse only childcare or child and adult care, whether it should be managed by the University or by the schools, and what should be the annual maximum payment for such expenses. Vice Provost for Faculty Allen emphasized that several Penn offices are involved in developing the policy and that she hoped that a new one would be available within six months.

Recommendation: SCOA should retain this charge for 2017-2018.

3. Continue to review the scope and effectiveness of the University Research Foundation's funding process.

SCOA began its review of the scope and effectiveness of the University Research Foundation (URF) funding process by examining the program's restructuring announced in September 2016 by Vice Provost for Research Dawn Bonnell. This restructuring added a new group of funding opportunities designed to support investment in emerging research areas—the program's announcement cited Precision Medicine as an example—while maintaining support for the URF's original objectives, which include funding junior faculty and supporting projects in disciplines where external funding is difficult. Noting that the new initiative to fund emerging research seemed designed to support disciplines that already had access to robust external funding (such as medicine and engineering), SCOA asked how URF would distribute funds between its "new" and "old" priorities.

SCOA reviewed online sources, heard from committee members who have served as reviewers for URF proposals, and posed questions to the Vice Provost. SCOA learned that the new program will be supported by additional

funds and so will not at this time entail reduced support for the original URF priorities. Also of note: the first Research Opportunity Development Grant to be awarded under the new program went to a proposal from SAS entitled *Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf: Cities and Maritime Networks 2500-2000 BCE* and received an award that totaled \$180,000. SCOA also inquired into the source of URF funds and whether they could (or should) be increased. SCOA learned that some of the funding currently comes from an endowment and that a significant fundraising effort would be necessary to increase future funding award amounts and numbers significantly.

Recommendation: SCOA should conduct a periodic review of the number and dollar amount of grants awarded by URF in both old and new categories.

4. Review Penn's standard contracts for Massive Open Online Courses and consider ways in which the University could enhance its support for faculty who are interested in launching new MOOCs.

SCOA initiated a review of several issues related to faculty involvement in online learning courses including intellectual property rights that arise in connection with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and other forms of online courses.

SCOA reviewed contract templates, heard from committee members concerning online master's programs at PSOM and SEAS, and met with Peter Decherney, Chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee for Open Learning Initiatives, who provided an overview and update on the state of online learning initiatives at the University.

SCOA's preliminary investigation suggests that online learning is evolving rapidly at Penn and is taking a variety of forms of which MOOCs are one. A decision this year by the Provost to shift oversight of online courses from the University level to the schools complicates the task of reviewing policies governing these activities. Staffing turnover across the current academic year within Penn's Online Learning Initiative also contributes to the challenge of collecting current information. SCOA commends the Senate Committee on Faculty and the Academic Mission (SCOF) for convening the April 4 symposium "Online Learning at Penn: Where Are We Going?" and intends to fully review the information gleaned from that session for its future deliberations. The recently-named Faculty Director of the Online Learning Initiative, Rebecca Stein, has expressed a commitment to engage with the Senate on these issues in Fall 2017.

The expansion of online courses suggests growing interest among Penn faculty in developing online versions of their courses. The website for Penn's Online Learning Initiative lists over 100 online courses across all schools. Absent centralized oversight of these activities, review of the variety of arrangements governing faculty participation and intellectual property still remains a priority. Informing faculty of the opportunities and challenges posed by this dynamic situation is important.

Recommendation: SCOA recommends that this charge remain active for 2017-2018 and its scope be expanded to encompass all courses with online components.

SCOA Membership

Xinyin Chen, GSE
 Ken Drobotz, Veterinary Medicine
 Katherine Margo, PSOM/Family Medicine
 Irina Marinov, SAS/Earth and Environmental Science
 Pamela Sankar, PSOM/Biomedical Ethics, *Chair*
 Talid Sinno, SEAS/CBE & MEAM
Ex officio:
 Marshall Meyer, Wharton, PASEF non-voting member
 Laura Perna, GSE, Faculty Senate Chair
 Santosh Venkatesh, SEAS/ESE, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect

Report of the Faculty Senate Grievance Commission

The Faculty Senate Grievance Commission of the University of Pennsylvania is an independent committee consisting of three faculty members appointed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. This commission is available to members of the Penn faculty and academic support who allege they have been subject to action that is contrary to the University procedures, policies, and/or regulations, that is discriminatory, or that is arbitrary. During Academic Year 2016-2017, the commission was composed of Parvati Ramchandani (PSOM/Medicine, Past Chair), Mitchell Marcus (SEAS/Computer and Information Science, Chair), and James Palmer (PSOM/Otorhinolaryngology, Chair-Elect).

During the year, the commission was approached by three members of the faculty, two of whom had been denied tenure, and one of whom, a part-time clinical faculty member, had been terminated after a professionalism hearing.

In all cases, the individual had several initial discussions with the Chair of the Commission about the grievance process, the circumstances of the case, discussions about clarifying the issues that might be grounds for a grievance, and discussions about the procedures for submitting a formal grievance letter. In one tenure case, the faculty member decided not to pursue a formal grievance. In the second tenure case, the faculty member has submitted a formal grievance which will remain outstanding for further consideration in the upcoming year. In the final case, the faculty member filed a formal grievance. The Commission is pursuing additional information from the grievant's school and has not yet reached a determination of whether the case should result in a hearing panel.

Mitchell Marcus, Grievance Commission Chair, 2016-2017