

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

General Committee Charge

The Committee on Faculty and the Administration oversees and advises the Executive Committee on matters relating to the faculty’s interface with the University’s administration, including policies and procedures (e.g., the Patent Policy) relating to the University’s structure, the conditions of faculty employment (such as personnel benefits) and information. In general the Committee deals with the matters covered by the following sections of the University’s *Handbook for Faculty and Academic Administrators*: I.A.-D., G.-H.I., I.-K., I.E. III., V., VI.

Specific Charges and Steps Taken to Address Them

1. *Systematically review existing and new modalities for online education at Penn, with particular focus on issues related to intellectual property, contracts and incentives for faculty to develop such courses.*

SCOA continued its review of issues related to faculty involvement in online learning courses including compensation and intellectual property (IP) rights. To better understand these issues, SCOA invited Peter Decherney, faculty director, and Rebecca Stein, executive director, from Penn’s Online Learning Initiative (OLI) to discuss these issues with Committee members. Individual SCOA members also reported to the Committee on separate discussions they held with directors of two online learning programs and with staff from the University’s Office of the General Counsel who have helped to develop contracts for online learning courses. These conversations suggest that substantial agreement exists about IP conditions that pertain to online learning courses. However, they also highlighted that, as a result of the de-centralized management of online learning at Penn, there is no comprehensive account of practices across schools, making any conclusion about how schools handle these issues provisional at best.

To address this gap, SCOA designed and piloted a survey distributed to staff involved in online learning at Penn’s 12 schools. We received answers from nine schools, two of which informed SCOA that they offered no online courses during the periods surveyed. Three did not respond in time for publication. A revised survey will be administered next year with clearer and more detailed questions. Considering the preliminary nature of these results, we report them in summary form rather than specific to each school.

Survey Question	Summary of responses
How many contracts did your school issue to faculty to develop online learning courses in 2016-2017?	Based on the 7 schools that issued ≥ 1 contract, the number of contracts issued varied from 2 to 40, and the median issued was 6.
How many contracts did your school issue to faculty to develop online learning courses for 2017-2018?	Based on the 5 schools that issued ≥ 1 contract, the number of contracts issued varied from 3 to 30, and the median 10.
Was compensation calculated the same for all contracts or differently for some contracts?	Most schools reported that they calculate compensation differently across contracts. Bases for differences included faculty rank, standing and status, and course type (e.g., credit or non-credit).
Is compensation paid as part of regular salary or in addition to regular salary?	All schools paid faculty in addition to salary. Some also paid as part of regular salary.
Approximately how much are faculty paid to develop a semester-equivalent course.	Across schools, faculty receive an amount ranging between \$2,500 and \$25,000 to develop an online course. Within schools, payment varies based on faculty rank or standing, course type, and required effort.
Do faculty receive additional compensation if an online course runs again, and if so how much?	Almost all schools pay additional compensation if a course runs again. Across schools compensation varied. In 2016-2017, from \$1,500 to \$15,000; in 2017-2018, from \$1,500 to \$5,000. Within schools the amount paid varied primarily by course type (e.g., MOOC versus for-credit). Two schools specified that in the event a course receives net revenue, faculty receive additional payment calculated as a percent of the net revenue.
What conditions do contracts from your school contain with regard to intellectual property (IP)?	Most schools report following guidelines set by OLI, described as giving all rights to the University for actual video or audio recordings created for the course while the faculty member retains rights to the material’s intellectual content. Some schools reference other policies and one school reported that it does not address IP. Two schools highlighted provisions concerning material presented by guest lecturers and exemption for recorded material of their own creation that faculty incorporate.
Does your school approve online courses using the same process as residential courses?	Most schools report using a different process to approve online courses. None provided detail.

SCOA highlights four findings.

1) Concern that IP policies related to online learning activities varied across schools motivated this SCOA charge. Thus, the finding that most schools report adhering to OLI’s policy should mitigate SCOA’s concern.

2) The disparity in payments across reporting schools (the highest paid and the lowest differ by a factor of ten) calls for scrutiny, especially in light of concerns discussed in (3) below.

3) Policies at two schools allowing faculty to receive additional payment calculated as a percent of the net revenue of a course, in the event the course receives net revenue, raised concerns. Specifically SCOA members considered the implications of introducing an idea that faculty are paid based on the number of students they enroll; whether, for example, this might create a conflict of interest for faculty and whether creating a system with differential incentives might have unanticipated consequences on the University’s academic mission.

4) Reasons for approving online courses by a different process than residential courses should be identified, and implications of potentially allowing for the development of two sets of standards and goals should be examined.

2. Review the provisions for faculty engagement with the various innovation hubs at Penn.

SCOA reviewed available material about several of Penn’s innovation hubs and met with Dawn Bonnell, Vice Provost of Research (VPR), who oversees several of these efforts. SCOA also inquired to the Tri-chairs about the scope of this charge, in particular whether it was meant to apply broadly to any activity at Penn that might be considered innovative or only to those recognized as part of the President’s innovation program, such as the Pennovation Center and the Penn Center for Innovation (PCI). SCOA received clarification that the charge addresses only the latter.

Recommendation: SCOA recommends that this charge be carried over to the 2018-2019 academic year and that it be revised to clarify the intended goals of the charge.

3. Review the availability of childcare services on campus and any related policies.

Regarding the charge to review childcare services on campus and related policies, SCOA first reviewed charges concerning day care services of other University committees, including University Council Committee on Personnel Benefits (CPB) and Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty (SCESF) and exchanged emails about those charges with SCESF Chair Robert Stine. Noting overlap of committee charges to examine childcare services, SCOA membership voted to continue to focus its attention on policies regarding using grant funds to reimburse childcare expenses associated with research-related travel. See Charge #4.

4. Continue to review existing and emerging policies regarding use of grant funds to reimburse childcare expenses associated with travel for the funded project.

Through exchanges with the Faculty Senate Tri-Chairs and with the office of Anita Allen, Vice Provost for Faculty (VPF), SCOA continued to monitor efforts to create a fund to reimburse expenses incurred by faculty for dependent care expenses associated with faculty travel for scholarly activities. SCOA reviewed the proposed language for the policy and asked for clarification about to which groups of dependents it applied (only young children or also other dependents who might need supervised care) and whether and how the policy had been disseminated to faculty. SCOA learned that the VPF is working with the Penn Forum for Women to establish a Provost-based fund to support the program and that these efforts could result in a forthcoming new program. At the time of publication, SCOA was unaware of a resolution about to whom the policy will apply (both whether it applies only to faculty or to post-doctoral fellows as well and whether care only for young children is reimbursable or also expenses for other dependents).

Recommendation: SCOA should continue to review progress on the establishment of this fund, in particular policies governing who may use it and for what purposes and plans for its dissemination to eligible Penn employees.

5. Support the planning and execution of Knowledge Teach-In events.

SCOA advised and supported the efforts of the Faculty Senate in convening a series of “Teach-In” events at various campus sites from March 18-22, 2018. A summary of the Teach-In can be found in other reports contained within this supplement.

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Report of the Senate Committee on Faculty and the Administration

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Other Business

FIAP/Terminal Sabbatical

SCOA was asked to review the terms governing terminal sabbaticals and Faculty Income Allowance Plan (FIAP) payments in response to concerns about variation in practices across schools. SCOA members spoke with staff at SAS, PSOM and SEAS as well as with staff in central administration about their handling of requests for terminal sabbaticals and about the procedures for calculating FIAP payments.

SCOA determined that practices were consistent across schools; however, the fact that some schools offer 9-month contracts to faculty and others offer 12-month contracts created some confusion. This was clarified by noting that FIAP calculations are based on “average academic base salary” for each school, regardless over what time period it is paid. FIAP does not take into account any supplemental salary that faculty on 9-month or 12-month contracts might arrange. Thus, reliance on “average academic base salary” is what creates consistency across schools in calculating FIAP payments.

Based on these inquiries SCOA membership notes, however, that understanding of the terminal sabbatical and FIAP payments policies among faculty and staff is uneven and suggests that more attention be paid to publicizing and explaining these policies.

University Research Foundation

SCOA continued its review of the scope and effectiveness of the University Research Foundation’s (URF) funding process that it began in 2016-2017. The review was prompted by the question of whether the URF would maintain a commitment to its original objectives, which include funding junior faculty and supporting projects in disciplines where external funding is difficult, in light of changes to the program to increase support for emerging research areas likely to be in the running for external support (e.g., precision medicine). A review of the distribution of funding decisions during 2016-2017 suggested that SCOA’s concern was misplaced. A

review of 2017-2018 funding decisions suggests the same, at least insofar as the proportion of grants awarded in research areas less likely to get external funding exceeded the proportion awarded to faculty in areas that are commonly awarded external funding, such as in engineering and health-related schools (i.e., Dental, Medicine, Nursing, Veterinary). Questions remain concerning the value, as opposed to the number, of grants awarded to faculty across various disciplines. SCOA should continue its review of the scope and effectiveness of the URF funding process during future years.

Proposed Charges for SCOA in 2018-2019

1. Systematically review existing and new modalities for online education at Penn, with particular focus on issues related to approval process, intellectual property, contracts, and incentives for faculty to develop and maintain such courses.

2. Continue to review existing and emerging policies regarding use of grant funds to reimburse childcare expenses associated with travel for the funded project.

3. Continue to monitor the processes used for assessing faculty conflicts of interest.

4. Continue to review the distribution of University Research Foundation awards by research area.

2017-2018 SCOA Membership

Pamela Sankar, PSOM, *Chair*

Joel Bennett, PSOM/Medicine

Ken Drobotz, Vet School

Al Filreis, SAS/English

Katherine Margo, PSOM/Family Medicine

Talid Sinno, SEAS/CBE & MEAM

Peter Struck, SAS/Classical Studies

Ex-officio members:

Marshall Meyer, Wharton, PASEF non-voting member

Jennifer Pinto-Martin, Nursing School, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect

Santosh Venkatesh, SEAS/ESE, Faculty Senate Chair

Report of the Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity and Equity (SCFDDE)

General Committee Charge

The Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity and Equity (i) identifies and promotes best practices for faculty development, mentoring and work environment to facilitate faculty success at all career levels; (ii) evaluates and advocates processes for faculty recruitment, promotion and retention that promote diversity, equity and work/life balance for the faculty; (iii) monitors the status of faculty development, mentoring, diversity and equity; and (iv) issues periodic reports on the activities and findings of the committee that make recommendations for implementation.

2017-2018 Specific Charges for the SCFDDE

1. Continue investigating the factors impacting faculty inclusion, with particular attention to issues of promotion and satisfaction in the associate professor rank and recruitment, retention, promotion and climate for women and minorities.

2. Follow up on the December 2016 Diversity Forum and continue to identify opportunities for cross-school collaboration to advance diversity and inclusion goals.

3. Review the operation of the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity.

4. Maintain communication between the SCFDDE and the University Council Committee on Diversity and Equity and collaborate when possible on issues of mutual concern.

5. Support the planning and execution of Knowledge Teach-In events.

Report of Activities

The Committee met a total of six times (September 20, November 3, January 26, February 2, March 2, and April 6). Invited guests included Anita Allen, Vice Provost for Faculty (VPF); Sam Starks, Executive Director, Office of Affirmative Action (OAA); Joann Mitchell, Senior Vice President for Institutional Affairs & Chief Diversity Officer; and Ezekiel Dixon-Román, Chair of the University Council on Diversity and Equity.

Report on Charges

1. *Continue investigating the factors impacting faculty inclusion, with particular attention to issues of promotion and satisfaction in the associate professor rank and recruitment, retention, promotion and climate for women and minorities.*

The Committee obtained information from several schools on the status of Associate Professors with tenure and the policies and initiatives concerning their successful progression towards the rank of (full) Professor¹.

Its review of the information revealed two issues to which the University administration should give consideration. First, the committee observed a perceived lack of clarity among Associate Professors concerning the performance standards for promotion to Professor. Wide variation across schools in terms of performance expectations were detected. The Committee observed that the number of Associate Professors who do not get promoted to Professor is larger in some schools than in others. There continues to be a number of faculty who reach retirement without being promoted to Professor. Second, there exists a perception among recently-promoted Associate Professors that the new administrative burdens they have to shoulder is quite taxing on their ability to continue doing research with a view to being promoted to Professor. Most importantly, women and members of underrepresented minority groups report fielding many requests to serve on committees, run programs and engage in other types of administration work.

Recommendations:

a. The Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty should put in place a uniform system for gathering information about the career progress of Associate Professors, and about successful policies implemented at the

¹ The Law School does not promote faculty to the Associate rank; instead, faculty are promoted to Professor at the time they receive tenure.

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