Report of the Senate Committee on Faculty and the Academic Mission (SCOF)

General Committee Charge

The Committee oversees and advises the Executive Committee on matters relating to the University's policies and procedures concerning the academic mission, including the structure of the academic staff, the tenure system, faculty appointments and promotions, faculty research, and faculty governance. In general, the Committee deals with the matters covered by the following sections of the University's *Handbook for Faculty and Academic Administrators:* I.E.-F., H.2., II.A.-D.

2014-2015 Specific Charges

1. Consider the implication of faculty leaves on the timing of tenure, promotion, and reappointment decisions.

The University of Pennsylvania gives all tenure track faculty the option of an extension of the tenure clock under certain circumstances. This policy has been in place for some time but it may be fair to say that it is not well understood among the general faculty and indeed there may be an undercurrent of unease inhibiting its use. The Senate Committee on Faculty and the Academic Mission was charged with considering the implication of such tenure clock extensions on tenure, promotion, and reappointment decisions.

The Committee was briefed by Vice Provost for Faculty Anita Allen on the tenure clock extension policy of the University. The policy governing tenure clock extensions is spelt out in the *Faculty Handbook*. To summarize, such extensions are intended to be value neutral. The relevant section of the *Handbook* instructs deans seeking external evaluations of candidates who have availed of a tenure clock extension to inform external reviewers that such an extension was taken and that the evaluation of the candidate's productivity should be made without factoring in the extra time granted by the extension. The Provost's Office provides a letter template for all schools to use in order to ensure uniformity across the University in such cases where a tenure clock extension was taken.

The Committee found that the policy is spelt out clearly in the *Faculty Handbook*. To ensure conformity with the directives, the Committee suggested reminding deans and department chairs about the tenure clock extension policy in the annual letters asking for the list of tenure-eligible faculty. The Vice Provost for Faculty's office is currently in the process of upgrading workshops offered to new chairs and the Committee suggested that information about the policy be included in these workshops.

2. Continue discussion of Open Learning Initiatives and the emergence of new instructional methodologies.

In view of the rapidly changing landscape in online education, as well as in burgeoning alternative educational modalities, the Committee felt that it would be useful to continue the process begun in the previous academic year of gathering information on how these initiatives are being shaped at Penn. Accordingly, the Committee consulted with Professors Edward Rock (director of open course initiatives, School of Law), Andrew Binns (vice provost for education, School of Arts & Sciences), and Nora Lewis (vice dean of professional and liberal education, School of Arts & Sciences).

Director of Open Learning Initiatives Ed Rock described the current state of open learning at Penn. Penn has partnered with Coursera to provide Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Since the spring of 2012, Penn has completed 38 courses, some of which have run multiple times. There have been close to three million students enrolled in these courses. The Provost's Office issues a Call for Proposals once a year. The Call for Proposals issued in October 2014 expanded the scope to include the development of other digital content for use in on-campus courses in traditional classes as well as in experiments with new instructional methodologies to improve the quality of education by incorporating Structured Active In-class Learning (SAIL). In addition to Coursera, Penn recently decided to join the edX consortium founded by Harvard and MIT, which offers MOOCs on an open source platform.

Professor Rock identified two priorities for Open Learning Initiatives at this time: to find ways to generate income in order to defray the costs of the program, and to encourage faculty members to use digital resources in on-campus classes. In response to international demand for business education in particular, the Wharton School has launched a Business Foundations Specialization with Coursera consisting of four classes and a Capstone project. This has been developed as a pre-Master of Business Administration program, and so will not compete directly with the traditional Wharton MBA program.

Vice Provost for Education Binns weighed in on the possibility of offering selected online degree-granting programs at Penn. This is an area where some of our peer institutions have been very active. In response to Committee concerns about ensuring that the quality of potential programs was up to Penn standards and the effects of such programs on faculty hiring, Dr. Binns affirmed that, just as for any new academic program, a school wishing to initiate an online degree program would have to weigh its costs and benefits in consultation with faculty: any such new program must be voted on by the standing faculty of the school, and then approved by the Provost's Office and the Board of Trustees.

The Committee also heard from Vice Dean of Professional and Liberal Education Nora Lewis on the current mixture of online and regular course offerings from the College of Arts and Sciences. While Penn does not currently have a fully online program, there are at this time a couple of hybrid programs in place; no online undergraduate programs are being envisaged. Ms. Lewis also outlined for the Committee some of the thorny state regulatory thickets that have to be navigated.

These presentations highlighted issues very much in flux. It was clear to the Committee that there is very rapid change and innovation in online course offerings as well as in the adaptations of digital resources in on-campus classes. There is a need to monitor progress in these areas, identify best practices and targets of opportunity, and keep an eye on regulatory issues and burdens.

1. Continue consultation with school leadership regarding faculty tracks.

The consultative process that began in 2012 between the Committee, the Provost's Office, and the various schools on guidelines for appointments, promotions, and caps on numbers in the various faculty tracks was carried forward and the Committee received two significant faculty track change proposals for review.

• The Committee received a faculty track change proposal from the School of Nursing proposing to combine the existing 20% cap on Senior Lecturers and the 20% cap on Advanced Senior Lecturers so that the total number of Senior Lecturers and Advanced Senior Lecturers will not exceed 40%, with no restriction on the number in either category. The goal of this proposal was to provide the School with greater flexibility in the promotion and recruitment of lecturers.

• The Committee received a collaborative proposal from the School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM), the Perelman School of Medicine (PSOM), and the School of Dental Medicine (SDM) proposing changes to the Academic Clinician (AC) faculty track. The major goal of the proposal was to establish the AC track in the Vet School by creating a career path for existing staff vets and furthering the Vet School's clinical education and training mission. The AC track already exists in the Perelman School of Medicine and the School of Dental Medicine. The intent of the proposal was not to reduce the size of the standing faculty in any school but to align the AC track with the changes that were implemented in the Clinical Educator (CE) track in 2013-2014 and to enhance clinical instruction and services. The changes proposed new caps limiting the sizes of AC faculty as a percentage of standing faculty: Dental, 40%; PSOM, 70%; and Vet, 40%.

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After deliberation the Committee voted to approve each of these proposals and present them to the Senate Executive Committee for ratification.

2. Continue to work on the regular collection and analysis of data on the status of non-standing faculty in undergraduate education.

The Committee has asked the Provost's Office to keep it apprised of the on-going data collection pertaining to the role of non-standing faculty in teaching of undergraduates. No new data were examined over the course of the academic year and this remains an ongoing issue to be carried over to the next academic cycle.

3. Review and discuss this Committee's general charge, as provided in the Senate Rules, and identify what you believe to be the most pressing issues facing the Faculty over the next few years. In light of your discussions, recommend to the Senate Executive Committee two or three high-priority charges for the Committee on the Faculty to undertake in academic year 2015-2016. In explaining these charges, outline any appropriate actions you suppose the Senate might conceivably take after its review.

It is the view of the Committee that two of the charges should carry over to the academic year 2015-2016.

a. The rapidly changing landscape in Open Learning and the emergence of new instructional methodologies exploiting digital content in Structured Active In-class Learning classrooms have the potential to be hugely transformative and reshape the core mission of the faculty. SCOF should continue to monitor these developments.

b. SCOF should continue to work with the Vice Provost for Faculty on the regular collection and analysis of data on the role of non-standing faculty in teaching undergraduates. One possible outcome of a review is the crafting of explicit language for a guideline on the role of non-standing faculty in undergraduate teaching, with particular reference to freshman teaching.

c. SCOF should begin an examination of the processes governing mandatory reviews and early tenure cases (as also early reviews of other cases where an up-or-down decision is mandated) with a view to making these processes transparent and consistent.

SCOF Membership 2014–2015

Nancy Hanrahan, School of Nursing
Ron Harty, School of Veterinary Medicine
Justin McDaniel, School of Arts & Sciences/Religious Studies
Amy Sepinwall, Wharton/Legal Studies & Business Ethics
Mindy Schuster, Perelman School of Medicine/Infectious Diseases
Tom Sollecito, School of Dental Medicine
Santosh S. Venkatesh, School of Engineering & Applied Science/Electrical & Systems Engineering, *Chair*
Ex Officio Members:
Claire Finkelstein, Law School, *Faculty Senate Chair*
Reed Pyeritz, Perelman School of Medicine/Medicine and Genetics, *Faculty Senate Chair-Elect*

Senate Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty

The 2014-2015 Senate Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty
published the Economic Status of the Faculty Report
in *Almanac* April 28, 2015;
an executive summary as well as the full report
are available online at
www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v61/n32/pdf/042815-supplement-execsummary.pdf

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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's procedures, policies and/or regulations, that is discriminatory or that is arbitrary. During Academic Year 2014-2015, the commission was composed of Martha A. Q. Curley (Nursing, Past Chair), Steven Sondheimer (Medicine, Chair), and Parvati Ramchandani (Medicine, Chair-Elect).

During the year, the commission was approached by two members of the faculty: both had been denied promotion.

The first individual filed a formal grievance and spoke with the Chair. The commission pursued additional information from the grievant's department. The commission as a whole reviewed the case in detail, each member reaching an independent conclusion about the merits. The Chair consulted the commission for a consensus after reaching a decision about whether the case should result in a hearing panel. The case was not forwarded to a hearing.

The second case remains outstanding for further consideration in the upcoming year.

—*Steven J. Sondheimer, Grievance Commission Chair, 2014-2015*