

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

General Committee Charge

The Committee oversees and advises the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) 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.

2016-2017 Specific Charges & Steps Taken

1. Identify mechanisms for better communication and collaboration between school-based faculty governing bodies and the University Faculty Senate.

In addressing this Charge, SCOF focused its efforts on identifying ways of enhancing communication between Standing and non-Standing Faculty ("NSF") and proposing a mechanism for NSF to communicate with one another across schools (*see Appendix A online*). There remains work to be done in enhancing communication and collaboration between school-based governing bodies and the University Faculty Senate (*see Proposed Charge #1, below*)

2. Initiate a review of teaching by Academic Support Staff and Associated Faculty in the undergraduate schools with respect to numbers of courses and students taught, and student evaluations.

In 2010-2012, SCOF undertook a study entitled "Who's Teaching Our Students?" Each school submitted data reflecting the breakdown in among Standing Faculty and the various categories of NSF. These data are now at least five years old. SCOF recommends that each school be asked for updated data (*see Proposed Charge #2, below*).

At the time of the original data collection, there was no standard set of instructions dictating what specific data should be collected and how it should be analyzed and formatted. SCOF determined that Wharton's submission was the clearest and most comprehensive, and it recommends that Wharton's submission be used as the model for all future such data collection. SCOF has retained on file a copy of the 2011 Wharton submission for ease of reference.

3. Convene an event that invites the faculty to engage in an active discussion on the role and future of faculty at Penn [and]

4. Consider the ongoing development of online delivery of educational programming (including but not limited to MOOCs) and its implications to global engagement.

SCOF spent a considerable amount of time discussing the various issues that online education raises, and it decided to address some of these at an event held in April 2017 that was open to the entire university. The event, "Online Learning Initiatives at Penn: Where Are We Going?", involved a panel discussion featuring Kostas Daniilidis, professor of computer science and director of online education for SEAS; Peter Decherney, professor of English and cinema studies, current chair and member since 2012 of the Provost's Faculty Advisory Committee on Online Learning, and chair of the SAS Faculty Advisory Committee on Online Learning; Don Huesman, managing director of Wharton Online Learning; and Anne Trumbore, senior director of Wharton Online Learning. The panelists described the current online offerings and plans for the future. Among the key issues addressed was the way in which online courses would interact with traditional modes of content delivery; the burdens and benefits to faculty of developing and producing online courses; the objectives of the various initiatives, and how the university aims to evaluate whether they are met; and what the future holds for OLI at Penn.

The session was recorded, and SCOF plans to make a bookmarked version of the event available online to the university community at large.

Given how rapidly online learning initiatives are developing and changing the landscape of education for our students and those outside the university who access our online offerings, SCOF recommends that next year's committee continue to monitor online learning (*see Proposed Charge #3, below*).

5. Consider any matters affecting faculty size, appointments, and tracks brought to the committee by individual schools.

SCOF reviewed and ultimately approved the following proposed changes to the faculty composition and conditions of employment:

a. A proposal from GSE to eliminate the 10-year employment limit for positions of Practice Professor and Associate Practice Professor;

b. The creation of a Practice Professor Track and a Senior Lecturer Track in SP2;

c. The creation of a Practice Professor Track at the Annenberg School for Communication; and

d. The introduction of an Assistant Professor of Practice rank, and a change in the understanding of the Practice Professor role, in SEAS.

Since reviewing proposals for track changes is a core SCOF function, SCOF recommends that next year's committee undertake this important work (*see Proposed Charge #4, below*).

Other SCOF Work

In addition to addressing the 2016-2017 charges, SCOF undertook several other initiatives:

1. In the fall, SCOF reviewed a portion of aggregated results from the 2015 Faculty Climate Survey. The data suggested some interesting findings, but SCOF thought the task of distilling insights from aggregated results information too ambitious, given SCOF's other work. The committee ultimately concluded that it would defer work on the data to other Senate committees. SCOF understands that the Provost's Office is considering adoption of policies on the basis of the results, at which point SCOF could engage with these products directly (*see Proposed Charge #5, below*).

2. Prompted by proposals to enlarge the number of NSF in various schools, but also by work done by prior years' committees, SCOF spent a considerable amount of time discussing concerns about the status of NSF. These discussions were central to planning an event SCOF organized, at which SEC members were invited to discuss the role of NSF across the University and any associated concerns. That discussion took place at a January 2017 SEC meeting. The thoughts articulated by the members of SEC gave rise to further SCOF discussions, in light of which SCOF has developed four policy recommendations re-garding NSF (*see Appendix A*) as well as identifying possible further work for next year's SCOF (*see Proposed Charge #6, below*).

Proposed Charges for SCOF in 2017-2018:

1. Identify mechanisms for better communication and collaboration between school-based faculty governing bodies and the University Faculty Senate.

2. Initiate a review of teaching by Academic Support Staff and Associated Faculty in the undergraduate schools with respect to numbers of courses and students taught, and student evaluations.

3. Continue to monitor online learning initiatives with an eye to safeguarding the University's academic mission.

4. Consider any matters affecting faculty size, appointments, and tracks brought to the committee by individual schools.

5. Review the Provost's Inclusion Report (released in Spring 2017), which is in part based on results from the 2015 Faculty Climate Survey.

6. Attend to issues concerning the status of non-Standing Faculty (NSF). In particular:

a. Identify best practices for giving voice to non-Standing Faculty (NSF) within the departments/schools in which they serve, on matters directly relevant to them (*see Appendix A, item number II*);

b. Invite schools with Lecturer and/or Practice Professor Tracks to revise the appropriate subsections of the *Handbook for Faculty and Academic Administrators* (II.B.3 and II.B.4); describing the criteria for advancement within each of these tracks (*see Appendix A, item number III*); and

c. Develop and seek implementation of a mechanism for including NSF in a non-voting capacity on SEC (*see Appendix A, item number IV*).

SCOF Membership

Yianni Augoustides, PSOM/Anesthesiology

Eric Feldman, Law

Lea Ann Matura, Nursing

Susan Suavé Meyer, SAS/Philosophy

Mindy Schuster, PSOM/Infectious Diseases

Amy Sepinwall, Wharton, *Chair*

Tom Sollecito, Dental School

Lyle Ungar, SEAS/CIS

Ex Officio:

Laura Perna GSE, Faculty Senate Chair

Gino Segre, SAS/Physics, PASEF non-voting member

Santosh Venkatesh, SEAS/ESE, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect

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

Appendix A

Four policy recommendations relating to non-Standing Faculty (NSF)

I. Recommendation that each school produce an inventory of the breakdown in instruction between Standing and non-Standing Faculty:

In 2010-2012, SCOF undertook a study entitled *Who's Teaching Our Students?* Each school submitted data reflecting the breakdown in among Standing Faculty and the various categories of NSF. These data are now at least five years old. SCOF recommends that each school be asked for updated data. At the time of the original data collection, there was no standard set of instructions dictating what specific data should be collected and how it should be analyzed and formatted. SCOF determined that Wharton's submission was the most clear and comprehensive, and it recommends that Wharton's submission be used as the model for all future such data collection. We agree. SCOF has retained on file a copy of the 2011 Wharton submission for ease of reference.

II. Recommendation that each department include NSF at meetings discussing issues of concern to both Standing and non-Standing Faculty

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the Senate Sub-Committee for the Faculty and Academic Mission continued its examination of the place of NSF across the university. To that end, SCOF ran a focused discussion at a SEC meeting where it sought to consult members of SEC to gain insight into the concerns that arise for them and at their schools. At the discussion, it was suggested that NSF members be included in department meetings where issues of concern to both Standing and non-Standing Faculty members were to be discussed. Because there is much variability in the nature and roles of NSF in different departments and schools, SCOF believes that more work should be done to identify sensible ways of including NSF. To that end, SCOF recommends that next year's committee *identify best practices for involving NSF in matters of concern to them.*

III. Recommendation that each School revise the relevant provisions in the Handbook for Faculty and Academic Administrators describing criteria for advancement in NSF tracks

Currently, Sections II.B.3 and II.B.4 of the *Handbook for Faculty and Academic Administrators* describe the Practice Professor and Lecturer tracks respectively, including the possibility for promotion within each track. As it stands, however, these sections provide very little concrete guidance as to the criteria for advancement. Greater clarity would allow candidates for promotion to know what their school expects of them and personnel committees to know how to evaluate NSF promotion cases. SCOF therefore recommends *that each school revise the relevant subsections of the Faculty Handbook to provide these additional details.*

IV. Recommendation that SEC amend its structure to add a non-voting seat for a NSF member

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the Senate Sub-Committee for the Faculty and Academic Mission continued its examination of the place of NSF across the university. One concern voiced in discussion with the Senate Executive Committee, and raised independently in SCOF meetings, regarded representation and voice for the NSF on matters concerning faculty governance. To begin addressing this concern, SCOF recommends that SEC amend its governing structure to include one NSF as a non-voting member of SEC. While it would be beyond SCOF's purview to recommend a selection process for the NSF representative, SCOF nonetheless offers the following suggestion:

- a. Each department chair should
 - i. assemble a list of names and email addresses of the department's NSF; and
 - ii. send an email to those NSF (i) containing the assembled names and email addresses and (ii) inviting nominations, including self-nominations, for a school-wide NSF committee. In the event that more than one person is nominated, the Chair can follow up the nomination process with a ballot so that the department's NSF can select their nominee.
- b. Each departmental nominee would then serve on a school-wide committee of NSF whose purpose would be to:
 - i. together with the other schools, develop a process for selecting one NSF member from across the university for a non-voting position on SEC; and
 - ii. function as a base for pursuing issues of concern to the NSF. (Each of these school-wide units could determine for itself how it wishes to operate.)

The process SCOF suggests is meant to serve as a starting point for identifying a NSF member representative to SEC. The NSF might well choose an alternative selection procedure.

SCOF recommends that the NSF representative to SEC be elected to a 1-year renewable term.