

## 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., I. I. H.2., II.A.-D.

### 2018-2019 Specific Charges and Steps Taken to Address Them

#### 1. Review the composition of and teaching by Standing Faculty, Academic Support Staff, and Associated Faculty.

Much discussion centered on the various faculty roles enumerated in the *Faculty Handbook* and how these positions and roles were similar and/or different across the University. The roles of the Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff varied widely across the Schools. There are differing opportunities for faculty in the Schools. For example, at least one School occasionally hires Lecturers who have an expectation that in a certain number of years a role on the Tenure Track would be provided to the faculty member. SCOF observed differing perceptions on the roles of Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff, with inter-School perceptions varying greatly. Some Schools appear to utilize the roles as career positions that full-time, permanent, or tenure-equivalent. However, that practice was criticized for its lack of true job security: they can be terminated at-will with limited notice. Oftentimes persons appear to be recruited into certain positions with verbal implications that they can remain in the positions for extended periods given strong performance. It is also not clear if Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff have a voice in Departmental or School matters that pertain to their roles.

In order to understand the responsibilities of the various tracks among Schools, we requested data on the various tracks, job descriptions, and criteria for appointment/promotion and review from the Schools that utilize these tracks. Preliminary review of the data indicates variation in roles and expectations across the Schools.

Data for Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff provided at the request of SCOF by Institutional Research and Assessment (IR&A) (2018) indicate the size of the Associated Faculty has increased over the past decade, mainly because of the introduction of the Academic Clinician (AC) track in Dental, Vet and PSOM. Overall, there appears to be a decrease in full-time Lecturers since 2008 and a notable increase in part-time Lecturers in some Schools. SCOF recommends further data collection and analysis related to who is doing the teaching in the various Schools (Standing Faculty vs. Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff).

#### Recommendations:

- SCOF should attempt to gather data on the number of undergraduate courses taught by Standing Faculty, Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff and how this has changed over time.

- SCOF should consider further:

- How is representation for various tracks defined?
- If a faculty member is not a good fit within a track, is it possible to transition to a more suitable faculty track?
- What representation should the Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff have at the University level?
- What reasonable standards and expectations can be promoted that are flexible enough to apply to Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff across all tracks while still maintaining rigor in the tracks?

#### 2. Continue to work toward identifying best practices for giving representation to Academic Support Staff and Associated Faculty within departments, Schools and the University.

Interest was also expressed in understanding whether Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff feel that their perspectives and interests are well represented as part of the shared governance processes in Schools. There was a great deal of discussion regarding how or if Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff members have a voice in their perspective Schools/departments. Concerns about Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff wellbeing, including available fringe benefits and job satisfaction, were voiced, as were concerns about the complexities of various tracks and variance in titles and roles across Penn's Schools. Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff tracks allow Deans flexibility to expand and contract teaching and programming on short notice, since Associated Fac-

ulty and Academic Support Staff are at-will employees. Committee members agreed the need to understand the amount and nature of undergraduate instruction being done by Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff.

SCOF discussed identifying vulnerable groups and following them over time to understand what they are doing. This would allow, for example, Schools to recognize whether Academic Clinicians are holding responsibilities set forth for Academic Clinicians or whether they are overlapping responsibilities with Clinician Educators. Track definitions and parameters should be monitored to ensure that responsibilities are consistent with requirements and expectations. Academic faculty should also have an appropriate "voice" in their departments so that they are able to perform their roles well.

We discussed various ways to yield information from Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff regarding their role, voice, etc. SCOF members discussed the potential distribution of a survey to Academic faculty members inquiring about their wellbeing and their roles and responsibilities. SCOF members agreed that focus groups should be conducted by an independent facilitator. SCOF members in the undergraduate Schools were asked to help identify a full-time Lecturer and a Senior Lecturer to participate in the initial focus group.

This focus group was convened in March 2019. Nine full-time Lecturers and Senior Lecturers participated in the focus group from Nursing, SEAS and SAS. Some of the positive findings include: Work satisfaction and competence; Relations (they like the people they work with); and Compensation (pay was not a top issue). Areas of concern: 1) Job stability, benefits stability, fair treatment as employees; 2) Career paths; 3) Research opportunity and support; 4) Respect, status; 5) Participating—having a voice in program/department oversight and decisions; 6) Recognition of presence and value; 7) Quality of education; and 8) Embedded cultural norms and structural discrimination.

#### Recommendation:

- Convene additional focus groups and continue to review results. Develop a plan for next steps based on results.

#### 3. Continue to review the impact of online learning initiatives, particularly emerging online certificate and degree programs, at Penn.

Since the Senate Committee on Faculty and the Administration (SCOA) was charged to review aspects of faculty remuneration as they relate to online education, SCOF elected to allow SCOA to complete its work before pursuing this charge. SCOF received routine updates regarding SCOA's work. SCOF did question the extent to which faculty are asked to participate in online learning. Should this work be considered within a usual teaching load or in addition to a usual teaching load? Should online teaching initiatives considered in the promotion/tenure review process? SCOF recommends pursuing answers to these questions.

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

SCOF did not receive any proposals this year.

### Proposed Charges for SCOF in 2019-2020

1. Continue to work toward identifying best practices for giving representation to Academic Support Staff and Associated Faculty within departments, Schools, and the University.

2. Continue to review the composition of and teaching by Standing Faculty, Academic Support Staff, and Associated Faculty.

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

#### SCOF Membership 2018-2019

Lea Ann Matura, Nursing School  
 William Beltran, Vet School  
 Eric Feldman, Law School  
 Susan Sauvé Meyer, SAS/Philosophy  
 Mindy Schuster, PSOM/Infectious Diseases  
 Amy Sepinwall, Wharton  
 Bruce Shenker, Dental School  
 Tom Sollecito, Dental School  
 Lyle Ungar, SEAS/CIS  
 Jonathan Zimmerman, Graduate School of Education

#### Ex-officio Members:

Steven Kimbrough, Wharton, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect  
 Jennifer Pinto-Martin, Nursing School, Faculty Senate Chair  
 Gino Segre, SAS/Physics, PASEF non-voting member