

University Promotion, Retention and Tenure Committee, 2017-18

Minutes of 13 September 2017

The first meeting of the academic year began at 3:30 p.m. in room 203 of Reynolds Hall, with Debbie Shelton (Nursing and Health Professions) presiding. Present were Brian Church (Education and Behavioral Science), Myleea Hill (Liberal Arts and Communication), Yeonsang Hwang (Agriculture, Engineering and Technology), Suzanne Melescue (Sciences and Mathematics), Phyllis Pobst (Liberal Arts and Communication), and John Robertson (Business). Beth Hood (Agriculture, Engineering and Technology) and John Salvest (Liberal Arts and Communication) were unable to attend.

The committee first discussed whether the Shared Governance Oversight Committee had approved the proposals that UPRTC made in Spring 2017, for amendments to the Faculty Handbook. Debbie Shelton assured us that they had, as shown on the SGOB web page. That amendment specifies that regardless of how the colleges are aligned, UPRTC will continue to have nine members, representing "Agriculture, Business, Communications, Education, Engineering, Fine Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Nursing & Health Professions, and Science & Mathematics."

One small but important change was suggested to the draft of the university's PRT calendar which we had before us: that the last item on page 4 be amended to read, "Provost and VCAAR sends official letters of notification to promotion and tenure applicants the day before the ASU Board of Trustees meet for action." Members pointed out that last May the Board did not consider promotion and tenure recommendations until June, and that the delay in sending letters had caused considerable tension and stress, especially for those awaiting word about tenure. The change will be sent to Jeannie Cossey, who is assisting the committee.

The committee also discussed the third item on the calendar for September. Consulting the Faculty Handbook, we agree that "new faculty member" meant recently-hired persons, not all pre-tenured faculty members.

Debbie Shelton explained the efforts of Tiffany Keb, a lawyer who is working with the university to improve Faculty 180. That program has been used for several years now, but is not yet good enough to replace paper applications and résumés. The College of Business gave it a trial last year and repeat the trial this year, but applicants will still need to provide PRT committees with paper. Shelton also told us that Keb's office would take paper copy from faculty members and enter them in the Faculty 180 system upon request.

Discussion turned to the *Criteria for University Promotion, Retention, and Tenure* document for 2017-2018, which we will need to approve by October 20th. Concerning the phrase "significant professional stature" in point 3 of the *Criteria* from last year, Debbie Shelton had information

about the lists of journals provided by Cabells Scholarly Analytics (www.cabells.com); Cabells distinguishes between legitimate scholarly journals, the whitelist, and predatory journals, the blacklist. In some disciplines, applicants for promotion and tenure have mistakenly published in sham journals, which superficially appear to be respectable but can damage their careers. We were pleased to learn that Dean B. Ellis Library has bought the Cabells lists; Debbie Shelton showed the committee how to use the library web site to consult them.

We agreed that PRT committees, especially at the department and college levels, should be encouraged to check the applications they receive to identify anything published in a blacklisted journal. Shelton said that she had talked to Emily Devereux, director of research development in the Research & Technology Transfer office, and was told that they would not assist with grants that involved publications in predatory journals, nor consider funding for travel to predatory conferences. Suzanne Melescue suggested that college and department PRT documents should include some language warning faculty members away from such traps. We agreed to add the phrase, "as recognized by the department and college," to this paragraph.

The committee discussed the amendments proposed by members of the College of Liberal Arts and Communication, provided in a marked-up Word file. Phyllis Pobst explained the reasoning behind the proposed amendments. Other members proposed further improvements, and the committee asked the secretary for a cleaned-up copy with the new wording, to take to their colleges and departments for further discussion. [That copy was sent to the committee as an email attachment on 15 September.]

The committee then discussed how to handle tensions and rivalry on college-level PRT committees, which can arise when the disciplines represented are very different. Suzanne Melescue said that when there are divided opinions on a committee which lead to a split vote, the letter of the CPRTC chair is even more important than usual; such a letter can explain the committee's vote to the dean, UPRTC and the Provost, and can advocate for the candidate, if appropriate.

The meeting adjourned, having agreed to meet again at 4:00 on October 4th.

Phyllis E. Pobst, committee secretary