

Faculty Personnel Policy and Review Committee

Annual Report

AY 2018-19

As the name of the committee suggests, the Faculty Personnel Policy and Review Committee (Review Committee or RC for short) has two major tasks. The first of these is to consider changes or updates to personnel policies for faculty members. The second is to implement those policies by making recommendations for three-year terms for department chairs and program directors, making recommendations for faculty members outside a department to serve on search committees, reviewing Appendix Bs for new or existing faculty positions, and, of course, reviewing interim, term, tenure, and promotion cases. We interviewed department/program members and made recommendations for 7 department chairs and 5 program directors. We recommended 20 faculty members to serve on 10 department/program faculty searches. We reviewed 14 Appendix Bs. These Appendix Bs provide position specific information about job requirements.

The Review Committee had a challenging yet productive year. The Review Committee struggled, as did several faculty committees, with finding faculty members willing to serve on the committee. We went through much of the entire fall semester with enough members to reach a quorum (at least 6 of 9) but less than a full complement of members. This made it especially difficult to conduct interviews with departments for the purpose of making a recommendation for the next chair. The chair recommendation process involves teams of two members of the committee meeting with each member of the department for about 30 minutes. It is time consuming under the best of circumstances. Having fewer committee members meant each team had to conduct more interviews than normal because there were fewer people to share the work and forced the chair to serve on one of the interview teams, a practice not normally needed. This was a recurring theme throughout the year and was a motivating factor for some of our work. We did eventually reach full committee membership.

This year RC reviewed a total of 22 case files. Several of these files were around 1000 pages and a couple topped 2000. There were 4 cases for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, 4 term reviews (2 for faculty positions and 2 for librarians), 6 interim reviews (for faculty in their third year at DePauw), and 8 cases for promotion to Full Professor. While we can not report on specifics of any of these reviews, we should report on some general themes that impacted our work on personnel policies and will continue to provide policy work for the committee next year. The first of these themes is the size of review files. This has a direct effect on the amount of work the committee must do, which in turn leads to the difficulties we had in finding faculty members to serve on the committee. While the workload has improved (or so I'm told) from what previous iterations of the committee experienced, the amount of work outside of our meeting times (we meet 2 hours every week) is excessive. The quality of the files is generally not improved by the large quantity of information in them. Another theme is that the language used to describe the criteria for tenure and promotion is often imprecise. This almost certainly feeds the file size problem. It also makes file construction more difficult for the candidates and evaluation of files more difficult for the Review Committee.

At the beginning of the academic year, RC identified the need for DePauw to include in its Academic Handbook a Financial Exigencies Policy. In short, such a policy would provide a process for how decisions would be made and the role of the faculty in making decisions about eliminating academic programs for financial reasons. The chair of RC discussed this with the chairs of the Strategic Planning Committee and the Faculty Priorities and Governance Committee. There was agreement that such a Financial Exigencies Policy was needed and that developing this policy should be done jointly by representatives of the faculty, the administration, and the Board of Trustees. It is our understanding that this was conveyed to the Board of Trustees at the meeting on campus in October. We still believe this policy is necessary and await the Board of Trustees initiating discussions to develop this policy.

The Review Committee has long recognized that bias exists in responses to the Student Opinion Surveys and this presents challenges to faculty, particularly women faculty and faculty of color. RC wanted to approach this problem with data. We undertook a statistical study of the numerical data from Student Opinion Surveys. This study

determined there is no evidence of bias against women in the numerical data. There is an insufficient quantity of data to allow for a similar study regarding faculty of color. Since we believed much of the bias issue was related to comments rather than numerical responses we also considered doing an analysis of the written comments. Ultimately, we determined that such an analysis was not likely to be helpful. In our many discussions we weighed the sometimes competing needs to obtain student input about potential problems in the classroom, provide student voice in their education, and prevent the negative effect of biased comments on faculty members who are often in vulnerable positions. We believe the best approach may be to provide a more robust numerical instrument for students to provide feedback, provide a parallel method for students to report problems in the classroom, and encourage students to provide signed written comments to the faculty member's file in accordance with our open file policy. Unfortunately, we must leave it to next year's committee to implement changes to the Student Opinion Survey.

The Review Committee observed that the Academic Handbook did not contain a detailed job description for faculty members. A document called Detailed Job Description exists which is shared with all faculty members at the time of their initial hiring. While it has been available upon request from the Dean of the Faculty, it was not available on the DePauw website. The committee updated the handbook to point to this Detailed Job Description. We note that the new handbook language and the Detailed Job Description are not yet available on the DePauw website. The addition to the handbook is below.

The responsibilities of a full-time faculty member are many and varied within the inter-related categories of teaching, research, and service. These responsibilities are shared by all faculty members as defined in the Detailed Job Description that is provided at the time of initial hiring. Others are defined in Appendix B to the Detailed Job Description, which is specific for each faculty member. The Detailed Job Description may be updated by the administration in collaboration and consultation with the Faculty Personnel Policy and Review Committee. The Appendix B may be changed only by mutual agreement of the faculty member and the University.

As mentioned above, the workload of the Review Committee, in particular the effect of review file size, was a great concern. To address this, RC revised the guidelines that we provide to both the review candidates and the Personnel Committees for preparation of the review file. In addition to providing specific instructions on the contents of the file, we instituted limits on the size of each portion of the file contributed by the candidate. This work brings back the concept of limits that existed before files became electronic and now defines limits in a context appropriate to electronic submission. The reestablishment of limits should significantly reduce the size of files. We believe it is also likely to improve the focus and overall quality of materials submitted by candidates. Additionally, we created guidelines for preparing Annual Reports. The Annual Reports are an important aspect of the review process as well as an opportunity for reflection and growth. There were no clear guidelines for how to do this and, as with the review file, the length of annual reports had become in many cases too long. Finally, RC also reviewed the Joan Crimson report. This is an example document to illustrate to Personnel Committees how to prepare the PC's report evaluating a candidate's review file. The document was changed to the J Crimson report and made gender neutral. Additionally, we edited the document to reflect the changes we made to guidelines for constructing the review file.

For some time the VPAA and the Review Committee have been aware of significant inequities in service contributions from DePauw faculty. This issue was made clear in the campus climate survey and through numerous communications, formally and informally, to the VPAA. The inequity is most pronounced in the relative service contribution of women faculty and faculty of color - service that is not always easily quantifiable. RC, via reports from the VPAA, was aware that some faculty members have not contributed their fair share to the good of the university. After a study and analysis as well as an open meeting to share findings and seek input from the faculty, the RC introduced a motion at the April faculty meeting that was subsequently amended and approved at the May faculty meeting. This motion changed the Academic Handbook section describing the Service portion of the criteria for tenure and promotion. While it is in the criteria for tenure and promotion, these service requirements should be

understood as defining the service portion of faculty work for all full-time, tenure-line faculty members including those who have been fully promoted. The Review Committee will continue to work next year on how to track service activities for all faculty members.

Review Committee discussions of various cases and general issues related to our work of reviewing cases have made clear that an update and clarification of the criteria for tenure and promotion is needed. Indeed, we have already begun this work with changes to the Service criteria. Next year's committee will need to continue the work of more clearly defining what it means to be a faculty member at DePauw and the distinctions between the ranks of Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor. Additionally, as mentioned above, the committee will need to implement changes to the Student Opinion Survey, work with the Board of Trustees and DePauw administration on a mutually agreeable Financial Exigencies policy, and implement a process for tracking faculty service contributions.