

Annual Report

Faculty Standards Committee (FSC) of the University Senate

April 2024

Committee charge: This committee shall continuously review University policies and practices relating to tenure, academic freedom, workloads, rank and promotion, remuneration, retirement, and other matters affecting the faculty and shall propose any desirable expression of Senate opinion on these matters, including proposals to the Trustees for modifications in their rules and regulations on these matters.

The FSC membership for academic year 2023-2024 included:

- *Dan Burkey, Chair, Engineering, Associate Dean
- *Bede Agocha, CLAS, Africana Studies Institute
- *Mary Ann Amalaradjou, CAHNR, Animal Science
- *Valarie Artigas, School of Nursing
- *Scott Campbell, CLAS, English
- **Kelly Herd, Business, Marketing – sabbatical Spring 2024*
- *Lisa Holle, Pharmacy Practice
- *Elizabeth Jockusch, CLAS, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology
- *Elaine Lee, CAHNR, Kinesiology
- *Vicki Magley, CLAS, Psychological Sciences
- *Betsy McCoach, Neag, Educational Psychology
- *George McManus, Marine Sciences, Avery Point – *retired February 2024*
- Gladis Kersaint, Office of the Provost (ex-officio member)
- Jada Lexie, Undergraduate Student
- John Richardson, Fine Arts, Art & Art History
- Martina Rosenberg, CETL, Faculty Development

- **Senate Member 2023/2024*

Summary

The FSC met eight times during the academic year. Detailed minutes from all meetings are available on the Senate website. In the 2023-2024 academic year, the committee discussed the following items:

SET Items, SET+ Task Force Follow-up, and Associated Senate Motions:

There was general agreement that changing the name from Student Evaluation of Teaching to Student Experience of Teaching was reasonable and that it reflected and emphasized the subjective nature of the instrument. Additional discussion by the group revolved around the additional recommendations included in the report and how best to disseminate and implement some of the suggestions. There was discussion that there are still elements of the SET+ evaluation that potentially resemble post-tenure review, and it was suggested that there may be pushback on this from both faculty and AAUP, despite the need for evaluation beyond the SET being an AAUP contract requirement.

There was also discussion around where responsibility lies for ensuring the required review happens. Part of the challenge so far has been perceived to be a lack of clear responsibility for carrying out the activities – is it the department, the individual, the school or college? It was reemphasized that while CETL can assist in training and best practices for evaluating teaching, it cannot be the organizational unit responsible for conducting these evaluations. It was suggested that a departmental committee, similar to the undergraduate committee, graduate committee, or PTR committee, could be developed to oversee this assessment of teaching effectiveness and also credit those participating for the labor involved.

From this discussion, the committee drafted three motions for presentation to the Senate based on the task force recommendations: 1.) Changing the language around Student Evaluation of Teaching broadly to Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness (ATE), to reflect a more holistic approach to teaching assessment that did not foreground the SET instrument in particular. 2.) Changing the name for the end of semester survey, SET, from Student Evaluation of Teaching to Student *Experience* of Teaching, reinforcing the subjective nature of the survey and questions, and 3.) Having the Senate affirm the [recommendations](#), including guidelines for the interpretation of teaching assessment data compiled by the task force, which takes into consideration the latest literature and best practices on assessment of teaching. These motions were all passed by a significant margin at the March 4th, 2024 Senate Meeting.

In the spring term, a representative from the student government inquired about the timing of SETs for students. Martina Rosenberg shared that SET deadlines are tied to grade release – opening the surveys earlier is no problem, but doing SETs after grades are made apparent to students is not a fair option. As of now, SETs close right before finals begin because grades could be released as early as the first day of finals, depending on the final examination structure of the class. Concerns were raised regarding the low participation of students in the SETs and so a few extra days may be helpful. It was also added that reading days must be protected. Discussion ensued on opening up the timeframe to start earlier with some positive support for this idea (no earlier than the 2nd to last week of the semester). It was recommended that Faculty Standards consult with BPiR to gauge their feedback. FSC Chair Dan Burkey reached out to BPiR for their feedback and future action.

Faculty Workload Revision Policy:

VPAA Kersaint provided a brief summary of the history of the issue of faculty workload adjustments based on major life events, as well as an overview of the internal discussion that had taken place to this point, involving the Provost's Office, Counsel's Office, Human Resources, and AAUP.

After continued discussion throughout the fall term, UConn Human Resources/Labor Relations and AAUP agreed on finalized language. The policy was brought to the UConn Senior Policy Council meeting in December for review/approval and implementation was effective in January 2024. Any future changes to policy would be facilitated by Human Resources.

The finalized policy is available here: [Policy and Procedures for Modified Duties for Faculty Life Events](#)

Societal Engagement/Social Impact in the PTR Process:

Rosa Raudales was invited to present an overview of the role of the Office of Outreach & Engagement and how it may interact with the work of this committee. She added that the Office of Outreach & Engagement has put together a Community Engagement incorporation into Promotion, Tenure and Reappointment Taskforce, which is focused on data gathering and will be putting together a draft report which will be completed at the end of the Spring 2024 semester. Rosa Raudales opened the floor to questions and discussed ensued, particularly on the role of the Taskforce related to the Faculty Standards Committee. Jada Lexie shared that she would be interested in joining the Taskforce as a representative of USG. It was determined that the work of this Taskforce would be reported back to the Faculty Standards Committee this semester, once any updates are available to share. Rosa Raudales was scheduled to attend the April 29th meeting of the Faculty Standards Committee for a final report of the semester.

Syllabus Repository:

Josh Schulman presented on the importance of students having access to a course syllabus before enrolling in that class to make informed decisions. He added that the repository exists but is underutilized and students want more awareness and more use of this existing resource. Discussion ensued and concerns were raised about academic freedom as well as accuracy of syllabi uploaded (in case of late hiring of adjunct professors, etc). An idea was presented that the most recent syllabus (not the current one) may be helpful in some instances, with a disclaimer provided about accuracy (i.e. it's more of an example). VPAA Kersaint shared that she believes the current plan is for CourseLeaf to include course learning objectives in the online course catalog once fully launched, which may fulfill some of the need for more information highlighted by students. The group also discussed the timeline for when syllabi could be available to students; Senate Bylaws require Syllabi and a Course Schedule to be provided to students by the first day of classes. An idea was raised for faculty to be asked to upload them by the first day of class when they are contacting their enrolled students. A question was raised whether the syllabus repository includes a functionality for faculty to upload/replace an old file. This functionality was confirmed to be available. Josh Schulman proposed that another approach may be changing the University Senate bylaws to require professors to provide syllabi up to one week before the start of term (rather than day 1) to help students with decision-making. The group agreed that a better communication strategy on this issue would be beneficial and would encourage participation in the repository. A discussion with Deans, Associate Deans and Department Heads may also be helpful in engaging faculty to participate, and FSC Chair Burkey presented briefly on this at the Associate Dean/Department Head meeting in March. It was noted that 100% compliance for this repository is unlikely without an incentive or a penalty, neither of which is currently being applied.

Emeritus Faculty Policy:

As a follow up to last year's work on policies related to emeritus and/or retired faculty, the Provost's Office and the Emeritus Faculty Committee took recommendations from the FSC subcommittee and finalized recommendations and updated guidelines for faculty continuing to engage with the university post-retirement.

The finalized policy is available here: [Guidelines for Retired Faculty in Relation to Ongoing Research, Teaching, and Service](#)

CIRE Faculty Professional Development Leaves:

A working group was formed to focus on this issue and the resulting report from Spring 2023 was shared amongst all CIRE faculty and the Provost's Office. VPAA Kersaint has stated that the Provost's Office is looking at the recommendations, however, because some of recommendations are also under the purview of AAUP, this will take time to move forward.

Annual PTR Forum:

Due to popularity, the PTR and PR forums have been updated to annual events. The Tenure-Track Promotion, Tenure & Reappointment Forum was held on Friday, April 12th, 2024, from 9-11 am via WebEx. The AAUP leadership was invited to provide introduction and recommendations. The Clinical, In-Residence, Extension (CIRE) Promotion & Reappointment Forum was held on Friday, April 12th, 2024, from 1-2:30 pm also via WebEx. The AAUP leadership was again invited to provide introduction and recommendations. Follow-up sessions with individual schools and colleges for specific questions were also scheduled.