

# Annual Report to the University Senate

## Academic Year 2025-2026

### Senate Faculty Standards Committee

**Committee Charge:** This committee shall continuously review University policies and practices relating to tenure, academic freedom, equitable distribution of work, rank and promotion, remuneration, retirement, and other matters affecting the faculty.

2025/2026 Senate Faculty Standards Committee Members:

- **\*Anastasios Tzingounis, Chair, CLAS**
- \*Andrew Bush, CLAS
- \*Scott Campbell, CLAS
- \*Joseph Crivello, CLAS
- \*Kimberly Cuevas, CLAS (Waterbury)
- \*Kelly Dennis, SFA
- \*Kelly Herd, School of Business
- \*Elizabeth Jockusch, CLAS
- \*Priya Shah, CLAS (Hartford)
- Amy Gorin, Senior Vice Provost (Ex-Officio)
- Lilla Korniss, Undergraduate Student
- John Richardson, Fine Arts
- Martina Rosenberg, CETL, Faculty Development
- Abdullah All Shakil, Graduate Student
- Tanya Sinha, Undergraduate Student

\*Senate Member 2025/2026

#### Summary:

The FSC met eight times during the Fall of 2025 and Spring of 2026. Detailed minutes from all meetings as well as attachments of relevant documents are available on the Senate website. In the academic year 2025-26 the FSC discussed the role of undergraduate teaching assistants in pedagogical instruction, examined whether the current SET instrument aligns with the university's diverse teaching modalities, discussed current and upcoming mentoring resources for faculty, evaluated the growing demand for CSD accommodations, discussed the re-establishment of a testing center to better support large courses, engaged in conversations on PTR expectations for tenure track and CIRE faculty, and revisited the rights and privileges of emeritus faculty.

## Major Topics:

### Undergraduate Teaching Assistants (UTAs)

During the Fall 2025 semester, the Faculty Standards Committee met with multiple groups that oversee the use of undergraduate students in teaching and pedagogical instruction (Dan Burgkey, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs, College of Engineering; David Ouimette, Executive Director, Institute for Student Success; Leo Lachut, Director of Academic Support; and Kristen Govoni, Associate Dean of Academic Programs, CAHNR). The purpose of these meetings was to provide the FSC with an overview of current practices involving undergraduate students in instructional support roles across the University. Based on these discussions, the committee suggested that the Senate Executive Committee work with the Provost's office to develop policies regarding instruction by undergraduate students. In particular, the FSC recommended:

- Establishment of an umbrella title for undergraduate students serving as teaching or instructional assistants to distinguish them from graduate teaching assistants.
- Development of institution-level guidance that clearly defines UTAs' permissible roles and responsibilities, with explicit guidance related to grading and access to gradebooks.
- Establishment of baseline training requirements applicable across programs, with particular emphasis on FERPA compliance.
- Acknowledgement and documentation of faculty workload associated with the supervision of UTAs. ~~To be~~
- Continued support of ~~ing~~ UTA programs, while ensuring the availability of graduate assistant positions.

### Student Experience of Teaching (SET) Instrument Review

The FSC was asked by the Senate Executive Committee to continue to review the SET instrument and form a subcommittee based on the following charge:

We would like the University Senate Executive Committee to create a task force to review the current SET instrument and suggest potential modifications revisions, keeping in mind the many different types of classes and instructional formats (e.g.- online classes, hybrid classes, service classes, Lab classes, etc.) that use the instrument. We ask that the task force include members with expertise in measurement/instrument design and education, as well as representation from CETL. The task force would report back to the Faculty

Standards Committee / University Senate by the end of the 2025-2026 academic year.

A Subcommittee consisting of FSC members Martina Rosenberg (CETL), Scott Campell (CLAS), Anastasios Tzingounis (CLAS), and an external member, Matthew Lamoureux (SOC), evaluated the SET effectiveness across the different instructional modalities currently used at UConn. The subcommittee's review was limited in scope focusing on modality-related concerns. The group met eight times from October 2025 to April 2026. The subcommittee for the AY25-26 focused on the following topics:

- Evaluate the extent to which SET questions are modality neutral.
- Identify questions that may not be universally applicable, or that may be redundant.
- Consider targeted revisions to improve clarity and applicability.

Based on its assessment the subcommittee recommends the FSC and Senate Executive Committee:

(i) To revise SET question wording to improve modality neutrality, including wording for other instructional formats.

For Question 10.2 of the current SET:

Revise from "The instructor was well prepared for class" to "The instructor planned and delivered the course thoughtfully."

For Question 10.10 of the current SET:

Current language: "The instructor used class time effectively."

We suggest omitting this question, as it does not apply to asynchronous formats and is adequately assessed via Q12.6, that reads: "The pace of the course seemed appropriate."

For Question 10.13 of the current SET:

Current Q10.13 language: "The instructor's teaching methods promoted student learning." We suggest revising to "The instructor actively encouraged student learning."

(ii) To provide clear guidance regarding the use of "Not Applicable" responses. The committee recommends including guidance encouraging respondents to select "Not Applicable" when an item does not pertain to the course format. While "Not Applicable" (or "N/A") is already provided as a possible answer, the committee argues that students should be reminded that some course modalities (or other variables) may mean that the question does not apply to them and that, in these cases, "Not Applicable" is the appropriate response.

(iii) To consider organizing items to distinguish between experience of teaching and of the course.

(iv) To review and revise the Senate Recommendations for Interpreting Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) Results to reflect the name change (should be Student Experience of Teaching) and to address the omission of modality as a factor in interpreting SET responses.

<https://bpir.media.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3452/2022/08/Interpreting-SET-Results-Updated-Senate-Recommendations-13-April-2022-1.pdf>

The committee anticipates that this work will inform future revisions to the SET instrument and contribute to a more equitable and effective evaluation process.

### Faculty Mentoring and Professional Development

In recent years, several initiatives across the University have taken place to strengthen faculty mentoring. The FSC met with program leaders who lead these efforts. There was a strong consensus that mentoring has an important role in supporting faculty success. Below is a summary of the discussions:

- Gwen Tarbox (Director, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) summarized efforts on mid-career faculty development and the steps that CETL has taken to begin offering more structured support, including workshops for mid-career faculty.
- Manuela Wagner (Associate Dean for Humanities and Faculty Inclusion and Success, CLAS) and Laurel White (Director of Administrative Projects, CLAS) described their efforts on faculty mentoring in CLAS, including initiatives on individualized mentoring, the development of group mentoring centered around career stages, and a mentoring program for CLAS Heads.
- Leslie Shor (Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of The Graduate School) shared that faculty seeking appointment to the graduate faculty must complete an 8-hour mentoring program; a program previously developed by the Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER). This program has also been expanded as a remedial requirement in cases where a faculty member is involved in a bullying complaint. Consequently, the FSC discussed the importance of supporting graduate student success, particularly considering the increased mental health challenges graduate students currently face. The FSC supports continued development of mentoring programs and resources to ensure positive student outcomes and timely degree completion.

## Promotion, Tenure, and Review (PTR)

The FSC engaged in discussions regarding promotion, tenure, and reappointment. A key takeaway was the importance of departments and units to clearly articulate PTR expectations in their departmental bylaws. Currently, not all departments provide explicit and detailed guidance for promotions for CIRE faculty.

## Academic Accommodations and Testing Center

The FSC discussed the growing demand for CSD accommodations and its effect on faculty workload. Christine Wenzel (Executive Director, Center for Students with Disabilities) shared data showing large growth in both the number of students receiving accommodations and exam proctoring demands. Currently, CSD is working with 7,000 graduate and undergraduate students, with DSP caseloads ranging from 700 to 800 students. The CSD has proctored nearly 10,000 exams over the last academic year. The committee discussed the challenges associated with this growth, including coordination between faculty and CSD. One potential solution was the development of a centralized testing center to support both faculty and students. Joe Crivello (FSC member) plans to propose the re-establishment of a testing center for large courses. Such a center would help address several challenges faculty face with exam administration and help ensure that all students follow the code of conduct.

## Emeritus Faculty Support

The FSC was contacted by Barry Wells (Associate Dean for Physical Sciences and Graduate Affairs, CLAS) with questions regarding the rights and privileges of Emeritus faculty. The FSC discussed whether current practices align with Emeritus faculty expectations. The FSC also noted that some policies may hinder the ability of Emeritus faculty to continue serving UConn effortlessly. Dr. Wells identified several issues with current policy including, but not limited to:

- A timing gap between the retirement date and the Board of Trustees' approval of Emeritus status. Such a gap can cause Emeritus faculty to lose access to their email accounts and OneDrive data. Data lost during this time cannot be recovered after access is restored.
- Limited access to university software licenses.
- Inability of Emeritus faculty serving as PIs on external grants to get a Pro Card or Travel Card.

The FSC has brought these issues to the Provost's office.

## Annual PTR Forum

The Tenure-Track Promotion, Tenure & Reappointment Forum was held on Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026, from 9-11am via WebEx. The AAUP leadership team was invited to provide introductions and recommendations. The Clinical, In-Residence, Extension (CIRE) Promotion & Reappointment Forum was held on Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026, from 1-2:30pm via WebEx. The AAUP leadership team was again invited to provide introductions and recommendations. Follow-up sessions with individual schools and colleges for specific questions were also scheduled.

## Conclusion:

In summary, the Faculty Standards Committee had a productive 2025–2026 academic year, discussing a range of issues consistent with its charge. The FSC remains committed to advancing its mission and will continue to bring forward recommendations and suggestions to the Senate Executive Committee and University Senate.