Minutes

The Faculty Senate met on May 16ᵗʰ 2023, in the Sunset Meeting Room of the College Union (Klamath Falls campus) and via Zoom for Portland-Metro faculty and others attending remotely.

Attendance/Quorum

President Terri Torres called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. All Senators or alternates were in attendance except for Yanqing Gao and Chitra Venugopal.

Discussion of The Non-Tenure Track Faculty Promotion Policy Draft

Terri Torres began by explaining that this special meeting was called specifically to discuss and vote on the final draft of OIT-20-040 as written and revised by the Rank, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) committee throughout this academic year. Terri also explained that she received some new changes to the policy draft as of 4:30pm that need to be considered, at least, before the Senate votes. She turned the meeting over to the co-chairs of RPT for further explanation and discussion.

For your convenience, you can find the policy draft that was used as the basis for this meeting in the packet, **on pages 74-86**. I will record the remainder of the Senate-wide discussion below in the usual minutes format.

- Dr. Mott spoke initially to apologize for the new changes and to explain that none of those new changes (as of 4:30pm) affect the promotion tracks for tenure track *or* non-tenure track faculty, but instead only serve to clarify the steps in the promotion processes.
  - Terri also spoke to clarify that these changes are coming up now (instead of at the President's Council step of approval) because of her request.
- Matt Schnackenberg spoke to clarify the purpose of the new changes even further, explaining that the new changes to the document (as of 4:30pm) are to better adjust the policy to the present, where we use digital e-portfolios for promotion instead of physical binders. He seconded Dr. Mott's point that these new changes are *not* substantively changing how the policy works in any way.
- Matt then explained the major changes that the policy proposes. He pointed out in particular the last three bullets under the "Substantive" heading in the list of changes RPT had provided. You can find this list on **page 87** of the packet, for your convenience.
  - In particular, Matt drew Senators' attention to the footnote mentioned in the first of those three bullets: this footnote would allow current non-tenure track faculty who already have a title such as Assistant or Associate Professor to retain those titles as honorifics under this policy (which would refer to them otherwise as a certain tier of "Instructor.").
    - Ken Usher pointed out a potential problem with the "current rank" verbiage in this footnote; essentially, this might penalize any faculty who are newly promoted when this policy goes into effect because even if they've worked at Oregon Tech for many years, they will technically have zero years in rank for the purposes of this footnote.
      - Matt responded that he and Beverly have already discussed this possibility, and thought that the few faculty this would apply to would have to be looked at on a case-by-case basis.
        - Ken and Matt briefly discussed that it wouldn't be possible (or at least timely) to define every single possible provisional case for the faculty this footnote is meant to acknowledge.

- Beverly McCreary spoke to clarify that these faculty will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, and the footnote is meant to address these edge cases only generally, not specifically.
  - Ken suggested that we either strike out the "time in current rank" phrase or replace it with "time in service." Beverly suggested in response that both phrases are included in the footnote to cover all possible cases.
    - At this moment, the Senate realized that we hadn't yet made a motion regarding OIT-20-040. Riley Richards made a motion to vote to approve the policy draft, and Vanessa Bennett seconded.
      - From there, Ken proposed that the footnote language be changed to include the phrase "time in service."
  - Matt moved on to explain the second of the three bullets, which was a further revision to the definitions of "Tenure Track Faculty" and "Non-Tenure Track Faculty" on page two of the policy draft.
    - There were no questions or concerns regarding this change.
  - He also explained that there has been a recent note added on page twelve of the policy draft to make certain this portion of the policy gets reviewed by HR and Legal and that any changes necessary to bring it into alignment legally with the CBA get made at that point.
    - To clarify, Ken asked to make sure if everyone was okay with this small, necessary change being made *after* the vote happens tonight, since it cannot happen before.
      - There were no questions or concerns regarding this change.
- Ken spoke to say that most of the other potential issues with the policy are things the Senate has discussed before. In short: if you have any other issues with the policy you want to bring up before we vote, now is the time to do it.
  - Terri asked if the policy has been altered to improve the timeline of approval to give the Provost more time, as was requested previously.
    - Ken responded that this was one of the things that the changes made this afternoon addressed.
      - Terri requested that we go through each of these changes to everyone is aware of what they are before the vote.
        - She asked if there were other questions or concerns before we discuss those new changes. There were none.
- Ken volunteered to go through the new changes for the full Senate's review. I volunteered to send a copy of this version out to the full Senate via email before we began the discussion. This version is the one that has already been referenced above, and can be found on **pages 74-87** of your packet. Ken and Matt began this review by reiterating that these new changes were made largely to bring the policy draft more in line with the reality of our digital portfolio process by changing some leftover verbiage from the days of paper portfolios.
  - Ken began by drawing the Senate's attention to a brief language addition on page one of the policy draft (this is the red text on page one). This was meant as a brief clarification and nothing more. There were no questions or concerns from the Senate about this addition.
  - Ken then asked us to consider the added definition of "E-Portfolio" on page three of the policy draft. He explained that the E-Portfolio, as defined in this paragraph, is a temporary document that is submitted by a faculty member as part of the promotion process. Beverly spoke to correct Ken, explaining instead that the E-Portfolios that faculty submit are kept as part of the faculty member's permanent record by the Provost's Office.

- Ken expressed some concern about the fact that these E-Portfolio documents are being permanently saved by the Provost's Office without a corresponding revision to the Faculty Records Policy (which hasn't been revised since 2004).
  - Dr. Mott asked if portfolios were not kept permanently in the past, and Ken explained that the only documents that were kept permanently in the past were the recommendation letters from the departments and Deans, and the decisions letters by the Provost, but the portfolios themselves were *not* kept permanently (mostly because they were physical items, and space is finite, or at least space on the Klamath Falls campus is finite).
    - Ken asked if we have the right to view our past E-Portfolios via the Provost's Office. Dibyajyoti Deb asked if the E-Portfolios will now be collected via DocuSign.
      - Beverly explained that Paul Titus is the one in charge of the E-Portfolio submission and retention. As she understands it, each faculty member builds their E-Portfolio individually – no one else can add materials to it – and then the E-Portfolio is passed on confidentially to the members of the appropriate committees and individuals for promotion review. Ultimately, the E-Portfolio along with the recommendation and decision documents Ken mentioned earlier (from the departments and the Provost), all get put into the faculty member's permanent evaluative file in the Provost's Office.
        - Ken expressed understanding of this process, but reiterated that it was new information to him that the E-Portfolio themselves were made part of the faculty's file.
          - Matt explained that in the past the Provost's Office *didn't* keep the physical copies of our portfolios, so this is a big change for faculty who weren't aware of it already.
            - Beverly explained that this is a legal matter; the Provost's Office is obligated to hold on to the E-Portfolios indefinitely now. There was a longer conversation about this, but ultimately this discussion was immaterial as the law dictates that the Provost's Office has to retain faculty portfolios. Ultimately, Ken suggested that he was fine with this "change" as long as faculty are made aware of it and have the ability to view their previous promotion materials upon request. There were no further concerns or questions on this point.
  - Deb expressed confusion over the language in the definition on page three of the policy: does "E-Portfolio" here refer to *only* the portfolio that faculty create and submit, or to that portfolio *as well as* the recommendation and decision documents that get collected with it at the end of the process? He suggested changing the wording to make a distinction between these two things.

- There was some further conversation before Kamal Gandhi suggested that we could clarify this difference by calling the *full* file that gets preserved in the Provost's Office the "E-Portfolio" and the smaller document that the faculty generates simply "portfolio."
    - This change was accepted as clarifying the issue that Deb brought up.
  - Ken also suggested that we add a statement to the current "E-Portfolio" definition to make clear to faculty that this file *is* kept permanently in the Provost's Office and is available for their viewing upon request.
    - I spoke in support of this idea, arguing that this is likely to be new news to other faculty as well and so being as clear as possible about it would be helpful.
  - Ken then moved on to a slight change at the bottom of page eight of the policy draft (written in purple in the attached copy). This addition was meant to clarify the specific flow of documentation throughout the promotion process. He pointed out three more similar changes on page nine of the policy draft. There are a number of other, nearly identical changes throughout the remainder of the document. Nobody had concerns about any of these, and Kamal suggested that we simply blanket-approve these changes rather than going through each one individually. There were no objections to this.
  - Ken brought up one other legitimate concern he had about the additions: an added line at the top of page eleven of the policy draft (written in green in the attached copy) that asks for the department chairs to inform the Provost's Office of the eligibility for promotion of any of the department's faculty by the end of the second week of fall term.
    - Beverly clarified that this line has been added to take care of any faculty who become eligible for promotion suddenly as a result of getting their Master's degree (in the case of NTT faculty): as she put it, the Provost's Office is sometimes unaware that this has happened, which is why it's helpful to have the department chair inform them.
    - Dr. Mott also clarified that these additions reflect issues that Paul has had in the past, in hopes of smoothing out those difficulties in the future.
      - It was proposed that the line in question be changed to "The Department Chair will confirm the faculty member's eligibility with the Provost's Office" to reflect this discussion.
        - Kamal pointed out that this change would be a bit redundant: this paragraph says that the Provost's Office informs the departments of who is eligible for promotion; then, the departments inform the *Provost's Office* of who is eligible for promotion.
          - Ken then suggested that the wording be changed to "The Department Chair shall also confirm eligibility with the Provost's Office." There were no objections to this adjustment.
  - Ken next pointed out two changes on page twelve of the policy draft. These are highlighted in yellow in the attached copy and are timeline changes. Nobody had any questions or concerns about these two changes.
  - The few other changes were already addressed by the clarification in the definition of "E-Portfolio," so Ken skipped over those.
- Terri asked if there were any final questions.
  - Sean Sloan asked if it was possible for PAC to ask for clarifications from a promotion candidate.
    - Randall Paul responded that historically this has not been something candidates have been allowed.
    - Ken pointed out that committees can ask for more information *from* a candidate, but it doesn't work the other way around.

- With there being no other comments or questions, the Senate moved on to the vote to pass the revisions to OIT-20-040.
    - o The vote passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Terri adjourned the meeting at 6:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Bunting, Secretary