Committee on Post-Tenure Review Policy
May 23, 2013

Recommendations for Transitioning to the Post-Tenure Review Policy

As part of the Provost’s charge, the committee was asked to “[d]evelop a post-tenure review schedule for current faculty members at the associate and full professor ranks that would be phased in over a seven year period beginning in the 2014-2015 academic year.” In light of the Board of Regents’ deadline for implementing the policy, and the difficulties that implementation will present, the committee understood this charge as requiring it to address more broadly the problem of how to handle the transition phase in the new policy. That problem includes (1) deliberations and discussions during the coming academic year; (2) facilitating the adoption of unit-level criteria and procedures; and (3) scheduling review during the phase-in period. This document contains the committee’s recommendations on these issues.

1. Deliberations and Discussions: Initial discussion of the post-tenure review policy is underway. The provost’s office, the faculty senate, the deans, and other administrators have received the proposal, and the provost met with faculty senate to discuss it. The provost’s office has posted the policy on a website equipped to receive comments with links to the committee’s full report. An e-mail has been sent to the faculty notifying them of the policy proposal, referring them to the website, and inviting participation in the discussions this fall. This notice and comment process is a part of the implementation of the policy and should be conducted in a manner that fosters engagement by faculty and responds to legitimate concerns and constructive suggestions. The committee recommends the following steps be taken in relation to the faculty-wide discussion:

- The website should be developed as much as possible to provide information and facilitate comments. This could include adding links to provisions of the policy that takes you to the committee’s explanations. As comments come in, it may be useful to have a frequently asked questions page. It should be possible to submit comments anonymously, but the committee does not believe that comments received should be open to public view.

- During the comment period the committee anticipates a series of open meetings for discussion, which should also include visits to governance and administrators of the college and schools to solicit feedback, answer questions, and discuss unit-level criteria and procedures (see below).

- The committee believes that the most efficient and effective way to address the concerns and suggestions expressed during the faculty-wide discussions outlined above would be for the committee to review the comments and discussions and revise the proposed policy, thereby honoring the input received from faculty, while still presenting a complete policy to the central administration and governance. In view of the tight timeline involved and the need to process the information and feedback received during the process, the committee recommends that the period for comment and discussion be shortened to end on October 1, 2013 (rather than November 1).
2. **Adoption of Unit-Level Criteria and Procedures:** Experience has shown that the development and adoption of unit level policies may take time. Although units can and should draw on existing statements of expectations, such as faculty evaluation policies and promotion and tenure criteria, the post-tenure review criteria should be designed in accordance with the purposes of post-tenure review as a summative assessment of tenured faculty. Similarly, while post-tenure review procedures can be modeled to some extent on procedures for promotion and tenure or annual evaluations, neither set of procedures is wholly appropriate for post-tenure review. A reasonable deadline for units to adopt criteria and procedures will depend on when the final policy is approved. The committee believes that it will take some time for units to adopt policies, and that there may be significant delays in some units. To minimize these problems, the committee recommends the following steps be taken:

- Unit-level discussion of criteria and procedures should begin as soon as possible and should not await the final adoption of the policy. Starting the discussion sooner would have the additional benefit of encouraging focused discussion of post tenure review within units, promoting a more informed deliberative process.

- The committee recommends the creation of guidance documents to assist units in the development of their criteria and procedures for post-tenure review. The documents could be prepared by the Provost’s office, in consultation with the Deans and the committee, and might include:
  
  - General guidance on the nature of the post tenure review process, with particular attention to how it differs from existing review processes.
  
  - One or more templates that units have the option to use. These templates could include the basic elements that must be in all unit level criteria and procedures and provide a consistent structure, while leaving space for each unit to articulate its own criteria and specify or add unit-specific procedures.

- In the college and schools with multiple departments, prompt adoption of college/school criteria and procedures might resolve many issues and simplify the task of individual units further. (For example, the college and the schools might adopt criteria and procedures that individual departments or programs may simply accept as their own or add to as appropriate to the practices of the unit.)

- The committee also recommends the adoption of some default criteria and procedures for use in the event that a unit has not approved any criteria or procedures before reviews are to begin in the 2014-2015. One possibility would be to specify that (1) units without approved criteria should base their evaluations on the criteria currently in place for promotion to full professor; and (2) a set of default procedures (similar to the template described above) will apply until the unit approves its own set of procedures. (Alternatively, if the college or school has adopted criteria and procedures, they might serve as the default criteria and procedures for units within the college or school.)
3. **Schedule for Individual Reviews**: Post-tenure review applies to tenured faculty, which may be divided into three groups for purposes of phasing in review. The first two groups can be put to one side under the terms of the policy. Faculty members with less than seven years since consideration for tenure or promotion, or from the award of a distinguished professorship, can be reviewed in accordance with the ordinary seven-year period for review. Faculty members in phased retirement or with an approved retirement date would be excluded from review under the policy. The critical group for purposes of phasing in the policy is the third group: faculty members with more than seven years since consideration for promotion or tenure or the award of a distinguished professorship.

This group represents a substantial backlog of faculty members who must be reviewed, although the total number involved appears to be less than originally anticipated. The committee considered a number of possible approaches, but ultimately concluded that a flexible approach is necessary because the circumstances will vary greatly across units. For many units, the number of faculty involved will be small and it will be simplest to process all eligible faculty right away. For other units, the numbers may be much higher and the phase in will be more difficult. The committee considered specifying the schedule, but ultimately decided that the best solution is to leave the schedule to the chairs and deans, with some guiding principles. Thus, the committee recommends that:

- Scheduling of faculty members with more than seven years since their last consideration for tenure or promotion or from the award of a distinguished professorship should be determined by department chairs, program directors, and/or deans, with priority given to those faculty members who would most benefit from review.

- In making this determination, additional factors to consider include:
  - The preferences of the faculty member concerning the timing of review;
  - Balancing the impact of the phase-in of review; and
  - The needs of the department, program, and college or school.