

Report of the Senate Committee on Faculty and the Academic Mission (SCOF)

General Committee Charge

The Committee oversees and advises the Executive Committee on matters relating to the University's policies and procedures concerning the academic mission, including the structure of the academic staff, the tenure system, faculty appointments and promotions, faculty research and faculty governance. In general, the Committee deals with the matters covered by the following sections of the University's *Handbook for Faculty and Academic Administrators*: I.E.-F., H.2. and II.A.-D.

2015-2016 Specific Charges

1. To consider any matters affecting faculty size, appointments and tracks brought to the Committee by individual schools.

The Committee received proposals for four faculty track changes from the School of Arts & Sciences Dean, Steven Fluharty, which were approved by the Provost. The principles behind these track change proposals were not to diminish the role of the Standing Faculty but to meet curricular obligations to students. Each of these proposals was discussed separately. SCOF invited several representatives to report to the Committee on these matters. Dean Fluharty also briefed the Committee and answered questions about each of the proposals.

The proposals were:

A. *To create in the SAS Associated Faculty a "Practice Professor" track, which already exists in other schools.*

The Committee discussed the need for teachers who are distinguished in their fields and have unique, real-life skills. A Practice Professor track within SAS would be of benefit, similar to the tracks already in place in the Schools of Design, Engineering, Nursing and Wharton. The Committee voted unanimously to approve it.

B. *To create the new positions "Lecturer in Critical Writing" and "Senior Lecturer in Critical Writing" in the Academic Support Staff.*

All undergraduate students are required to take a Critical Writing course. These courses are taught by non-Standing Faculty. The newly created track intends to find faculty members who are skilled at meeting the specific educational needs of the students. People in this track currently retain the position of full-time "Lecturer A" for up to three years which can be extended to six years by the permission of the Provost's Staff Conference. The more seasoned and effective teachers would then become Lecturers in Critical Writing, as decided by a committee assembled by the dean, with an initial three-year appointment, followed by a review at the end of the second year and the ability to continue in the role for up to eight years (and subsequent five-year terms) pending approval of the Provost's Staff Conference. The total number of lecturers cannot exceed 15% of the Standing Faculty in SAS. The Committee spoke with Al Filreis, who runs the Critical Writing program, for clarification. He supported the proposal as a way to decrease turnover amongst the non-Standing Faculty, meet educational needs and provide stability to the program. The Committee also heard from Senior Lecturers in the Critical Writing program who also supported the proposal.

C. *To raise the cap on the number of "Lecturers in Foreign Languages" from 6% to 15% of the Standing Faculty and the number of "Senior Lecturers in Foreign Languages" from 3% to 8% of the Standing Faculty.*

Since regular full-time lecturers can only serve three years, the Lecturer in Foreign Language (LFL) was developed to increase the continuity of foreign language teaching. In the current system, it was noted that an Instructor first becomes a "Lecturer A" and the best become LFLs. The Senior LFL position was created to recognize outstanding performance and enhance continuity in the position. It was noted that SAS is already over its limit of 30 LFLs. In 2015 there were 40 Lecturer A positions, 38 LFLs and eight Senior LFLs. SCOF invited Linda Chance, associate chair and associate professor of Japanese language & literature, who coordi-

nates LFLs in the department, as well as Reyes Caballo-Márquez, LFL and coordinator of Spanish intermediate, to join their discussions. It was acknowledged that there is an unmet need for teaching foreign language to freshman undergraduates. Several areas of concern were raised among the group: The Standing Faculty in the Romance languages is overwhelmingly male and the LFLs are more often female. Compensation and work level for LFLs should be reviewed over time. LFLs were not often invited to faculty meetings, and they may have offices at remote geographic locations from the rest of the department, thereby diminishing the potential for interpersonal interactions and eroding job satisfaction.

D. *To raise the cap on the number of "Senior Lecturers" in the Academic Support Staff from 3% to 8% of the Standing Faculty.*

E. *Summary of Track Change Proposals and Committee Recommendations*

The Committee voted unanimously to approve each of these proposals and present them to the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) for ratification. Several concerns were raised that will require future review and discussion:

- Courses at the 200-level and above should be taught exclusively by Standing Faculty.

- Concern was raised that non-Standing Faculty do not have an adequate voice in regards to the nature and terms of their employment. Efforts to increase inclusion and interaction with other members of the faculty and to avoid a "two-tiered" system should be investigated.

- The Committee recommends that gender composition and compensation in the tracks be reviewed regularly.

- The Faculty Senate should regularly review the composition of the teaching faculty and consider how these and future proposals may affect education of undergraduates.

2. To continue to evaluate innovations in classroom-based instruction (e.g., "flipped" classrooms).

The Committee invited Beth Winkelstein, vice provost for education, and discussed Structured Active In-class Learning (SAIL, or flipped classroom) initiatives at Penn. Math, physics and bioengineering sophomore courses incorporating active learning are in their fourth year at Penn. The Center for Teaching and Learning continues to assist in reviewing the progress of these initiatives and engage in controlled studies of learning methods. There are currently 26 courses identified as active learning courses. There are \$5,000 course development grants for faculty to help develop new courses around active learning. Investment in classrooms that are best suited for active learning is ongoing.

3. To review open learning initiatives and Penn's contractual arrangements with faculty.

The Committee invited Stanton Wortham, faculty director of the Online Learning Initiative (OLI), to a SCOF meeting. He reviewed OLI's progress: there are 83 courses currently on Coursera and edX. Several charge a fee and result in a certification. Financial aid is available. Most of the specializations have been launched through Wharton, and they have generated substantial revenue for the school. Wharton has no plans to offer online degree programs. At Penn, a doctorate in clinical social work is offered online, but it is completely synchronous with in-person learning, complete with class lectures that are live-streamed online. A second online-only degree is proposed in collaboration among PSOM, Law and Wharton in health policy behavioral economics. Profit from these courses is shared by the involved faculty. Seed money is available to Penn faculty for development of a massive open online course (MOOC). The Provost remains committed to growing and developing faculty engagement in MOOCs.

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Recommended Charges for the 2016-2017 Academic Year

The Committee recommends the following charges be given to SCOF in the coming academic year:

1. To review the results of the current and future track changes with regard to numbers, courses taught, gender composition and student evaluations.
2. To continue discussions about ways to improve retention, job satisfaction and inclusiveness among the non-Standing Faculty.
3. To continue to review active learning initiatives and to receive updates on the ongoing research at Penn that tracks students who are randomized to traditional versus active learning classroom.
4. To continue to review open learning initiatives and new courses and degrees, faculty initiatives, faculty satisfaction and details of faculty contractual arrangements.
5. To review the results of the 2015 Faculty Climate Survey in collaboration with other Senate Committees as appropriate.

SCOF Membership 2015-2016

Mindy Schuster, PSOM/Infectious Diseases, *Chair*
Lea Ann Matura, School of Nursing
Justin McDaniel, School of Arts & Sciences/Religious Studies
Amy Sepinwall, Wharton School
Tom Sollecito, School of Dental Medicine
Lyle Ungar, School of Engineering & Applied Science/CIS
Ex officio members:
Laura Perna, GSE, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect
Reed Pyeritz, PSOM/Medicine & Genetics, Faculty Senate Chair

Senate Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty

The 2015-2016 Senate Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty published the Economic Status of the Faculty Report in *Almanac* February 23, 2016;

An Executive Summary: <http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v62/n24/pdf/022316-supplement-execsummary.pdf> as well as the Full Report: <http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v62/n24/pdf/esf-long.pdf> are both available online.

Report of the Faculty Senate Grievance Commission

The Faculty Senate Grievance Commission of the University of Pennsylvania is an independent committee consisting of three faculty members appointed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. This commission is available to members of the Penn faculty and academic support who allege they have been subject to action that is contrary to the University procedures, policies and/or regulations, that is discriminatory or that is arbitrary. During the Academic Year 2015-2016, the Commission was composed of Steven Sondheimer (Medicine, Past Chair), Parvati Ramchandani, (Medicine, Chair) and Mitch Marcus (Computer & Information Science, Chair-Elect).

During the year, the Commission reviewed a grievance by a faculty member regarding denial of tenure. A letter of inquiry about the matter was sent to the Past Chair in April 2015 but the formal grievance was filed with the current Chair only in September 2015.

The Commission pursued additional information from the grievant's department and met with multiple faculty leaders in the grievant's department on separate occasions as well as University leadership and representatives from the Vice Provost's office. The Commission as a whole reviewed the case in detail, each member reaching an independent conclusion about the merits. Multiple meetings of the entire Commission were held, where all aspects of the case were carefully considered, with thoughtful consideration of the impact of the Commission's deliberations on the faculty member. Additional discussion was held with representatives from the Ombudsman's Office as well. After these multiple meetings, the Commission reached a consensus that the case did not have enough merit to warrant forwarding to a hearing.

—Parvati Ramchandani, Grievance Commission Chair, 2015-2016