2018-19 Professional Standards Committee (PSC) Report

Submitted to the Faculty Senate & Office of the Provost 4/16/19

Members

    Carolyn Bonifield (Grossman School of Business)
    Catherine (CC) Christenson (Larner College of Medicine)
    Frances Delwiche (UVM Libraries)
    Evan Eyler (Larner College of Medicine)
    Michael F. Giangreco, Chair (College of Education and Social Services)
    Eric Lindstrom (College of Arts & Sciences)
    Hendrika (Rycki) Maltby (College of Nursing and Health Sciences)
    William (Bill) Mierse (College of Arts & Sciences)
    Mary Peabody (College of Agriculture & Life Sciences)
    Jason Stockwell (Rubenstein School of Environment & Natural Resources)
    Tian Xia/Jeffrey Marshall (College of Engineering & Mathematical Sciences)

Summary of Primary Activities

Sabbatical Reviews

During the Fall Semester the PSC reviewed a total of 68 sabbatical applications.

Number of Sabbatical Applications Reviewed by Academic Unit:

    College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS), n=5

    College of Arts & Sciences (CAS), n=40

    College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences (CEMS), n=9

    College of Education & Social Services (CESS), n=6

    College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS), n=0

    Grossman School of Business (GSB), n=3

    Larner College of Medicine (LCOM), n=0

    Rubenstein School of Environmental and Natural Resources (RSENR), n=4

    UVM Libraries (LIB), n=1

    Total Sabbaticals Reviewed, N=68

Reappointment, Tenure & Promotion Reviews (RPT)

During 2018-2019 the PSC conducted 99 RPT reviews: (a) 93 RPT full dossiers reviews, including full, off-cycle* administrator tenure reviews, and (b) 6 *Expedited Tenure Reviews for Administrators* (pre-hire).

College/ School & N of Dossiers	2nd Reappoint-ment @ Assistant Professor	Promotion Senior Lecturer	Promotion Associate Professor Non-Tenure Track *(e.g., Research, Clinical, Libraries, Extension)*	Promotion Associate Professor & Tenure *(*includes tenure only at rank)*	Promotion Full Professor Non-Tenure Track *(e.g., Research, Clinical)*	Promotion Full Professor Tenure Track *(*includes tenure only at rank)*
CALS n=6	1	2	0	2	0	1
CAS n=23	1	3	1	7	0	11
CESS n=11	2	4	0	4	0	1*
CEMS n=8	0	1	1	2	0	4*
CNHS n=7	2	1	0	1	2	1*
GSB n=4	0	0	0	2	0	2
LCOM n=31	1	0	12	4	4	10*
RSENR n=3	0	1	1	1	0	0
LIB n=0	0	0	0	NA	0	NA
Totals N= 93	**7**	**12**	**15**	**23**	**6**	**30**

The Faculty Senate's *Expedited Tenure Review* (pre-hire) process was used to review 6 cases:
CEMS (n=1): UVM President
CESS (n=1): Department of Education, Chair
CALS (n=4): CALS, Dean (4 finalists)

Review of PSC Operating Procedures

In April 2019 the PSC made minor changes in its operating procedures (e.g., adjusting the name of the meeting place to Howe Library; adding information about the expedited tenure review process for administrators). The revised version was submitted to the Faculty Senate office for reposting on the PSC web page.

Summary of Persistent Issues Related to the Sabbatical and RPT Submissions

Given its role reviewing sabbatical and RPT dossiers from across the university, the PSC is in a unique position to notice patterns, trends, and issues that may be helpful for faculty, Chairs, Deans, and the Provost to consider for future submissions. In this section of our report, we identify a series of issues that we think would be helpful to address. Some of these issues are persistent and have been raised in previous annual reports.

Sabbatical Issues

1. We note substantial variability among sabbatical submissions, especially pertaining to the level of specificity with which actual activities to be completed during the sabbatical are described. We continue to review sabbatical applications that include a strong rationale, but sometimes lack the level of specificity that would allow the reader to clearly understand what the faculty will actually be doing during the sabbatical period. For example, PSC consider the required timeline absent when an applicant writes something like: *"Work described above will be completed by the end of the sabbatical leave."* We encourage specificity of activities with projected timelines.

2. If the sabbatical application includes collaboration with partner institutions or organizations, including letters of invitation indicating access and anticipated collaboration verifies that the proposed activities can be pursued and hopefully completed. Some sabbaticals continue to include plans for such collaboration without verifying letters or emails. If the plan includes travel to a foreign country, it is helpful for applicants to establish their language access (e.g., fluent in the dominant language, availability of translators), if required.

3. We encourage sabbatical applicants to be as explicit as possible about how the sabbatical plan extends beyond what they might typically be expected to complete on their standard workload FTE devoted to scholarship and/or creative activity. For example, if someone indicates they plan to complete an article they have been working on and write one additional paper, one might reasonably wonder why these activities necessitate a sabbatical. It is most helpful when applicants explain how the sabbatical time allows them a unique opportunity to engage in activities that would otherwise not be available to them given a typical slate of duties (e.g., teaching, advising, committee work).

4. Due to the nature of funding cycles and notification dates, some faculty members who are pursuing external funding for sabbatical related activities (e.g., foreign or domestic travel) do not know the status of potential funding before submitting the sabbatical application. Since the plan may be dependent on the funding, faculty members often include a Plan A (a grand plan based on receipt of desired funding) and a Plan B (a scaled-back or completely different

plan if funding is not forthcoming). This poses a challenge in the review process because the sabbatical applications almost universally are built around Plan A, with Plan B often offered as a brief afterthought (e.g., *"I have an extensive plan to travel overseas to do X, Y, Z, and if I don't get funded I plan to stay home and write a couple of articles."*). We suggest that the Plans for A and B be reversed. By this we mean that the sabbatical applications primary Plan A should be what the faculty member can commit to doing at the time of submission and the Plan B be considered value-added (e.g., ... and if I receive the funding for which I applied or am applying I will be able to do these additional or different activities...). If accurate, it can be helpful when an applicant states something like: *"work is not dependent on the fellowships"*. If presented this way the proposal can be evaluated on the known, rather than the unknown. This is year, we received a couple of stellar examples of this Plan A/Plan B approach.

5. We encourage sabbatical applicants to remember that they are writing for an audience of people outside their own field or sub-field. Applicants are encouraged to avoid excessive disciplinary-specific language and acronyms likely to be unknown by reviewers outside the field (e.g., FSC, PSC, Provost).

6. We encourage Colleges to double-check applications for technical accuracy and completeness (e.g., URL links, bookmarks) prior to submission. Each year, several are returned to units for correction, which can delay the review process.

7. It is unclear to the PSC whether some applicants are receiving sufficient mentoring, guidance, and feedback prior to submission, especially first-time applicants. When deficiencies are perceived during the review process, they are most frequently issues that could have been reasonably addressed had the applicant received feedback earlier, such as from the Chair.

Reappointment, Promotion, Tenure (RTP) Issues
We have separated this section into two categories, issues and suggestions for: (a) Department Chairs, Deans, and Faculty Standards Committees (FSC), and (b) faculty members submitting RPT dossiers.

For Chairs, Dean & FSC:

1. The PSC recognizes that scholarship standards and expectations vary substantially across disciplines. While we rely on the cross-disciplinary membership of the PSC to review applications and help us understand expectations in different fields, at times we would be most appreciative if Chairs and Deans would help us understand expectations related to disciplines and individual cases. One area where this comes up pertains to the standards/expectations for being an independent or lead researcher or author and the extent to which this is expected. For example, sometimes a faculty member who is being considered for associate professor with tenure may have several collaborative authorships, with few if any as the lead author. In many disciplines, there is an expectation that being the lead author/researcher is expected to demonstrate independence from doctoral or post-doctoral mentors and establish the faculty member's capability to conduct research and lead

scholarship. We understand that in some circumstances a faculty member may not often be the lead, yet still deserve promotion. For example, someone whose specialty contribution is methodological may be the lead author less frequently, although the contributions may be significant and essential. In cases where the scholarship record warrants, we ask Chairs and Deans to educate us, through their narrative and letters, about this aspect of scholarship expectation pertaining to candidates.

2.   On a related issue, PSC is always appreciative of having Chairs clarify scholarship standards within specific fields. For example, in some fields publishing a book is an expectation and sometimes it matters whether it is a trade or academic/university press. In other fields the peer-reviewed journal article is the important standard. Other less common forms of scholarship, such as translations or writing a government report may have high value -- we need Chairs and Deans to explain the value, especially in cases that may include outputs with which PSC reviewers may be less familiar.

3.   Some dossiers still do not sufficiently or accurately specify an individual's actual workload percentages and/or information about what that means. Some Chair workload sections provide: (a) explicit workload clarity (those are very helpful), (b) boilerplate language (e.g., 40:40:20) even though the applicant may provide some level of contradictory information in their own narrative, and (c) no interpretable information about workload. How many courses (and different courses) a faculty member teaches or how much time they spend administratively are examples of factors that impact scholarship/research productivity. This type of workload information is helpful to put scholarship outputs in perspective. If two faculty members in the same or similar fields are teaching five, four, or two classes per year is relevant to evaluating their scholarship output. While percentages are commonly relied upon, it is equally important to be specific about what percentages actually mean (e.g., number of courses taught). This need exists because percentages tend to be gross indications of workload effort and we find standard designations (e.g., 40:40:20) are not reliable indicators of how many courses a person is teaching (we have encountered ranges from 2 to 5 with the same workload percentage listed).

4.   If "No" votes at the Department and/or FSC level are sent forward without explanation, the PSC has little choice but to discount them. We ask that any "No" votes be accompanied by explicitly naming the category and specific standard(s) that the "No" voter believes have not been satisfactorily met.

5.   When hiring faculty who have served at other universities it should be explicit how much, if any, of their previous experience is counting toward this promotion/action. For example, a faculty member works at UVM for one year as an Assistant Professor and goes up for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure, based mostly on past work. If the Dean has made an agreement of this sort to bring in credit from other universities toward promotion to Associate or Full, it will be helpful to have that specified. Similarly, for faculty being considered for early tenure, it would be helpful to have the early consideration noted by the Chair or Dean along with the justification.

6.   Please check all dossiers for technical adequacy prior to submission. The reviewing task is hampered when files lack bookmarks and/or links don't work.

7.   We continue to find many external letters that are clearly not at "at arm's length". It is incumbent upon Chairs to solicit letters at appropriate distance for the applicant or explain why this did not happen (e.g., a very specialized field with a limited number of appropriate reviewers).

8.   The sequencing of external review letters and the corresponding writer's CV differs by college/school. The PSC found it helpful when all of the letters were in sequence (e.g., letters 1-7), followed by all of the CV in the same sequence. It was found to be more difficult when the documents alternated, letter 1-CV1-letter 2-CV2-letter 3-CV3.... We ask units to consider submitting all letters consecutively, before including the writer's CVs.

For Faculty Members Submitting Dossiers

1.   The CV of most faculty members list publications using a standard citation format associated with their discipline (e.g., American Psychological Association - APA, American Medical Association - AMA, Modern Language Association - MLA, Chicago style). Problems arise in a small number of cases where a citation standard is not used; this often means several elements are missing (e.g., no names listed; names listed but authorship sequence not clear). We encourage faculty to list scholarship in their CV as if they were citations appearing in a scholarly journal, to include all of the same elements (e.g., authors, year, article title, journal/book, volume, page numbers, doi if available).

2.   When presenting teaching, it can be very helpful for reviewers when faculty summarize their teaching with a basic table that includes at least the following: (a) course number, (b) semester taught, (c) enrollment, and (d) overall average student rating for the course.

3.   Many faculty members engage in collaborative research and authorship. While we have noted improvements within some units from year to year, too many faculty members still do not adequately describe the extent and nature of their participation in collaborative endeavors. For example, when a faculty member is the fourth of six authors, what exactly did the person do to contribute to this publication? It is incumbent upon each faculty member to explain this in the narrative section of the dossier. This is especially important in fields (e.g., medical sciences) where there may be different meanings attached to first and last authorship. Sometimes the last position means the least contribution; however, we have learned from our medical college colleagues that sometimes last means the person who runs a lab, conceptualized the study, and garnered the funding -- two very different meanings that we cannot discern without explanation beyond a citation.

4.   We know there are many productive scholars at UVM garnering external funding -- and they should be credited for these accomplishments. We regularly review dossiers where it appears individuals are listing grants (including amounts) that someone else wrote and/or where someone else is the principal investigator. Like publications, if a faculty member co-authored a funded grant they should take credit for their contribution by specifying the

extent and nature of the contribution to garnering the funding. The concern we see with some regularity is that a faculty member gets a large grant and then either hires people to work on the grant or distributes smaller sub-awards to individuals or groups. In these cases, the receiving faculty member who was hired for a small piece or got a sub-award lists the full (much larger) amount on their own CV, giving the impression that they have been responsible for garnering these funds. While we recognize that it is not done with any ill intent, the PSC sees this frequently enough to raise it as a concern.

5. We encourage applicants to remember that they are writing for an audience of people outside their own field or sub-field. Therefore disciplinary-specific language and acronyms should be avoided or used minimally since they are likely unknown by reviewers outside the field (e.g., FSC, PSC, Provost).

6. When considering promotions to associate and full professor (tenure-track), some cases are more challenging than others in terms of determining whether they meet the CBA (p. 36) standard (15.5, e, ii) of *"Substantial and sustained scholarship/research/creative activity of high quality is an essential criterion for reappointment, promotion and tenure."* In cases where there is uneven scholarly production and/or significant (e.g., multi-year) gaps in scholarship production, it is incumbent on the applicant to help the reviewers understand how their record of productivity meets the "substantial and sustained" expectation.

Larner College of Medicine (LCOM)
As the only academic unit with faculty who are not covered under the CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement), the LCOM presents a unique set of issues given their multiple promotion pathways. The PSC continues to seek clarity to better understand the criteria and review process for those on the Clinical Scholar Pathway, especially as it pertains to expectations based on workload percentages in general, and especially for research/scholarship and the role of external reviews.

Related to general workload percentages, we find the term "service" has a few different meanings across submitted dossiers, such as: (a) clinical service work with patients, (b) administrative service leading a center or unit, and (c) service to the university at various levels (e.g., departmental/college committee, university-level committee), community (e.g., board member for local non-profit organization), and profession (e.g., journal reviewer, grant reviewer, officer of an organization). It is this third meaning that is generally accepted as the meaning of "service" across the rest of the university. We encourage the LCOM workloads to consider including the following categories (as appropriate for individuals) with corresponding clear definitions of each adding up to 100%:

• Clinical Responsibilities (e.g., patient care; work as a practicing physician)
• Teaching & Advising
• Research/Scholarship
• Service (e.g., department/college committees, voluntary community engagement, service to
      professional organizations, editorial boards, grant reviewing, conference reviewing)
• Administrative (e.g., leading a department, unit, Center)

An ongoing source of confusion for many PSC members reviewing Clinical Pathway dossiers is understanding what portion of the dossier they are evaluating when an individual's role is overwhelmingly clinical/patient care in terms of percentage and when their workload distribution for research/scholarship might be as low as zero to 5%. This also intersects with the alignment between this research/scholarship percentage and the external (arm's length) letters. For example, external reviewers are asked to comment on research/scholarship when it may not be part of the workload or is a minimal percentage (e.g., 5% of less). These external reviewers (because they are at arm's length) are not in a position to offer feedback on an individual's clinical work, which typically makes up the majority of the workload. The PSC will continue to work with the leadership in the LCOM in an effort to clarify continuing conceptual and practical questions that are raised by PSC members regarding the evaluation of faculty dossiers on the Clinical Scholar Pathway.

Gratitude for the Work

Being on the PSC involves a significant investment of time and effort. One of the most common sentiments expressed by PSC members to each other is that time and effort are worthwhile; we individually and collectively experience gratitude for the opportunity to review the breadth and depth of work being produced at UVM. Members of the PSC approach each dossier with great respect for the work of our UVM colleagues and take pride in carefully and independently reviewing each dossier. Being a PSC member offers a unique opportunity to glimpse into fields of study we would typically not encounter otherwise. It is a constant learning experience and contributes to our sense that UVM is special place, with so many talented people doing so much amazing work!