

## **2016-17 Professional Standards Committee (PSC) Report**

Submitted to the Office of the Provost & Faculty Senate Executive Committee 4/10/17

### **Members**

Robert Rodgers, Chair (College of Arts & Sciences)  
Elizabeth (Elise) Ames (Larner College of Medicine)  
Carolyn Bonifield (Grossman School of Business)  
Sid Bosworth (UVM Extension)  
Bernard (Chip) Cole (College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences)  
Michael Giangreco (College of Education & Social Services)  
Curt Ventris (Rubenstein School of Environmental and Natural Resources)  
Donna O'Malley (UVM Libraries)  
Eric Lindstrom (College of Arts & Sciences)  
Keith Mintz (Larner College of Medicine)  
Bob Parsons (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences)  
Ge Wu (College of Nursing and Health Sciences)

### **Summary of Primary Activities**

#### **Sabbatical Reviews**

During the Fall Semester the PSC reviewed a total of 55 sabbatical applications. An additional sabbatical application was considered in Spring Semester from the Larner College of Medicine.

Number of Sabbatical Applications Reviewed:

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS), n=5  
College of Arts & Sciences (CAS), n=24  
College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences (CEMS), n=7  
College of Education & Social Services (CESS), n=7  
College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS), n=2  
Grossman School of Business (GSB), n=2  
Larner College of Medicine (LCOM), n=2  
Rubenstein School of Environmental and Natural Resources (RSEN), n=6  
UVM Extension (EXT), n=0  
UVM Libraries (LIB), n=1  
*Total Sabbaticals Reviewed, N=56*

## Reappointment, Tenure & Promotion Reviews (RPT)

During the Spring semester the PSC reviewed 97 RPT dossiers and submitted its votes and comments to the Office of the Provost.

College/ School & N of Dossiers	2nd Reappoint- ment @ Assistant Professor	Promotion Senior Lecturer	Promotion Associate Professor Non- Tenure Track (e.g., Research, Clinical)	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=4	0	1	1	1	0	1
CAS n=32	8	3	1	7	0	13
CEMS n=7	2	0	0	1	0	4
CESS n=9	2	2	1	2	0	2
CNHS n=4	1	0	1	1	0	1
GSB n=3	1	1	0	1	0	0
LCOM n=31	1	0	20	1	7	2
RSENR n=6	1	1	0	2	1	1
EXT n=1	0	0	1	0	0	0
LIB n=0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals N=97</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>

### Collaboration with the Larner College of Medicine

Under the leadership of Dr. Charlie Irvin (Assistant Dean for Faculty), our colleagues in the Larner College of Medicine have updated their RPT process with corresponding forms, including a standardized CV template. The changes are designed to streamline and improve the RPT process, especially for clinical faculty who are spending the majority of their time serving patients. Throughout the past year, Dr. Irvin and his colleagues have sought feedback from the PSC to facilitate a smooth transition to the new process and forms beginning in Fall 2017. The PSC continues to work closely with the College of Medicine to clarify workload descriptors (e.g., teaching, research/scholarship, clinical care, administration, service) and to understand the

evolving interpretation of criteria for the relatively new pathways within the College beyond the tenure-track (i.e., research, clinical, education). For example, because a faculty member on the Clinical Scholar Pathway may have a very low percentage of their stated workload devoted to scholarship (e.g., in some cases 5-10% or below) it can be challenging to establish the kind of national reputation and influence expected to be promoted to full professor. This potentially sets up a Catch-22; the Clinical Scholar Pathway does not require extensive scholarship output, yet it that very scholarly output that may be necessary to achieve the rank of full professor.

### **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 offer a series of issues that we think would be helpful to address.

#### **Sabbatical Issues**

1. The PSC suggests a minor update to Sabbatical application process that would make it clear at the outset whether any past sabbatical was successfully completed (e.g., post sabbatical submission requirements were met). Letters are sometimes at the end, buried in the paperwork. An update might include an item and/or link on the front page of the application to the previous post sabbatical reports. This information is especially helpful to the PSC in reviewing applications for those how have had previous sabbaticals. What documented outcomes occurred as result of their past sabbatical?
2. The PSC continues to be concerned that a small number of faculty members continue to include highly personal information on their CVs that is not only irrelevant to the sabbatical and RPT processes, but that would seem to put them unnecessarily at risk of identity theft given how widely CVs are distributed and often posted online. Unless deemed essential for a specific reason, we discourage faculty from including personal information on the CV (e.g., SSN, citizenship, DOB, place of birth, marital status, spouse name, children's name and ages); all of these and others have been found on submitted CVs. This concern relates to both sabbatical and RPT submissions.
3. In some cases, the PSC was challenged to understand the scope of work and to understand what was considered a sufficient scope of work to constitute a sabbatical leave. Is proposing to write a couple of journal articles enough? Is transferring a course from traditional to online format sufficient? Or are these examples of a level of production that is expected within an individual's typical workload? We encourage faculty to be as explicit as possible in the description of their activities and timelines and to make the case how their sabbatical work extends beyond what they could reasonably accomplish without sabbatical. In some cases, a letter of support (external or internal) could be helpful, but we do not wish needlessly to increase the bulk of materials appended to sabbatical applications.

#### **RPT Issues**

4. In the first section of the Green Sheets (1. Overall Expectations) the PSC notes wide variation in the content, clarity, and specificity offered by different departments. In a small

number of cases this section did not include responses to the information requested. In many cases this section included the same boilerplate information (e.g., departmental guidelines or links, workload distribution 40:40:20) for everyone in the department regardless of actual variations in workload distribution. Upon reading further into the dossiers, in many instances we found that the applicant's description of their activities did not align with the boilerplate language, especially pertaining to workload distribution (e.g., effort devoted to teaching/advising). The most helpful responses to the Overall Expectations section included the departmental boilerplate language to establish the base expectations, followed by either confirmation that the applicant's workload distribution substantively matched that boilerplate language or whether it significantly varied from it. If it varied, how so? Having a clear understanding of both the base expectations within the department and an applicant's individual workload sets an initial context upon which the rest of the dossier is reviewed and understood by the PSC. Some departments do this exceedingly well, and we are appreciative of their efforts. Moving forward we hope to see more RPT dossiers that clearly and fully respond to the requested information pertaining to Overall Expectations for the department and the individual.

5. Related to item 1, and when considering traditional 3-credit hour courses, the PSC finds wide variation on what constitutes the percentage of time designated for one course. We recognize that workload percentages are gross estimations and acknowledge the difficulty (probably futility) of attempting to parse it too finely given the range of variables across classes. That said, we think it reasonable that there be more consistency in the meaning attached to courses as they pertain to workload percentages because this has equity implications, maybe most notably for junior faculty on the tenure-track. What does course percentage mean? For example, in CAS they typically indicate a 40:40:20 split for teaching, scholarship, and service respectively. Within most departments in CAS 40% means 5 courses or 8% of FTE per course (actually less than that since they typically include their advising duties into the 40% for teaching). In at least one department that used the same 40:40:20 distribution we have noted that 40% for teaching has meant 2 courses a year instead of 5 throughout all or most of the pre-tenure period without externally-funded buyouts. When evaluating the scholarship production of two junior faculty members where one is routinely teaching 5 courses a year and the other is teaching two (though both are listed as 40% for teaching) it raises equity issues. Until just a few years ago CESS had its base workload distribution at 62.5:25:12.5, for the teaching, scholarship, and service; the 62.5% represented the same 5 courses as taught in CAS, but with a value of 12.5% per course instead of 8%. Within the past few years CESS adjusted by reducing its 5-course base teaching load to be valued at 11% per course (55% for teaching) and separating out 7.5% per for academic advising. Meanwhile CHNS follows the same base model as CAS (40:40:20), but in CNHS 40% is for four courses (10%) rather than five. It seems clear that no matter what percentages are selected, they are substantively a social construction and probably always will be. That said, we think for the sake of equity we encourage discussion about the possibility of considering a university standard (an approximation) of the percent of effort that should be attached to a course.
6. In some cases, the PSC noted concerns regarding external letters for tenure/promotion and promotion to full professor. The majority of dossiers suggest commonly held expectations for

external letters. These common standards that the PSC values seeing, and that are typically found in most dossiers include: (a) external evaluators should be at "arm's length", (b) letters should be on institutional letterhead that is visible to the PSC, (c) the evaluator should already be at the rank as high or higher than the promotion being sought (e.g., all external letters for full professor bids should come from full professors), and (d) the CV of the evaluator should be included. Each of these criteria allows the PSC to evaluate the credibility of the external reviewers. When these criteria are absent to any extent, or in combination, it raises concerns about the credibility of the external evaluators.

7. From a technical perspective, given the length of the Green Sheets (often 100-200 pages per dossier), it is extremely helpful for the pdf dossiers to include bookmarks in the side windowpane and linked document attachments. The vast majority of dossiers included these features; yet they were absent in all submissions from two colleges. We request that each college review their dossiers before submission to the Office of the Provost to ensure that bookmarks, links, attachments and any other technical aspects of the documents are operational.
8. Improvement has been noted by the PSC in terms of faculty members explaining the extent and nature of their participation in co-authored work, especially when the faculty member is not the lead author. Some faculty members have done an outstanding job situating their contributions to co-authored works, while for others we are left to wonder. For example, if you were the third or fourth author on an article co-authored by six people, what did you contribute to warrant authorship? What was your role? We don't expect to see this on a CV, but do look for an explanation within the narrative.
9. In cases where a faculty member is being put forward for early promotion to Associate Professor with tenure, the PSC requests that the dossier, including the letters from the Chair and Dean assist the PSC in understanding the rationale for the early promotion. Sometimes a faculty member has moved to UVM following service at another university and those years are being counted toward promotion and tenure here. Such cases are readily understandable because typically the faculty member has demonstrated sustained effort at an acceptable level over a combined total of the same pre-tenure years they would amassed had they been at UVM their entire early career years. In other words, the PSC understands that meeting the criteria for sustained accomplishment can reflect combined effort across institutions.
10. The PSC has noted wide variation and significant concern about how credit for external funding is represented on faculty CVs. We regularly find that individuals who are hired to work on a grant or other externally-funded projects, but who did not write the grant (are not responsible for garnering the external funds) list the full amount of the award on their CVs; by doing so they appear to be taking credit for that funding. We see a handful of very large grants, garnered by a very small group of UVM faculty, showing up on lots of CVs (we feel inappropriately). A variation on this also occurs when a UVM faculty has a sub-award on a larger project. Some list the amount of their sub-award, while others list the full amount. It appears clear to us that guidance and professional development (or minimally supervisory feedback) is needed to ensure that faculty CV accurately represent their contributions to garnering external funding versus being invited to work on a funded project. The most

important aspect of this clarity is the ethics of presenting one's work. Additionally, from a PSC perspective it is important for us to be able to clearly distinguish which external funds faculty members are responsible for garnering on their own or with colleagues. Given the variety of funding sources and scenarios, we encourage colleges and departments to consider exploring this aspect of the CV.

### **Gratitude for the Work**

The members of the PSC review each dossier with great respect for the work of our UVM colleagues and take pride in carefully and independently reviewing and presenting each dossier we receive. One of the most common sentiments expressed by PSC members to each other is our gratitude for the opportunity to review the amazing breadth and depth of work being produced by UVM faculty members. Being a PSC member offers a unique opportunity to glimpse into fields of study we would typically not encounter otherwise -- it is a gift to each of us. It is a constant learning experience and contributes to our sense that UVM is fortunate to have so many amazing people doing so much amazing work.