CUSOM Senate Faculty Meeting June 20, 2023

Prepared by Cheryl Welch for Secretary

Welcome – Faculty Senate President Merlin Ariefdjohan

Minutes of meeting from May 16, 2023 were unanimously approved

Dean's Update – Dean Reilly

- New Chair of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery, Dr. Yuri Agrawal, MD, MPH, will start on July 1. Thank you to Todd Kingdom for his leadership during the search. The next chair of Radiology will be announced soon.
- We are in the final stages of the search for the new director of ACCORDS program. Dr. Allison Kempe indicated last year she wanted to step down from that position. Two finalists have interviewed, and hopefully we can recruit one of them.
- The new class of PT students started a couple weeks ago, PA students should be here in 2 weeks, and new MD students should be here in about month.
- White Coat ceremony for MD students in early August.
- The common theme across all hospital partners is financial pressure they are under. Expenses have exceeded rate of revenues.
- There was a presentation today at Executive Committee about new Doctor of Physical Therapy program being run in conjunction with UCCS. First cohort of students to start this time next year.

Tenured Faculty Salary Reduction Policy – Dean Reilly

- The current salary policy is based on BSI policy. Salaries are set by academic rank. Roughly, the salary base for a full Professor is $120,000. Most faculty make more than a base salary. The total is achieved by having a supplement on top of a base to get to agreed-upon salary.
  In virtually all departments, there is an incentive plan in place based on various metrics. The incentive portion is not guaranteed. The issue to address is that in certain circumstances, tenured faculty (who have a guaranteed base salary) are no longer generating a level of support to support themselves. Despite annual reviews that have highlighted that fact, and associated performance improvement plans, there are some circumstances where the performance does not improve, which imposes a hardship on department or divisions. Ten or 12 years ago, there was an issue identified in basic science departments, and in response, there was a request by basic science departments to buy people out of tenure if they would give up tenure. This policy that is being proposed is to reduce salaries below base in those unusual circumstances where performance is below expectations for a tenured faculty member, and despite chances to mediate, the faculty member has not improved performance. There are safeguards in place for faculty, including an ad hoc committee to review the recommendation.

  Question: If there are cases like this, will they go under the office of professionalism, or will the review be contained in department?

Answer: They will be reviewed by Office of Faculty Affairs, since we are dealing with performance rather than professionalism issues. We would recommend faculty for an ad hoc committee that will be outside of the department of the faculty member.
Steve L: Agreed, we will select a committee outside of the department. Reductions would be limited to 15% per year. The policy would only be invoked after the faculty member receives a not meeting expectations rating on their annual review, and they do not get back on track. Before recommending a salary reduction, we must also consider overall contributions to the department. These faculty are important, but this situation is not sustainable.

Question: Do we have an estimate of annual cost savings of this policy, or the current cost of the burden of the present policy?

Answer: We don't have an estimate of cost savings, as most people at the level of associate professor or professor have a supplement on top of the base, and before we get to this conversation, the department would have to go through reductions to the supplement to get down to the base. One basic science department has two or three faculty in this situation, and an estimate would likely be $400,000 to $500,000 for that department per year for salaries and benefits. For basic science departments with no clinical stream to cover unfunded time, it impacts the rest of the department's ability to pay out incentives to the rest of the faculty. As far as annual savings, it is likely no more than one or two faculty per year in this situation, and in that case it would be $20,000 or $25,000 savings for the department or division. This would be an important tool to be available to chairs. The origin of this policy is from department chairs, not the Dean's Office.

Question: It is one thing if we give tools to departments to help them run the business, separate from making a performance issue. Is this just to give teeth to the performance improvement plan that wasn't there before, or just to manage the budget?

Answer: It only applies to tenured faculty, where ending the appointment not an option. The process of removing tenure from faculty for cause can take many years. What we are talking about is faculty with a sustained period of underperformance, being counseled about that, receiving a performance improvement plan, and then not improving. If that faculty member is tenured, there are a limited number of actions a department chair can take in that situation. This gives them one more tool to mitigate the financial impact of supporting that faculty member's salary in the department or division. It's estimated there might be 3 people in this situation from this year's annual reviews. As far as other institutions and whether they have this policy, Harvard does not have tenure in clinical depts. At the University of Pittsburgh, this was the policy. This would not affect the new financial policy of basic science departments. We don't think there is a meaningful opportunity to misuse this policy in a way that would limit academic freedom. Tenure was created in order to preserve academic freedom, and here we are talking about a less political environment. As mentioned, there will be safeguards in place to make sure that it's not abused. If someone has unfunded research and they are at odds with the strategic vision of a department, they should not be in that department. This policy needs

to be reviewed by this body, then it goes to the Executive Committee of the SOM, then to the Dean, and then submitted to the Chancellor of this campus.

Question: What is the timeline for that process?

Answer: There is no deadline for this. The goal is to have a discussion and see what the concerns are. It's not urgent or an emergent matter. It likely would take two to three years to invoke the policy for the first faculty member.

Question: Why not use a current committee to review rather than add ad hoc committee?
Answer: The FPC has more than enough work to do already. This would be a little more involved. Ad hoc committee would be the most expeditious for everyone involved, which is similar to post-tenure review. Faculty Senators should submit any concerns of faculty in writing to Dean Reilly, and he will engage the appropriate individuals to discuss the concerns.

Question: For clarity, with regards to an ad hoc committee, what is their role? Maybe we need more clarity on the output of the ad hoc committee.

Question: Can you speak to the scope of this problem? Do other institutions have policies like this, and how can we prevent the need to use this policy? Do we need to reevaluate other things?

Answer: It's likely not an uncommon problem in academic medicine, and is more acute in basic science departments. The leverage that exists for non-tenured faculty is not available in managing underperformance of tenured faculty. We are not unique in this situation.

Promotion Task Force Update – Sunita Sharma, Chair, SOM Promotion Task Force

- Dr. Sharma, who is the chair of the SOM Promotion Task Force which is currently reviewing the SOM promotion process, emphasized the importance of the promotion process, as it is the way we recognize and reward excellence. The goal of the promotion process is that all faculty who are eligible and meet the criteria for promotion are encouraged to apply for promotion.
- The existing SOM promotion process has been developed over time and with several different iterations of the bylaws.
- There are several faculty series available, including the regular faculty series (tenure eligible), research professor series, and clinical practice series. Dossiers are about 100 pages, and quite complex. They include many components and are tailored for careers, which may include an investigators' portfolio, scholarship and service, letters of reference, teaching evals, and supporting documents that show how they meet benchmarks for promotion. The process varies across departments. Dossiers that are approved by the Departmental Committee are submitted to the SOM by October 31.
- SOM reviews dossiers between January and June of the following year, and it is a once yearly process. The promotion clock from Assistant to Associate is 7 years.

- The goals of task force include:
    - Review the existing promotions process;
    - Identify areas that can be simplified;
    - Reduce some redundancy in the process;
    - Review promotion tracks and nomenclature;
    - Discuss the visiting faculty appointment process and timeline;
    - Address promotion clock and once yearly review process.
- The process could likely be simplified, with the goal to develop a simplified system predicated on transparency, equity, and efficiency.
- Not in scope: The task force will not address promotion criteria for instructor, senior instructor, or assistant professor.
- Discussion of the tenure process is not in the scope of this task force.
- The task force is also not responsible for the promotion process for volunteer faculty.

Subcommittee working groups will:

- Review our existing process;
- Perform/review a comprehensive evaluation of what is done at other institutions;
- Develop recommendations/options and identify pros/cons of the approach;
- Report back to larger task force.

Timeline:

- Request information regarding promotion and tenure process from external institutions;
- Subcommittee assignments will be designated at the next meeting;
- Monthly meetings between now and August to review progress of the subcommittees;
- Deliverables by Sept 1;
- A streamlined/efficient process recommendations regarding dossier, committee review, promotion clock/review timeline and promotion tracks to SOM by September 1.

- We are also looking at promotion tracks and requirements at other similar institutions.

Question: To what extent do some of new ideas require a change in the school rules? How much could we adopt changes just as a matter of the regular course of business?

Answer: That will be determined by the recommendations of the committee. Some tracks exist at other institutions which we may be able to adopt. Titles, tracks timeclocks all require SOM rules changes.

Dossier streamlining may or may not require rules changes. Existing campus policies may provide some flexibility. Almost everything will likely need rules changes.

Question: Will recommendations be available to faculty, and will there be a deliberative period?

Answer: A Set of recommendations will be provided by the SOM task force, reviewed in OFA, and distributed in Faculty Senate and across the SOM for evaluation.

Question: Was the charge of the task force was to investigate things that wouldn't need changes to rules, and now is it more about the promotion process?

Answer: If there is a consideration of changing nomenclature around promotion series, there is already some language already adopted and used at the systems level that could be implemented without rules changes. If we recommend a broader change around promotion series, that would require rules change. We are still in the early stage of recommending changes. We will be looking at the promotion process, and a change in series is a huge potential change potentially coming down the pipeline. We will work on preparing a charter for faculty to review. The deadline depends on whether rules changes will be needed. If only simple changes needed that don't require rules changes, they can be implemented in the next round of promotions. Not everything recommended by the committee will be enacted, and not all with be enacted in the next round of promotions.

Question: Is the task force trying to streamline the process for faculty being reviewed, as well as the process for review?

Answer: Yes. A large number of faculty don't go up for promotion because of the process. There are ways to simplify but not require as large a dossier. The review of dossier happens at the department and the school, and the question is whether there is a potential process that may decrease workload on faculty for the review. A lot of work still needs to be done, and anyone with questions can reach out to Dr. Sharma. You can also volunteer to be on the task force.

Steve Lowenstein: Titles, tracks and timeclock policies have been in the system for 25 years, and faculty roles have evolved. Changes are likely needed to recognize what's new, to support faculty and ensure equity.

Dr. Sharma: Please reach out with questions, and we will provide a charter for senate review.