POLICY
RECOMMENDATION
Amendment B to University Policy S15-8
Retention, Tenure and Promotion for Regular Faculty Employees: Criteria and Standards

Resolved: That S15-8 be amended as shown in the strikeout and underline of the excerpted policy.

Rationale: Professional Standards has become aware of several limitations in the “baseline” teaching descriptor of our RTP policy. This descriptor sets the minimum standards in teaching expected for tenure.

The main purpose of our amendment is to achieve the policy’s original intent that teaching be evaluated holistically and fairly, using multiple sources of information, including but not limited to the Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness surveys (SOTES.)

First, our revised language seeks to correct a problem with the way the current language discusses the “norms” of our SOTES. As one example of the problem, it is sometimes the case that a SOTE evaluation of 4.0 is “below the norm” as set by the Student Evaluation Review Board, even though the SOTE instrument states that a “4” means that the student agrees that the instructor is “effective.” Thus, faculty who are judged to be “effective” by their students are sometimes judged to be “below the norm” with important negative consequences for their professional advancement. Our proposed language corrects this problem by providing needed flexibility, indicating that the survey results can be “either within appropriate norms or otherwise offer a preponderance of evidence of teaching competence and effectiveness.”

The committee also inserted a reference to “course syllabi and other teaching materials.” These materials are already commonly present in dossiers, but the explicit inclusion of this language reminds evaluators that information beyond the SOTES must also be considered. We further reinforce this point by referencing “a holistic judgment of effective and competent teaching” elsewhere within the descriptor.
Approved: December 10, 2019.

Vote: 10-0-0

Present: He, Cargill, Peter, Monday, Kumar, Mahendra, Kemnitz, Birrer, Chin, Riley.

Absent: none.

Financial Impact: No direct impacts

Workload Impact: No direct impact
POLICY RECOMMENDATION
Amendment B to University Policy S15-8
Retention, Tenure and Promotion for Regular Faculty Employees:
Criteria and Standards

3.3.1.3.2 Baseline. The candidate has taught assigned courses that are well crafted and appropriate for the catalog description. The candidate has taken measures to correct any problems identified earlier in either direct observations or prior performance evaluations. Recent direct observations are supportive. Student evaluations, taking into account the nature, subject, and level of classes taught, generally within the norms by the end of the review period, particularly for classes within the candidate’s primary focus and any curriculum specifically identified in the appointment letter.

3.3.1.3.2 Baseline. The candidate has documented effectiveness and competence in teaching, particularly for classes within the candidate’s primary focus and any curriculum specifically identified in the appointment letter. Assigned courses are well crafted and appropriate for the catalog description, as shown in course syllabi and other teaching materials. The candidate has taken measures to correct any problems identified earlier in either direct observations or prior performance evaluations. Recent direct observations are supportive. By the end of the review period, student surveys of teaching effectiveness, taking into account the nature, subject, and level of classes taught, also support a holistic judgment of effective and competent teaching. Survey results are either within appropriate norms or otherwise offer a preponderance of evidence of teaching competence and effectiveness.