

30 June 2021

TO: Washington State University (WSU) Faculty Senate
Dr. Kirk Schulz, President
Dr. Elizabeth Chilton, Provost

FROM: Dr. Randy Fortenbery, Co-chair, WSU Faculty Status Committee
Dr. Vilma Navarro-Daniels, Co-chair, WSU Faculty Status Committee

Report of the Faculty Status Committee: Academic Year 2020-21:

Pursuant to Section II.E.4.a.5 of the Washington State University (WSU) Faculty Manual, we are reporting the activities of the WSU Faculty Status Committee (FSC) for the 2020-2021 academic year. The FSC is an independent investigative committee elected by the WSU faculty at large. The committee reports and makes recommendations directly to the WSU President. Under provisions of the WSU Faculty Manual, a faculty member may appeal non-reappointment, denial of tenure, or deferral of promotion to the FSC. Historically, tenure denials have been the most common type of FSC case. FSC can also be asked to investigate the non-renewal of a faculty member following the comprehensive third-year review, or a tenured faculty member's termination of employment following elimination of a program due to financial exigency or discontinuance of a program or department. FSC also nominates members of the Faculty Hearing Panel and arranges for investigations and hearings prior to disciplinary action. Finally, other types of decisions that a faculty member believes may violate the Faculty Manual may be appealed to the FSC. FSC members serve three-year terms that end on August 15th.

FSC's investigations are thorough, confidential, and open-ended. Reports of the findings of an FSC investigation are provided only to the appellant and to the President. Under provisions of the Faculty Manual, the FSC can make its own rules of procedure but must meet certain timelines for handling a case. The specific provisions in the Faculty Manual have been approved by the Faculty Senate, the university administration, and the WSU Board of Regents; they should be regarded as authoritative. Further information on FSC's composition, powers, and operations is available in the Faculty Manual, Section I.E.4.

Membership:

Current FSC members, the year they rotate off the committee, and their affiliation:

T. Randy Fortenbery, co-chair (2021)
Economic Sciences

Vilma Navarro-Daniels, co-chair (2021)
School of Languages, Cultures, and Race

Allan Felsot (2021)
Department of Entomology

Ken Faunce (2021)
Department of History

R. Dave Evans (2022)
School of Biological Sciences

Keri McCarthy (2022)
School of Music

Mary Paine (2022)
Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences

Sabine Davis (2022)
School of Languages, Cultures, and Race

Yonas Demissie (2023)
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

Tracy Klein (2023)
College of Nursing

Gabriella Reznowski (2023)
WSU Libraries

Robin Bond (2023)
Honors College

Incoming Tenured Members:

Xiuyu Wang (2024)

Markus Flury (2024)

Alla Kostyukova (2024)

Incoming Career Track Members:

Rebecca Cooney (2024)

Keri McCarthy and Tracy Klein will co-chair the FSC in 2021-2022

Accomplishments:

In 2020-2021, the FSC had one major accomplishment beyond its regular business.

- 1) Expanded the Committee to include three Career Track Faculty. Historically, the composition of the FSC has been nine tenured faculty. Members are elected by the faculty through online voting. Committee membership required that members must have at least six years of service at WSU, be tenured at least at the associate rank, and not hold administrative appointments that involve participation in tenure and/or promotion decisions.

In 2019-2020 the FSC reviewed these requirements. To be more inclusive and broaden the representation of all faculty, the FSC updated its by-laws to include three career-track faculty on the FSC. Career-track faculty members must have at least six years of service at WSU and not hold administrative appointments that involve participation in promotion decisions. These career-track faculty will be present at all FSC committee meetings and provide representation on FSC cases involving career-track faculty.

Changes regarding the FSC committee composition were presented to the Faculty Senate in March 2020. The FSC ballot (fielded in April 2020) included six career-track individuals, of whom three were elected for service on the FSC.

In order to match the career track faculty and tenure track faculty FSC terms of three years each, the career track faculty from Spring 2020 resulted in faculty being elected to 1-year, 2-year, or 3-year term. In 2021 the ballot included an election for a career faculty member to replace the out-going 1-year term member elected last year to serve a complete 3-year term.

Appeals:

In July 2020, the FSC received an appeal from a faculty member regarding a termination following the third-year comprehensive review. This case was investigated by the FSC (with a sub-committee of four committee members), and a final report forwarded to the appellant and President Schulz on 6 November 2020.

In March 2020, the FSC received an appeal from a faculty member concerning denial of tenure and promotion, and termination effective May 2022. This case was investigated by the FSC (with a sub-committee of three committee members) and a final report forwarded to the appellant and President Schulz on 25 May 2021.

Recommendations:

Some problems presented this year persist from previous years and require attention by the provost and/or the Faculty Senate:

1. We feel it is necessary to remind faculty and administrators of the difference between the intensive annual review conducted each year, and the Career Progress Report given as part of the third-year review of Assistant Professors. In addition to the intensive annual review in the third year, a career [progress report is to be provided to the faculty member in their third year (required by the faculty manual, section III.C.4.3.d), and an explicit meeting between the Chair/Director and the faculty member should take place where the Career Progress Report is discussed. The faculty member, in their third year, should receive a copy of their annual intensive evaluation as well as a copy of their Career Progress Report.
2. Last year the FSC highlighted the importance of the mentoring committee in the success of a given faculty member, whether seeking tenure and promotion (i.e., assistant professor) or promotion (i.e., associate professor). We continue to encourage each unit carefully review the roles and responsibilities of a mentoring committee in the development of a given faculty member, updating and clarifying as needed. Mentoring committee responsibilities should be clearly delineated in writing, preferably in the unit manual. The role of the mentoring committee in providing the Chair/Director input in the annual evaluation process should also be explicitly stated.