

Guest: Provost Lori Bruce

1. What are current T&P trends?
2. How has the T&P coversheet been incorporated?
- 3.
4. Other questions from Senators

Provost Bruce started by reviewing trends from recent years, showing a table indicating that we are awarding 95% of the tenure requests and 90% of the promotion requests. Of course, there will be some variations each year, but there are no obvious abrupt changes. Each case is evaluated individually. Each person involved in the process is expected to do their own

Question: What about when a candidate has a number of good annual evaluations and good re

Question: There is some concern about misalignment with the policies. One talks about an appeals committee the policy indicates that you should exclude the applicant. Should they be included as part of their due process?

Answer: President Oldham Policies are subject to review and revision. You should definitely use the mechanism to remedy the issues. There are schedules and also a sunset clause. The Senate is encouraged to revisit the policies and recommend improvements.

Provost Bruce It does seem odd to exclude the applicant. There could have been a reason for doing this

President Oldham Most of the time, the appeal is to look at the process that was followed. The difficulty is when judicating with different people than those involved in the original decision.

Provost Bruce The applicant could have information about the process or new evidence that needs to be considered. Need to stay focused on the issue of the appeal.

Question: Several points Some departments have criteria for promotion and tenure that are too lax or too stringent, they should review them and compare to others. The Faculty Affairs committee is defined in the promotion policy to make decisions on appeals about promotion. The chair of the department and the faculty member are supposed to be told of the decision made by the Faculty Affairs committee. As for tenure, there can be credit given for prior service but this is not the same for promotion. However, work done toward tenure does count for promotion.

Response: President Oldham These are all valid points. The department guidelines should be aligned with the goals and strategic plan of the unit and could be reviewed by the dean and the Provost. As for the looseness of who hears the appeals, a standing committee would be better and would facilitate using the same group for consistency over a period of time. Giving credit toward tenure is important, but should be stated in writing up front. Be careful not to devalue the rank of full professor by allowing a candidate to come up too early. The evidence for awarding should be really strong and there needs to be standards across the board.

Provost Bruce The misalignment is due to revision and editing of the policies when the BOT required 2 policies in place of a single policy. That is when the appeals committee was put into the policy. It would be better if the two policies mirrored each other.

Senate President Luna plans to form an ad hoc committee at the next meeting to work on this.

Comments: The Faculty Affairs is a standing committee. It has representatives from all of the colleges, in rotating terms and is a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate. There is a well-

established procedure and timeline for hearing appeals. Their role is to make a recommendation to President Oldham who has the final decision.

Question: When developing the department standards, be careful not to be too prescriptive. We want to keep a level of flexibility to foster diversity. According to the policy, the primary responsibility for the decision is with the peers. Are there weights applied to the different people in the chain of decisions?

Answer: Provost Bruce the peers are the closest to the discipline, they would hold the heaviest there is a disagreement, it requires good reasons and evidence of the strengths and weaknesses that led to the decision. President Oldham agree. I only really evaluate cases with ambiguity. If there is agreement from those before, then I agree.

Question: For many years there was a promotion review committee. Can this be resurrected?

Answer: yes. As evaluators, we are allowed to make personal judgements. These judgements should be professional judgements. All must participate in the process. This is even more important when there are disagreements. We must hope that the process is strong enough to handle the conflict.

Question: What is the status of the dossier cover sheet?

Answer: Provost Bruce It was approved in April of 2020 by the Academic Council. It is discussed in the procedures for applying for promotion. It is designed as a quantitative table plus a narrative. It is meant to help to show the impact that the faculty member has had and highlight shows the most important information first, similar to an executive summary. It is only required for tenure, but most are using it for promotion also. It helps to give context around the accomplishment and tries to negate bias. When I evaluate a dossier, I am looking for a reason to cover sheet helps to get me there faster.

Discussion about Policy 600 Code of Conduct

Guests: Associate VP Kevin Vedder, Human Resources

1. Section III-C of Policy 600 - - how is this interpreted? Can it be modified?
2. Other questions from Senators

Question: In Section 3, part c it discusses ramifications for the appearance of unethical conduct.

Answer: Associate VP Vedder is honored to be here. However, I am still getting to know the policies, so I will do my best to answer your questions. I understand that the nexus of this came

about when TTU was transitioning to the BOT and this policy became necessary. I am not aware of the basis for this part of the policy. It could come from state policies, but I would have to do some research to discover the source. Once the circumstances are understood, then we can consider changing or removing it from the policy.

Question: I federal level. I am glad you are willing to revise.

Answer: I have found the same wording in the code of conduct policy at UT, MTSU, and Austin Peay. The same elements are present in those with identical language.

Question: Does it have teeth, or is it vague?

Answer: Again, I am not fully versed at this time. I do agree there are some areas of concern. When I have a better understanding, I can consider changes. Of course, you always need to consider the particulars of any given situation or event and then make a determination of the appropriate actions.

Question: This disciplinary measures and resulting liability of the university. An employee could claim bias. This is up for review in 2021, has it been reviewed?

Answer: Not to my knowledge.

Comments: There is concern about the unspecific language and the possibility of subjective application of this part of the policy. There can be an appearance of wrongdoing when there is no wrongdoing present. This could have financial concerns for the university. This policy does apply to all employees, but just faculty members.

Question: Who determines if unethical behavior occurred?

Answer: That would be the supervisor or department chair. Of course, there would be an investigation where we would talk with all involved parties.

Comments:

This policy needs to be revised to address 21st century issues. We need to be discouraging incivility and disrespect and encouraging professional courtesy. We all need to hold ourselves to a higher standard.

We need to respect freedom of expression and realize that reasoned discourse is a good thing. Sometimes we may act foolish, but does that make it misconduct?

This is a bad policy as it is written. Subjective criteria for disciplinary measures are a non-starter.

