

From: Jo Tyler (jtyler) jtyler@umw.edu

Subject: UFC Request for the COE P&T Committee

Date: March 25, 2016 at 5:25 PM

To: rhetorao@gmail.com

Cc: Nina Mikhalevsky (nmik) nmik@umw.edu, John Broome (jbroome) jbroome@umw.edu, Janine Davis (jdavis7) jdavis7@umw.edu, Marie Sheckels (msheckel) msheckel@umw.edu

JT

Anand,

Because the COE Faculty Affairs Committee has the responsibility for reviewing policies on P&T, I forwarded your email (dated 3/8/16 below) to them as well as to our P&T committee. Although I did not receive responses from all members of both committees regarding your questions, those few who responded were thoughtful and expansive. Here is a summary of the compiled responses to your questions, including highlights of the most persuasive points... (I am sending my own responses in a separate email.)

Regarding External Letters in P&T:

All who responded agreed that external letters are important and should be expected; they also agreed that individual faculty should supply names of potential letter writers. The members also agreed that the current COE policy in Appendix K addresses a fair expectation for external letters and presents a standard procedure for obtaining the letters. There was agreement as well that different colleges should determine their own requirements for obtaining and selecting letters of recommendation for P&T purposes.

Among the specific comments received, one member pointed out that distinctions among colleges are important in determining sources of letters, explaining that in the COE, as distinct from other colleges, "our interaction with future employers (the schools) is a major part of our professional work ... They see what we do, how we work, the students that we produce, and so on." Another member said "I would support NOT limiting the areas that outside recommenders can talk about. I do not think it is our job to predict the extent of faculty work outside of the university." Another comment about the sources of letters noted that if there were restrictions on who could write letters, it would limit the evidence available to the committee. For example, in reviewing the credentials of letter writers, the committee has a source of evidence of a candidate's overall judgment and perception of his or her professionalism.

Regarding Evaluation of Teaching and Use of Student Course Evaluation Data:

There was general agreement that the current instrument is not well crafted so it does not provide much in the P&T process. One committee member also wondered if asking this question indicated a desire to "elevate" the use of student course evaluations by somehow increasing response rates or "improving" the questions asked. That member cautioned that a survey should not be given more weight in evaluating teaching on P&T or annual performance review, and concluded by saying "Define the problem. Fix the problem. Don't look for a bandaid."

I hope you find this information helpful,

--Jo Tyler

Professor, College of Education

Chair, COE Promotion and Tenure Committee

Chair, COE Faculty Affairs Committee

From: Anand Rao <rhettorao@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 8, 2016 11:14 AM
To: Jo Tyler (jtyler)
Subject: Request for the COE P&T Committee

Hi Jo,

I hope you enjoyed your spring break! I am writing in response to a discussion item that the UFC had on its last meeting agenda. We discussed the possibility of including outside letters for promotion and tenure decisions, and would like to hear from the college P&T committees on this issue. We would like to hear your committee's thoughts on the following:

- 1) use of outside letters. How useful would outside letters be to the committee during promotion and tenure consideration? If the university were to include the use of outside letters, what should the letters comment on (limited to scholarly and professional activity, or include review of teaching and service), and how should outside reviewers be identified and selected?
- 2) evaluation of teaching. We also discussed some concerns raised regarding the evaluation of teaching, particularly given concerns raised over the use of online evaluation instruments and what have been typically low response rates. Does the committee have any recommendations for what can be used to supplement the current instrument?

We will continue this discussion at our next meeting on Wednesday, March 30th, and would appreciate your committee's comments and input to help direct that discussion. Written comments that I can distribute to UFC members in advance would be ideal, but members of the COE P&T committee are also welcome to attend the meeting and participate. Please let me know if you plan to attend and I will set aside time at the beginning of this discussion for you to share the comments coming from your committee.

Best,

Anand
P. Anand Rao, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Communication
Chair, University Faculty Council
Director, Speaking Intensive Program and
the Speaking Center
University of Mary Washington

