



May 2, 2023

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

FROM: Dr. Tracy Klein, Co-chair, WSU Faculty Status Committee  
Dr. Alla Kostyukova, Co-chair, WSU Faculty Status Committee

### **Report of the Faculty Status Committee: Academic Year 2022-2023**

#### **Charge and Purpose**

Pursuant to I.B.4 of the Washington State University (WSU) Faculty Manual, we are reporting the activities of the WSU Faculty Status Committee (FSC) for the 2022-2023 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:

- (1) Reviews, mediates, and/or adjudicates disputes between individual faculty members and between individual faculty members and the administration.
- (2) Makes recommendations to the Faculty Affairs Committee and to the president concerning policies about faculty affairs which arise out of its conciliatory and judicial functions.
- (3) Calls special meetings of the faculty or any component thereof, giving reasonable notice, at which time the chair of the Committee shall preside.
- (4) Reviews any problem within its jurisdiction brought to it by any member of the faculty
- (5) Makes periodic reports (at least annually) to the Faculty Senate and to the faculty concerning its operations

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 non-renewable three-year terms that end on August 15th.

FSC's investigations are thorough and confidential. Reports of the findings of an FSC investigation are provided to the members of the committee, the appellant and to the President in addition to the Senate Executive Committee. 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, charge, functions, and operations is available in the Faculty Manual, Section I.B.4.

### **Membership:**

Current membership consists of 12 faculty members, 9 tenure track (tenured) and 3 career track. The members and their affiliations can be found at: <https://facsen.wsu.edu/faculty-status-committee/>. A ballot to elect a new Co-Chair was circulated among current members, and Associate Professor Aaron Oforlea was elected for the 2023-24 term to serve with Alla Kostyukova.

A ballot to replace members who are finishing their terms was released by the Provost's office on April 17, 2023. Elected new members and those who were not elected were notified on (May 2, 2023) and all elected have accepted appointments. New members are: Kayo Niimi (Associate Professor, Career Track); Bidisha Mandal and Thabiti Lewis (Professors) and Marc Kramer (Associate Professor, Tenured).

### **Appeals:**

The FSC received one appeal, which was determined by preliminary evaluation of four committee members to be outside the scope of the FSC as it primarily focused on salary dispute. However, a thorough report of findings was generated from this preliminary evaluation and communicated to the President, Senate, Provost, Department chair and faculty member on September 21, 2022. All acknowledged receipt and the report was subsequently shared with all committee members and formally adopted. A response was requested from the Department chair and received timely on December 21, 2022. This response was reviewed and accepted by vote of the full FSC committee on February 20, 2023.

A subcommittee of FSC members and tenured non-FSC members was appointed to a Faculty Hearing Committee chaired by Dr. Douglas Call to review a faculty disciplinary case which was scheduled for January 17, 2023. This case was subsequently settled without hearing, and the committee was therefore dismissed by Chair Call.

### **Other Activities:**

The FSC met on August 19, October 3, and November 28 of 2022 and January 20, February 20, March 27, and April 17 of 2023. Minutes are maintained in the FSC Teams site accessible to all

current members. Completed activities include updating of bylaws, updating of membership and elections requirements in the Faculty Manual, nomination of new members, adoption of a formal ethics policy, and adoption of an online complaint form: <https://facsen.wsu.edu/faculty-status-committee/> and at <https://provost.wsu.edu/complaints/> in addition to those noted in the prior section. Members also met with the WSU Ombudsman's office in April to discuss the roles of each office and how we interface on faculty status issues.

### **Recommendations:**

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

1. We continue to emphasize that the process of annual review has been confusing to faculty and administrators, particularly considering multiple potential COVID extensions. 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), 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. We continue to recommend that a mentoring committee (or at minimum a mentor) is necessary for a given faculty member (career and tenure track), whether seeking tenure and promotion (i.e., assistant professor) or promotion (i.e., associate professor) in addition to the support and guidance of relevant departmental guidelines. We continue to encourage that each unit/department carefully review the roles and responsibilities of a mentoring committee in the development of a given faculty member, updating, and clarifying as needed. Mentoring responsibilities should be clearly delineated in writing, preferably in the unit/department manual or its equivalent. The role of the mentor in providing the Chair/Director input in the annual evaluation process should also be explicitly stated. There have been gaps also reported from individual colleges regarding guidance on progression from associate to full professor in all tracks.
3. The Faculty Status Committee's functional scope continues to cover career track promotion. We advise periodic review of bylaws to address inclusion in promotion guidance.
4. Because the scope of FSC is broad and becoming more inclusive of a greater number of faculty, we advise that the focus of the 2023-2024 FSC include a re-evaluation of the terms and member designations currently specified in FSC's governing bylaws and the Faculty Manual.
5. The FSC is concerned about the visibility of our committee, and we suggest adding information about the committee and its charge to decisions on tenure and promotion, in addition to other sources of post-decision assistance for guidance and further evaluation at department, unit, or Faculty Affairs levels.

