May 23, 2013

TO: Washington State University Faculty Senate
   Dr. Elson Floyd, President
   Dr. Daniel Bernardo, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President
   Dr. Francis McSweeney, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

FR: Dr. William Cofer, Co-chair, WSU Faculty Status Committee
    Dr. Kristen Johnson, Co-chair, WSU Faculty Status Committee

RE: 2012-2013 Faculty Status Committee Annual Report

Pursuant Section II.E.4.a.5 of the Washington State University Faculty Manual, we are reporting the activities of the WSU Faculty Status Committee (FSC) for the 2012-2013 academic year. The Faculty Status Committee (FSC) is an independent investigative faculty committee elected by the Washington State University (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 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 for three-year terms that end on August 15th.

In the 2012-2013 academic year, the members of FSC were: Margaret Black (CVM; 2013), William Cofer (CEA; 2013), Stergios Fotopoulos (COB; 2015), Gail Furman (COE; 2013), Cheryl Ganselman (LIB; 2014; replacing James Harsh, who resigned from the committee), Kristen Johnson (CAHNRS; 2014), Craig Parks (CAS; 2015), Bruce Pinkleton (COC; 2013; replacing Gisela Ernst-Slavit on sabbatical for the academic year), and Robert Quinlan (CAS; 2015). William Cofer and Kristen Johnson served as Co-chairs.

Kristen Johnson and Stergios Fotopoulos will serve as Co-chairs in 2013-2014. Annual elections were held during the spring semester to replace rotating members and the top three finalists have agreed to serve on the committee, including Laura Hill (CAHNRS), Julie Anne Wieck (CAS), and Katrina Mealey (CVM). Gisela Ernst-Slavit will be back from sabbatical in 2013-2014. The President accepted all FSC nominations for the Faculty Hearing Panel, which currently includes 21 members (3-year terms) as required by the Faculty Manual.
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

FSC received four appeals for denial of tenure and promotion (T&P), and one appeal for deferral of promotion in the spring of 2013. Appeals were received from three different colleges and WSU Libraries, and from three campuses. Investigations for all five appeals were completed by mid-May and reports were forwarded to the appellants and President. At the time that this report was submitted, the FSC has received no appeals concerning non-reappointment of tenure-track junior faculty (third-year review) from spring 2013.

The Faculty Manual states that appeals must be evaluated on the basis of substantial procedural irregularity, inadequate consideration, and/or violation of academic freedom. Based on these criteria, the FSC recommended to the President that the decision to deny T&P be upheld for three cases and no decision was recommended for two cases. After reviewing the FSC reports and recommendations, the President chose to set aside one decision and uphold two T&P denials. One T&P decision and the promotion case are still being considered at the time of this writing.

The FSC wants to bring to the forefront several issues of importance that arise with the appeals we receive.

- Some clinical faculty members teach courses in several different disciplines, especially at the urban campuses. Although they are assigned to a unit, administratively, they are often not fully credentialed in that discipline. As a result, they have a difficult time when they go up for promotion. We suggest that, in those cases, the proper channels for promotion be laid out when their contract is negotiated.
- An honest assessment from colleagues of candidates for T&P is necessary for the decision making at higher levels. However, knowing that comments made on ballots or at closed meetings will be exposed to the candidate inhibits the ability to speak freely. Conversely, the exposure of frank comments can lead to conflict and recrimination. We suggest that a means be found to ensure that ballots and closed meetings are confidential.