

Agenda

UWG Faculty Development Committee Meeting

November 5, 2021

12:00-1:00pm; via Google Meet

(Chair: Patrick Erben, English)

- 1) **Welcome and Attendance**
- 2) **Approval of August 24, 2021 Minutes and September 20, 2021 Minutes**
 - a. See email attachments.
- 3) **FDC work on BOR's PTR and Annual Evaluation Policy Changes**
 - a. **Please review:** New BOR Policy, pp.38-48 (Approved by the BOR on October 12, 2021)
https://www.usg.edu/regents/assets/regents/documents/board_meetings/Agenda_2021_10_12-13.pdf.
 - b. **Please compare:** UWG Faculty Handbook
<https://www.westga.edu/assets/provost/docs/faculty-handbook.pdf>.
 - i. **Especially review Sections 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 109, and Section 200 (Teaching)—in light of the new category of “Student Success Activities.”**
 - c. **Specific FDC discussion points:**
 - i. FDC work vis-à-vis Provost “Working Group”
 - ii. FDC recommendations/policy proposal
 - iii. FDC recommendations/proposal for annual review criteria
- 4) **Old Business**
- 5) **New Business**
- 6) **Adjourn**

**APPENDIX A: DOCUMENTS and COMMUNICATION regarding BOR new Annual Evaluation,
Tenure, and Post-Tenure Review Guidelines**

1. **Proposed BOR Policy Changes:** https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sI0_R-XoLjxKfs55hyIbWxs-zEVUYMhv/view?usp=sharing

2. **Georgia Tech DRAFT Senate Statements/Protests:**
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WGL2_byQjA4fKTufXlzDLdewOv-3Afkj/view?usp=sharing

3. Communications from GA AAUP Chair, Matthew Boedy:

From: Matthew Boedy <Matthew.Boedy@ung.edu>

Date: Tue, Sep 7, 2021 at 12:46 PM

Subject: new tenure and promotion category

To: <USGFC@listserv.uga.edu>

Everyone,

I noticed on the agenda for the Regents meeting today is a significant change to the promotion/tenure categories tied to the PTR revisions. I see USG is adding “student success activities” as a new category, separate from teaching effectiveness.

I have a few questions:

- 1) Where can we find a USG definition of student success activities?

- 2) How is this different than teaching effectiveness?

- 3) If faculty are judged by DWF rates – which we often have no or little control over – what data point is the USG aiming to measure student success with?

- 4) Have any of you heard about this before?

Thanks

Dr. Matthew Boedy

President, Georgia AAUP

From: Matthew Boedy <Matthew.Boedy@ung.edu>

Date: Thu, Sep 16, 2021 at 4:26 PM

Subject: on changes to tenure

To: <USGFC@listserv.uga.edu>

Everyone,

They say some things end not with a bang but on a whimper. This is what we are facing with the proposed revisions concerning tenure in the most recent Regents agenda.

No matter whatever the USG told a reporter - and I forwarded you that exchange - the language about firing without cause if indeed it stands is the end of tenure in Georgia.

If tenure at its most basic is the protection of a process and a mandate for a specific cause for firing, this new language opposes that clearly.

The national AAUP legal office has begun writing an advisory letter which it will send to me as conference president. That letter will lay out in stark terms how this change and the associated process that got us the revisions in whole to post-tenure review are in violation of AAUP standards and institutional process best practices. I will forward that letter to you when I get it.

Faculty Senates should propose and pass resolutions, this body should state in clear terms its position, and I will ask all AAUP chapters around the state to do the same. Those voices should be sent up the chain all the way to the Regents through direct communications and media play.

Some of you have asked if the national AAUP will censure the USG/BOR for such a policy. No, but what the AAUP has done in other states is to censure institutions when they act badly against individual faculty. So when/if this language is passed into policy, and then if/when a tenured faculty member is fired from it, the national AAUP will bring to bear its storied traditions and standards on the state of Georgia.

We cannot take the word of the USG that this only applies to this or that situation. PTR taking aim at tenure is bad enough. But what we have always done and mandated the USG do, is follow the letter of

the law in faculty handbooks and policy papers. We must work from the text itself and this text for now shows the end of tenure and therefore academic freedom in Georgia.

Sincerely,

Dr. Matthew Boedy

President, Georgia Conference of the AAUP

From: **Daniel K. Williams** <dkw@westga.edu>

Date: Sat, Sep 18, 2021 at 9:14 PM

Subject: Re: AAUP update

[addressees: History program faculty members]

Yes, as Colleen mentioned, FDC senate chair Patrick Erben did discuss some of these proposed changes to P&T / PTR at last week's Senate meeting.

At the time, he expressed concern about some of these changes, but since then, new developments have emerged that give even more cause for alarm. I have been in communication with Patrick over the past couple days about all of these developments, and I expect that either the FDC or ExComm will draft a resolution that could be sent to the BOR as an expression of UWG faculty opinion on these proposed changes.

Here is what I know about the changes to the tenure and post-tenure review system that the USG is considering:

1) The annual faculty evaluations by the department chair will take on increased importance for all tenured faculty. If these changes are adopted, one negative annual evaluation in one category will trigger a plan of improvement; two negative evaluations in a row will trigger an early post-tenure review. This was the earliest of the changes to be announced (it was discussed at the BOR's September 9th meeting), and this is what Patrick's report to the Senate primarily focused on. Patrick and others have expressed concern about this, because it gives more power to a department chair (and, conversely, less power to the traditional peer review process) than has existed before. Patrick is especially concerned that in disciplines in which faculty are not necessarily able to publish a new article every year, faculty will be penalized to a much greater extent than they previously have if they receive an annual

evaluation from their chair that indicates sub-par performance in this or any other area. My own view is that if this passes, each program or department will need to pass guidelines providing much clearer direction on the standards that faculty need to meet for annual evaluations, since these will now arguably become more important than the tenure or PTR process for most faculty. Instead of expecting a major evaluation only every five years, tenured faculty should now be ready for important evaluations by the chair every year.

2) There will now be a new category of evaluation for all faculty: participation in "student success activities." Previously, we have always been evaluated on three categories in our annual evaluations and in the P&T / PTR process: teaching, service, and professional development. Now there will be a fourth category: student success activities. As Tristan Denley later clarified, this category includes advising and mentoring students and a wide variety of assistance to students outside of teaching. This change has generated some negative reaction from some faculty senate chairs in the USGFC, but I haven't heard much reaction against it at our campus. My own view is that this new category won't hurt us at all, but will instead reward us for things that we're already doing. For example, if you write letters of recommendation for students, that could count for this category - as could a wide variety of other activities that most of us do on a regular basis. For the most part, documenting activities in this category will merely mean moving a few relevant activities from the service and teaching categories to this new category. But it will be another category on which we will be evaluated each year, and that may be stressful for some faculty. If the USG approves this proposal, the Faculty Development Committee at UWG will create a revised set of P&T guidelines for the university that will include this category, and once the Faculty Senate approves those changes to the faculty handbook, we'll then need to update the P&T guidelines in our program to include details on this category as well, as they pertain to history faculty.

3) The set of proposed changes to the P&T process authorizes the BOR to take tenure decisions away from a particular university within the system and transfer those decisions to the BOR. The proposed guidelines state: "While the Board of Regents has delegated authority for tenure decisions to institution presidents, if an institution is adjudged to be insufficiently rigorous in its enactment of faculty review processes the Board of Regents may move the authority to award tenure to the Board level until institutional processes have been remediated." This has raised a lot of alarm at both our campus AAUP chapter and the state AAUP, because it takes tenure decisions away from faculty and local administrators and transfers them to a board of non-academics appointed by the governor. It has the potential to completely change the tenure process. When the provost was asked about this proposed change at the Faculty Senate meeting last week, he said that he wanted us to make sure that we had a tenure process that was sufficiently rigorous that it would withstand BOR scrutiny and not trigger a BOR takeover of the tenure process at UWG.

4) The proposed revised USG policy will allow a university president to remove even tenured faculty members mid-contract without cause and without being governed by the policies that have traditionally restricted such dismissals. This is the change that is truly alarming, and it's what the state AAUP president called "the end of tenure here in

Georgia." I don't think that's an exaggeration. Currently, tenured faculty in the USG system can be removed only for two reasons: 1) Violations of policy. (For example, during the past year faculty have been removed at both UWG and other USG institutions for refusing to teach their classes in a F2F format when they were listed as such. USG policy allows university presidents to remove faculty for cause, whether they're tenured or not). 2) Financial exigency. USG policy outlines a process for declaring financial exigency in either the university as a whole or in a particular program, and when financial exigency is declared, the president has the right to remove tenured faculty members. But now, the proposed new USG guidelines would allow the president to remove even tenured faculty mid-contract "other than for cause." The proposed new guidelines state: "The President of a University System of Georgia (USG) institution or his or her designee may at any time remove any faculty member or other employee of an institution for cause. Cause shall include willful or intentional violation of the Board of Regents' policies or the approved statutes or bylaws of an institution or as otherwise set forth in the Board of Regents' policies and the approved statutes or bylaws of an institution. Such removals for cause shall be governed by the following policies on Grounds for Removal and Procedures for Dismissal. **A faculty member may also be separated from employment prior to the end of the contract term other than for cause as outlined here, pursuant to other policies of the Board of Regents. Such other policies shall not be governed by or subject to the following policies on Grounds for Removal and Procedures for Dismissal**" (new proposed additions are in bold).

I think that there's still some doubt as to what exactly these two sentences mean, so earlier this week, I made an effort to try to find out the BOR's exact meaning, but no one on the USG Faculty Council had any definite information on this. The prevailing view in both the USGFC and the state AAUP is that this language does indeed give university presidents the right to terminate the contracts of any tenured faculty member without stating a reason for doing so.

If that is the correct interpretation, tenure in the USG would no longer mean what it has traditionally meant; instead, any faculty member, whether tenured or not, would have less job security than non-tenured lecturers currently have. Any of us could be removed by the president at any time, and the president would not have to give a reason or go through any formal process to terminate the person's contract. If this is really what this proposed revision means, it is certainly alarming - which is why the USGFC, the state AAUP, and our campus AAUP chapter are sounding the alarm. We found out about this only this week, which is why it wasn't mentioned at our last Faculty Senate. But I do expect that the Faculty Senate will consider a resolution for the BOR on this issue in October. I don't expect that it will accomplish very much, since the USG chancellor is not even acknowledging the emails of faculty senate chairs this semester. But the GA Tech Faculty Senate has drafted a detailed protest resolution on this issue, and I would like to encourage our Faculty Senate to do likewise - although the fact that our next Faculty Senate meeting will not take place until after the BOR votes on this proposal may make that difficult - though I do think that I can probably get a statement from ExComm before the BOR's October meeting even if we won't be able to formally convene the Faculty Senate before then.

So, what can we do in the history program about these proposed changes? Right now, none of these proposals have yet been adopted, so there's still time to influence the BOR on the issue (if faculty have any influence over the BOR, that is). The BOR is scheduled to vote on these changes on October 12-13, I believe. Before then, the campus AAUP and possibly parts of the Faculty Senate (such as the FDC and / or ExComm) will be discussing the issues and attempting to influence the BOR - though, as I said, the BOR has been remarkably unresponsive to faculty senate resolutions across the USG this semester.

Perhaps, in a best-case scenario, the BOR will not adopt all of these policies or will at least agree to a modification that would mitigate the full harshness of their potential effects on faculty. However, if all of these proposals are adopted by the BOR, we will then have to move quickly to comply with them. The first step will be for the FDC and the Faculty Senate to update our university faculty handbook to reflect these changes. We can then do a few things at the program level to help protect faculty, including: 1) Update our guidelines to give faculty a clear set of standards to meet for annual evaluations from the department chair. If these evaluations are now going to be more important than ever, we probably need some clear benchmarks so that every faculty member will have a reasonable idea of what to expect. 2) Create a list of activities that can be considered "student success activities," so that faculty will know what they need to do to earn a rating of "Meets Expectations" in this area in their annual evaluations, P&T applications, and PTR. If possible, we would need to do those things before the beginning of the annual evaluation process in the spring, I think.

But ultimately, some of the most important aspects of the process will be out of control. We will not have direct control at the program level over whether the BOR will take P&T decisions away from UWG altogether and transfer those decisions to the board. I hope that the FDC and the Faculty Senate can ensure that our institutional standards are sufficiently "rigorous" to prevent that from happening, and I expect that they probably are. But in the somewhat unlikely event that this happens, there's not much that the history program can do about it.

The issue that is most worrisome, however, is not that the BOR would take over the tenure process for UWG; it's rather that the president would use the new guidelines to remove even tenured faculty from programs that are too costly or that seem to have too many faculty. If these guidelines are adopted - and if the BOR clarifies that these guidelines can be interpreted to give presidents this authority - I imagine that we'll likely see some of these faculty removals at UWG. And if that happens, of course, it would be a radical change from everything that we've always assumed about tenure.

Dan