

Faculty Council Meeting

November 15th, 5:30 pm

Cabell Board Room

Members Present: Krista Denning, MD (Anatomy & Pathology), James Denvir, PhD (Biochemistry & Microbiology), Rameez Sayyed, MD (Cardiovascular Services), Ross Patton, MD (Family Health), Sydnee McElroy, MD (Family Health), Shannon Browning, MD (Internal Medicine), Deji Olajide, MD (Internal Medicine), Sona Shah, MD (Neuroscience), Tigran Garabekyan, MD (Orthopaedics), Pat Kelly, MD (Pediatrics), Todd Green, PhD (Pharmacology & Physiology), Benjamin Lafferty, MD (Psychiatry).

Members Absent: Yousef Shweihat, MD (Internal Medicine), Brenda Dawley, MD (Ob/Gyn), Audra Pritt, MD (Pediatrics), Bonnie Beaver, MD (Surgery), Dustin Robinson, MD (Surgery).

Agenda: To discuss the Promotion and Tenure Regulation recommendations from the general faculty.

Dr. Sona Shah (Chair) began the meeting at 5:35 pm.

The group began discussion on the Revised Promotion and Tenure Guidelines, and the comments these guidelines received from the faculty. Highlights from the meeting discussion are below:

- A participant noted comments from the participant's department came from senior members in the department, and said that although many liked the overall idea, there were issues.
- Another member noted that, in the case of a Pathologist, patients do not even know the Pathologist, as they have no patient contact. Thus, it is unfair to include requirements for patient satisfaction surveys for their Promotion and Tenure.
- The group discussed the research track. A member had concerns on the basic science side. The participant noted that the language was outdated and did not apply to how research is conducted now. The participant noted that many projects are multi-disciplinary and multi-investigator, and said that type of research should be supported.
- The group discussed the proposed required number of publications, and felt that the number was too rigid.
- A participant noted that a "one-size fits all" approach is not appropriate, and that one discipline's requirements will not necessarily work for another discipline. The participant noted that publications will vary by department.
- The group noted that their needs to be accountability, but that the proposed number was too strict and inflexible.
- A participant noted that it is difficult to get a lab up and running in the first year, and that to expect 8 publications in 7 years is too many.

- A participant noted that you often have to be asked to be a reviewer of a manuscript, so that proposed requirement of reviewing 2 manuscripts would be difficult in many cases.
- The group discussed that there is no room for variance within the departments with these regulations, and again noted that a one size fits all approach will not work.
- A participant noted the different challenges departments face when trying to speak at a National Conference (e.g. some specialties are much larger than others, with many more people competing).
- The group discussed what it means to be a “National Meaning” and noted that the proposed regulations leave room for interpretation.
- A participant noted that you have to have the infrastructure existing for faculty to get involved in research, and noted how some institutions strive to invest in individual success.
- The group discussed the reason for these regulations. A participant noted that the original mission of the school was to produce primary care physicians for West Virginia, and did not include a research focus. The Council noted that while moving in the direction of a research institution was good, it could not be expected to happen overnight.
- A participant noted that these regulations could be limiting, and that they could reduce what faculty are able to do because they would not be available for other, possibly more useful, things.
- A participant noted the biggest concern was that the institution cannot fully become what these regulations suggest so quickly, and that the change should be gradual.
- A participant commented that the infrastructure does not yet exist for this to happen now anyways.
- A participant noted a fear that this could be a possible deterrent to potential faculty from coming or new faculty from staying here.
- The group discussed the results of not meeting the tenure requirements at the end of your tenure track. The group discussed whether or not these requirements meant that at the end of your track you were either awarded tenure or fired.
- A participant noted that the Greenbook states you are held accountable to the rules put in place when you were hired.
- The group noted that some faculty do not know what track they are on, and discussed the need for departments to review this with their faculty for clarity.
- A participant noted the lack of departmental promotion committees, and noted that they could be useful and advisory to the faculty of that department.
- A participant noted that clinicians do not have an incentive to stay here.
- The group discussed whether tenure still holds its original meaning.
- The group noted that younger clinicians often question whether or not tenure would have any benefit or meaning to them.
- A participant noted that while you can switch from the non tenure to the tenure track, you cannot switch from the tenure track to the non tenure track.
- The group discussed again what happens if you do not meet the tenure requirements within the allotted time. The group discussed whether or not there are clear punishments for not completing the requirements.

- A participant noted that, on the clinical side, there is no incentive to not go into private practice because there is a lack of infrastructure needed to produce these requirements. The participant also noted that residents need clinicians to learn from, and would go where they could learn from clinicians.
- The group noted that these regulations need to be more flexible. A participant noted that they need to be able to shift as the mission of the university may also shift years down the road.
- The group discussed existing alternate ways of getting tenure (e.g. the Dean bypassing the committee).
- The group discussed that the responsibility is with the individual faculty member to initiate their own Promotion and Tenure process.
- A participant noted that the document should not be negative and of punishment, but should support what you want faculty to become.
- The faculty noted the need for clearer definitions of what it means to be an Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Full Professor.
- The group noted that this first attempt should be applauded. The group pointed out that these problems are not just with our institution, but are going on nationally and with the tenure system as a whole.
- The group noted that the result of either giving people tenure or termination resulted in many people being granted tenure, and a lowering of standards of what it means to have tenure. They noted that while the shift is to now make the standards stronger, this cannot happen overnight.
- A participant noted that the current proposed regulations sound more like a checklist, and that the prior version was too flexible.
- The group agreed that there needs to be a middle ground to fit a diverse group of clinicians and basic scientists.
- A participant noted that an approach of broad, general guidelines applying to the whole faculty, coupled with more specific guidelines at the departmental level would be best. The group discussed this and agreed the approach would be beneficial.
- A participant noted that a “publish or perish” mentality can produce meaningless research.
- The group noted that the Outreach Clinic should be counted as “service.” The group also discussed that the examples listed in the regulations as service may need to be more professional.
- A participant noted the need for a way to measure outcomes of the Promotion and Tenure guidelines.

The group discussed the main points of their meeting, and agreed on the following:

- 1.) The resources and infrastructure do not currently exist to comply with some of these recommendations.
- 2.) There needs to be departmental variance for specific requirements, and broader general requirements for the school. Specific standards should come with departmental input.
- 3.) There needs to be institutional support to clinical researchers. There also needs to be support of collaborative research.
- 4.) Faculty need to be educated on the regulations and what they mean.
- 5.) The group noted that the old regulations were too loose, but that the proposed regulations are too rigid.

A participant suggested that the departmental meetings should include an agenda item for faculty to bring up broad faculty issues that transcend individual departmental concerns to present to the Faculty Council.

The group decided their next meeting would be Tuesday, December 11th, at 5:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.