

To: Leslie Rutkowski, Chair, SOE Policy Council

From: Faculty and Budgetary Affairs (FABA) Committee of the SOE Policy Council

Re: Proposal for handling merit review and Trustees Teaching Award nominations during the period of COVID-19 Pandemic

Date: 12/03/2020

Friendly amendments from Policy Council 12/16/2020

On this date the FABA addressed a charge from the Policy Council to develop a recommendation for handling merit review and nomination of faculty for Trustees Teaching Awards in 2021 for the 2020 year, in response to the difficult circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recognize there have been unforeseen burdens, and for some increase in existing burdens, that have fallen on the faculty during this year, including the following, 1) extra work associated with moving our teaching and advising online, 2) navigating all facets of work from home, 3) adjusting research programs and 4) facing difficulties in all facets of work that depend on others who are also impacted by the pandemic. Some members of the faculty have been further affected by dramatic increases in the demands of childcare, supervising school at home, caring for ill and elderly relatives, experiencing illness themselves, and losing family members and friends to the virus.

The campus has taken two actions in 2020 relevant to our discussions of merit review: 1) Members of the faculty have been extended the opportunity to apply for a year extension to the tenure timeline; and 2) campus-wide administration of course evaluations was suspended for the spring and summer 2020 semesters. In addition, several realities factored into our deliberations. We understand that chairs need to hold reviews with pre-tenure faculty and the SOE must decide on appointment renewal for those in fourth and fifth years and for NTT positions by March 1 each year. Chairs and committees need time to review any material put forward by faculty for merit review, and members of the faculty must complete the DMAI yearly regardless of other methods used in the merit review. The DMAI reports are also particularly critical to the institution in terms of analytics comparing us to other institutions and in terms of assessing the impact of COVID on institution-wide research productivity. We have also been asked by Policy Council to reduce the amount of faculty governance and administrative work required of the faculty now and in the near future.

After much discussion, we recommend the approach to merit review detailed below.

- 1) DMAI requirement to be revised as follows:
 - a. Extend the window for completion to January 15, 2022 which is consistent with campus recommendation and affords an additional year to the faculty;

- b. For the 2020 annual review due January 31, 2021, set the minimum requirements to these:
 - i. Upload current vita to the DMAI
 - ii. Upload Fall 2020 course evaluations DMAI
- 2) The EAD will request that chairs charge merit review committees to take a streamlined approach to reviewing DMAI reports this year and *this year only*. The purpose will be to ascertain that faculty under review have been *at least* minimally productive. Committees forward the verification of this streamlined review to chairs. Chairs and EAD do not meet.
- 3) Faculty verified as *at least* minimally productive will all receive a pandemic-specific ranking “P” (for Pass or pandemic). We do not anticipate situations in which *less than* minimum productivity is reported, but in that event the existing U ranking should be used.
- 4) Chairs will be provided with a template letter using language to explain this process and report the ranking to faculty. Should raises be forthcoming this year, every member of faculty ranked “P” will receive the same raise.
- 5) We will adopt a three-year window of merit review beginning in 2021, with the first window encompassing the years 2019, 2020, and 2021. *Emphasis may be given to the most productive of the years in the window*. This committee is charged with articulating the logistical details for implementation of this process consistent with the spirit of this document and bring those to the Policy Council for a vote as early as practicable in the spring 2021 term.

We further recommend a process *this year only* for nominating candidate for the Trustees Teaching Awards.

- 1) Send out a call for nominations, including self-nominations, to the faculty including the criteria for the award, a reminder that anyone whose nomination is selected to be put forward would need to prepare a dossier, and that only 15% of the faculty in any one department may be selected for the Trustees Teaching Award. Nominations, including self-nominations will provide 100-150 words stating the basis on which they feel qualified to be selected. As per the description of the award, this basis may be overall strong teaching, but may also be innovation in teaching.
- 2) Chairs of departments select from self-nominations those to be forwarded to the EAD.
- 3) EAD makes invitations to the final group of nominees for development of the dossier that will go to that Faculty Development Committee.