**Annual Committee Report**

**Faculty Relations Committee**

**Faculty Senate of Texas Christian University**

**Academic Year 2018-2019**

Prepared by Andrew Ledbetter, Faculty Relations Committee Chair

**Committee membership**

Members of the committee were Marinda Allender, Kendra Bowen, Emily Herzig, D. Lynn Jackson, Andrew Ledbetter (chair), Jeff Moore, Marie Schein, Greg Stephens (FSEC liaison), Alyssa Stewart, and Dan Williams.

According to the Bylaws of the Faculty Senate, the purpose of the Faculty Relations Committee (FRC) is to “monitor the effectiveness of University policies on tenure, promotion, and grievance, and serve as liaison with Human Relations on faculty benefits and Compensation” (<https://fsn.tcu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Constitution_Bylaws.pdf>, p. 4). The remainder of this document describes the committee’s work toward this general aim during the academic year 2018-19. The minutes for each meeting appear in Appendix A.

1. **Resolutions regarding merited research leave.**

During the previous academic year, FRC had gathered data from peer and aspirant institutions, discovering that TCU’s 8-year merited leave cycle is longer than the 7-year cycle used at other comparable universities. This year, we contacted Institutional Research and asked for information regarding the frequency with which eligible faculty take merited research leave. The overarching finding of that analysis is that fewer than half of eligible faculty take a merited leave. See Appendix B for further information from that report.

Building from these data, we drafted two resolutions that separately addressed (a) who is eligible for leaves, seeking to clarify the eligibility of non-tenure track full time faculty (e.g., instructors and PPPs) and (b) the length between leaves, recommending a move to a 7-year leave cycle. Both resolutions were passed by the Senate on April 4, 2019.

1. **Responding to previously unannounced changes to employee benefits.**

During the fall semester, we learned about two changes to employee benefits, neither of which occurred with consultation by the faculty:

1. From the DEI committee in the College of Fine Arts, we learned that TCU was phasing out benefits for domestic partners.
2. From TCU Announce, we learned that, starting 2019, new and current employees could no longer enroll in the PPO90 health insurance plan.

This was a matter of concern to our committee, given the “Resolution on TCU Employee Benefits” passed by the Senate on May 2, 2013. Moreover, in communication with Vice Chancellor of Human Resources Yohna Chambers, it became apparent that Human Resources considered consultation with the Chancellor’s Cabinet to be adequate consultation of faculty because the Provost sits on the Cabinet.

In response to these changes, we drafted a resolution on shared governance regarding employee benefits. The Senate passed this resolution on November 1, 2018.

1. **Opening lines of communication with Human Resources.**

After passing the resolution on shared governance regarding benefits, Human Resources initiated further conversation with the Senate. Early in the spring semester, employees in Human Resources held a session where they discussed current and future matters pertaining to benefits with representatives from the Faculty Senate and the Staff Assembly. Human Resources indicated their interest in holding such a meeting once a semester.

Without diminishing the value of this, I recommend that the chair of FRC make it a practice to check in with Human Resources during the summer, if possible. Decisions regarding benefits occur during the summer, and without some kind of faculty contact the Senate may be in the dark at critical decision-making points. This is cumbersome because the work of the Senate typically takes place during the academic year, but given the importance of benefits, it would seem to be worth FRC and FSEC’s time to establish a line of communication with Human Resources over the summer months.

1. **Working with the Governance Committee to develop a statement on shared governance.**

The Governance Committee developed a statement on shared governance, and our committee provided feedback on that statement. The statement passed the Senate by electronic vote in November 2018.

1. **Communicating with Institutional Research regarding changes to Faculty 180.**

Early in the academic year, FSEC became aware that Faculty 180 had been altered in a way that asked faculty to list work they had done regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. This change occurred without adequate faculty input and without clear guidance regarding the role of that information in merit, tenure, and promotion decisions. Miscommunication seems to have led to this and this has since been changed, but it raised questions regarding the process by which items appear on the Faculty Annual Report.

In response to this, and anticipating the use of Faculty 180 for the tenure and promotion process (i.e., replacing the current Box system), Mica Bibb in Institutional Research initiated contact with our committee regarding use of Faculty 180. Marie Schein agreed to serve as a liaison between FRC and Institutional Research, including helping them pilot test the new system. Mica visited our April 11, 2019 meeting and gathered feedback from our committee on both the use of Faculty 180 for P&T and use of the system more generally.

**Recommendations for Special Charges in 2019-20:**

In our final meeting, we brainstormed a number of possible charges for next year. I have synthesized these with additional ideas below. Clearly, it would not be possible to address all of these in a single academic year, but it is our hope that these will help FSEC and the FRC chair prioritize FRC’s time and energy next year.

* **Ombudsman and conflict resolution policies:** It would be worthwhile to keep conversation open with Human Resources about these things. It has come to the attention of the Senate that Human Resources has suspended TCU’s conflict resolution policies, pending review. The Senate and Staff Assembly were not consulted about this. We should aim to discover why they were suspended, what the process of review entails, how conflict resolution will be handled absent an active policy, and so forth.
* **Sabbatical resolutions:** We should check in with Provost Dahlberg about this; more generally, it would be helpful to start a tradition whereby the Provost updates the Senate, at least annually, regarding the administrative response to resolutions passed by the Senate.
* **Timing of tenure and promotion decisions:** The new deans and new provost are coming in with highly-accelerated tenure timelines. There is some confusion regarding what is necessary for emeritus status (e.g., does a year need to pass after retirement to obtain that status?) and the timing of promotion reviews for non-tenure track faculty. These may be worth discussing for clarity and consistency regarding procedures.
* **Processes of faculty review:** We considered the possibility that there are differences across Colleges regarding processes of faculty review. For example, some may review tenured faculty across different intervals of time, and some may include a heftier mid-cycle review during the tenure clock. It may be worth considering what consistency versus flexibility should occur regarding faculty reviews across TCU.
* **Phased retirement:** We should continue to discuss with Human Resources regarding whether and when this will be implemented.
* **Workload:** We noted that there is a certain lack of clarity regarding expected conditions of workload and the degree of flexibility in determining workload. For example, Marie Schein noted that some instructors may do research but receive no acknowledgement for it. Andrew noted that the Dean of his College does not seem to consider the size of the class to be relevant in determining the workload attached to that class. From Greg Stephens, it sounds as if the Neeley School may have somewhat more precise mechanisms for negotiating this, although clarity may still be lacking in Neeley as well. It has been some time since FRC has considered workload as it pertains to service. Perhaps a broader investigation of workload would be helpful.
* **Teaching load:** Consistent with the above, it seems that more work is needed to clarify the teaching load expectations for all faculty. Teaching is the common activity that unites all faculty and it should consume a considerable portion of a faculty member’s efforts. At the same time, effort devoted to teaching must be balanced against other expectations, particularly including research/creative activity, service, and administration. When doubling the size of a course, for example, the workload of teaching that course increases, but current practices do not seem to account for that. Of course, classes differ in so many ways that make it difficult to quantify workload, but Greg Stephens mentioned that 10% per class in a year has been mentioned as a benchmark in the past; i.e., for an instructor teaching a 4-4 load, each of those 8 classes consumes 10% of a professors’ workload, meaning that 80% of the faculty members’ time is devoted to teaching (presumably leaving 20% for service). By the same time, we would expect a faculty member who is told that 40% should go to teaching, 40% to research, and 20% to service should be teaching a 2-2 load. It may be worth examining teaching load practices across the university and considering whether further clarification would be helpful here.
* **Value of all types of faculty:** Recent conversations have raised the ugly reality that some in the TCU community may believe that tenured faculty should have a greater voice than non-tenured faculty, and that non-tenured faculty may be fearful about speaking up regarding university matters for fear of reprisal. Also, some of the matters referred to above (workload, faculty review, timing of promotion) may or may not reflect a commitment to equity across different types of full-time faculty. Some time ago, this committee investigated the experience of adjunct faculty members. It may be worth conducting a similar appraisal of the experience of full-time faculty who are not eligible for tenure, particularly as the number of non-tenurable faculty continues to grow.
* **Respectful dialogue:** At TCU, we should treat each other as professionals, particularly across different types of faculty. Following the conversations about civility in the Senate, this may be worth considering further.

Gratefully,

Andrew Ledbetter

Faculty Relations Chair, AY 2018-2019

**Appendix A: Meeting Minutes**

TCU Faculty Relations Committee Meeting Agenda

Thursday, September 13, 2018

3:30 – 5:00 PM

Mary Couts Burnett Library, Lizard Lounge

Members present: Marinda Allender, Kendra Bowen, Emily Herzig, D. Lynn Jackson, Andrew Ledbetter, Jeff Moore, Susan Ramirez, Marie Schein, Greg Stephens

1. Welcome and introductions

We learned that Greg Stephens likes crispy M&Ms and is biased against those who would dare combine chocolate and peanut butter in their candy.

1. What do we want in a Provost?

We discussed several qualifications, and these often took the form of questions that we’d like to ask the candidates. These included:

* Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
* How do we move forward to become a bigger, research Big XII university while still maintaining our distinctiveness as TCU?
* How can we expand our idea of community as we grow?
* Commitment to increase opportunities for faculty research productivity. Resources? Labs? Graduate students?
* What does the future of graduate studies look like at TCU? How can we increase graduate student stipends to draw the best grad students?
* Future of faculty composition (percent tenure/tenure-track, to what extent do we rely on adjunct instructors, etc.)?
* How do we brand ourselves beyond athletics?
* How do we cast a vision for our future identity?
* What is our vision for study abroad? How do we make it cost effective? How do we increase participation? What does “global citizenship” mean? What role language education in study abroad experiences?
* We care about the candidate’s commitment to shared governance, but that is hard to assess when we don’t have a description of it ourselves. It would be beneficial to develop such a statement by the end of the year so that we can share it with the incoming Provost.
* Willingness to stand up to the Board of Trustees when needed.
* Emily Herzig shared ideas brainstormed by the math department: Belief in the teacher-scholar model, commitment to shared governance, not being a pawn to athletics, and belief in broad liberal arts education.
* The Provost should be able to “walk and chew gum at the same time”—in other words, rather than doing one or two of these things as signature work, the Provost should be able to engage a host of initiatives.
* Along those lines, the Provost should be able to delegate effectively and lead the team that is implementing initiatives.
* What programmatic changes, if any, would the new Provost envision? If programmatic changes are needed (e.g., combining departments or colleges, shuffling departments around, etc.), how should those changes occur?
* The Provost should be proactive in engaging the faculty in dialogue.
* As a matter of process, Andrew expressed some concern about the communication medium used when conducting the interviews. He is concerned that Skype presents technological challenges and that the extra visual information in video chat actually distracts from careful consideration of a candidate’s qualifications. He would prefer face-to-face meetings (e.g., airport interviews) or conference calls.

**Next steps:** Andrew will compile this list and send it out to the committee to get their approval, and then send the final list to Ted Legatski. Andrew will also contact the chair of the Governance Committee (Pamela Frable) to discuss whether FRC and GC might be able to work together to draft a statement on shared governance.

1. Sabbatical/research leave policies
* We reviewed findings from FRC’s work last year, which indicated that peer and aspirant institutions generally offer sabbatical leaves every 7 years. This differs from TCU’s 8-year cycle.
* We discussed the proper scope of leaves. The sense of the committee is that leaves should be available for both research and/or pedagogical development.
* Before we take next steps, we sensed a need to gather more information on two things:
	+ If research exists regarding the benefits of sabbatical leave, this might help establish how such leaves would be beneficial to TCU.
	+ Cathan Coghlan may have data regarding sabbaticals at TCU (how often they’re taken, whether faculty don’t take them when they could, etc.).

**Next steps:** Andrew will e-mail Cathan to see what data he might have about sabbaticals. Perhaps someone would like to volunteer to search for data about outcomes associated with sabbaticals?

1. Discussion of additions to Faculty 180
* We ran short of time to discuss this issue. Cursorily, we noted that it involves both a definitional concern (what is “diversity, equity, and inclusion,” and what faculty activities are associated with it?) and a shared governance concern (under what circumstances and by what process should items be added to Faculty 180? How do these items interface with the tenure and promotion process, including the documents across the university and the colleges that govern it?)
* We plan to discuss this matter in greater depth at our next meeting. Location of that meeting is TBD due to the Thursday night football game.
1. Meeting adjourned around 4:50 PM.

TCU Faculty Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 11, 2018

3:30 – 5:00 PM

Mary Couts Burnett Library, Lizard Lounge

Present: Emily Herzig, Andrew Ledbetter, Jeff Moore, Marie Schein, Greg Stephens

1. Discussion of changes to health benefits.
* We discussed at some length the upcoming changes to health care benefits, which were mentioned recently in TCU This Week (<https://thisweek.tcu.edu/open-enrollment-for-2019-benefits-begins-oct-22/>). We are particularly concerned about this line: “Due to the expense of managing the PPO90 plan, existing enrollees who wish to remain in this plan (no new enrollees are being accepted effective 2019) will incur a slightly higher cost.”
* Our concern involves at least two levels:
	+ First, this is a reduction in our available options for benefits. Given that PPO70 was also cut within the last few years, it seems *possible* that the eventual goal is to eliminate PPO options in favor of consumer-driven and high-deductible plans. We are tentative in this concern, as we have not heard an explanation for these changes from HR. A reduction in benefits seems out of step with Vision in Action #4 (strengthening the workforce).
	+ Second, and perhaps of even greater importance to us, we are concerned with the process by which this was decided and announced. We do not know what the process was, but clearly it did not involve Faculty Senate (and, we assume, did not involve Staff Assembly either). Via e-mail, Dan Williams called our attention to the “Resolution on TCU Employee Benefits,” passed by the Senate on May 2, 2013 (see <https://fsn.tcu.edu/resolutions-work-accomplished/>).
		- That resolution argues that reductions in benefits should only occur “*in the event of a severe budget crisis that clearly threatens TCU’s institutional health and well-being*.” Given the multifarious signs of TCU’s financial prosperity, this does not seem to be the case.
		- Also, the resolution argues “*that any reductions to faculty compensation, including benefits, be discussed in the Faculty Senate before any steps toward implementation are taken; that, as a means of declaring its position, the Faculty Senate take a formal vote on such reductions; and that designated representatives of the TCU Faculty Senate take part in Cabinet-level budget discussions when changes in employee compensation are discussed.”* This has not happened regarding the changes to PPO90.
* We also discussed the historical and institutional context for these changes. About six years ago, TCU made significant changes to retiree benefits without consulting current faculty/staff or retirees, and at the same time, the administration asked the Senate to send out a survey asking the faculty to rank order their benefits in terms of their value. Marie has firsthand knowledge of this because she was on FSEC at the time. The retiree benefits changes received sharp criticsm from TCU employees and retirees. The benefits survey likewise received criticism, as it appeared to some to be a move toward further curtailing benefits. Indeed, the May 2, 2013 resolution on benefits was an attempt to forestall against any future attempts at benefits reductions.
	+ We noted that HR has experienced a large degree of turnover since that time, and they may lack institutional memory those events and subsequent conversations.
	+ We expressed concern that benefits seem to be a repeated target for cuts, and we wondered why that is the case, especially given the strategic plan (particularly Vision in Action #4 on strengthening the workforce) and TCU’s reputation as a great college to work for.
* Our next steps will involve:
	+ Learning from HR the reason for the changes to health benefits. We invited an HR representative to this meeting, but between the short notice, the short staffing in HR with the night football game situation, and a family medical issue with a representative who was going to come, that was not possible.
	+ HR informed us that there will be some kind of meeting for campus leaders about the benefits changes next week, and that our committee would be welcome to attend. We will look for notice of this meeting and attend if possible.
	+ Greg will invite a representative from HR to come to the FSEC meeting next Thursday to discuss changes to benefits.
	+ Greg will also reach out to Walter Betts (chair of Staff Assembly) to see if they are aware of these changes to benefits and if they are responding to them in any way.
	+ Once we have learned more about the situation, we will decide on a best course of action. It is probably too late to do anything about the change in benefits for 2019, but it would be worthwhile to address why faculty (and, presumably, staff) do not seem to be a part of these important decisions.
1. Brief update on sabbatical/research leave policies.
* Cathan Coghlan gave us a November timeline for getting institutional data on research leaves. Andrew touched based with him and learned that he is still on track to provide us with that data by FRC’s November meeting.
1. Update on statement of shared governance (work with Governance Committee).
* Following Greg’s recommendation that GC should take the lead on this task with support from FRC, Andrew spoke with Pam Frable (chair of GC). GC is currently in the process of developing a draft of a statement on shared governance. She indicated that she would value FRC’s feedback on the statement once they have developed it.
* This statement will be sent out to FRC by e-mail during the next few weeks. We will have to move quickly to get feedback to GC so that they can hopefully get it on the Senate agenda for the November meeting.
1. Discussion of additions to Faculty 180.
* Recently, Faculty 180 was updated to ask faculty about their contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Greg indicated that this occurred because of a miscommunication arising out of Provost’s Council. The question about DEI has now been removed from Faculty 180.
* The sense of the committee seems to be:
	+ Faculty must have input regarding any changes to evaluation criteria for tenure, promotion, and merit.
	+ Faculty must have input regarding the content of the faculty annual report (now implemented as Faculty 180).
	+ It may be reasonable to request information in Faculty 180 that does not pertain to faculty evaluation. For example, such information may be useful for marketing purposes.
	+ However, it should be crystal clear on the faculty annual report what material will be used for evaluation versus what material will not.
* Given that the DEI question has been removed from Faculty 180, our next step seems to be to affirm the importance of faculty involvement in changes to Faculty 180 reporting and faculty evaluation. Although Institutional Research implements Faculty 180, we assume that the actual content of the faculty annual report comes from the Provost’s office. Greg will check with the Provost to see if that is indeed the case.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:20 PM.

**Minutes**

**Faculty Relations Committee Meeting**

**on November 8, 2018**

Professor Daniel Williams called the meeting to order and noted that the Chair Andrew Ledbetter could not attend.

The committee first discussed the Resolution on Shared Governance Regarding Employee Benefits Draft of 10/30/2018. Members noted that the PPO90 is the most popular insurance plan offered by TCU at the present time. Some feel that stakeholders are being pushed toward the Consumer-driven plan. The PPO90 Plan is the most expensive, but it offers the most benefits. This year other insurance plan premiums increased by 3%; the PPO90 plan premiums increased by 8+%. It was noted that the Trustees consider the TCU benefits package as “rich”, much richer than those offered by business. This benefits package was instituted some years ago as a faculty retention mechanism. Salaries were not increased much then, but benefits did improve.

Discussion turned, then, to shared governance. Faculty agreed that faculty must be consulted when changes are made and should only be reduced when budget considerations require. This year, decisions to change benefits were made at the Cabinet level without faulty input. Faculty were only informed in “TCU This Week” that benefit costs were increasing. There was no prior consultation or communication with faculty. There was no opportunity for discussion or asking questions. It was noted that the Senate is advisory only. But, the present Provost wants shared governance to be his legacy.

The members then went through the Chair’s proposal paragraph by paragraph; editing it as thought best. The question then was how to get the Resolution accepted as policy and implemented. It was suggested that a representative of Human Resources brief us, perhaps in the spring of each year, to inform the Senate on their work on benefits and possible changes.

Representation on the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor’s Cabinet was also discussed. The Senate should take a position and be consistent. The Cabinet makes decisions that affect faculty without consultation. Members think that it is essential that faculty have a voice on the Board of Trustees.

The Committee also talked about the Shared Governance Statement of October 29, 2018. It was agreed to omit the AAUP statement from 1990. There have been lots of changes since then. Faculty must be consulted on all policies that affect them, not just on academics.

in the last minutes, other issues were voiced on emeritus status and the tradition of giving faculty a leave before retirement. These were tabled for the future.

Submitted by: Susan Ramirez (History Department)

TCU Faculty Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 14, 2019

3:30 – 5:00 PM

Mary Couts Burnett Library, Lizard Lounge

Members present: Marinda Allender, Kendra Bowen, Emily Herzig, D. Lynn Jackson, Andrew Ledbetter, Jeff Moore, Marie Schein, Greg Stephens, Alyssa Stewart, Dan Williams

1. Discussion of sabbatical/research leave data
* Cathan Coghlan, Melissa Reeves, and Cindy Odiorne worked together to provide us with data regarding how many merited leaves are taken each year at TCU, compared to how many folks are eligible for such leaves.
* Cathan noted ambiguity in the Faculty Handbook language regarding who is eligible for such leaves. According to the Provost’s Office, traditionally only tenured faculty received leaves, but recently a few non-tenured faculty have received them. Given that this is unusual, Cathan’s analysis was limited to only tenured faculty.
* Overall, the data reveals that:
	+ Few faculty take leaves during the course of a typical year. Only about 24 take leave out of over 200 that are eligible.
	+ Overall, only 44% of faculty who were eligible took leave during the window of time that Institutional Research looked at (2010 to the present).
* Discussion ensured regarding several topics:
	+ Why do so few faculty take leaves? Some ideas: They don’t want to (prefer teaching), they don’t have a project they want to pursue for a leave, they have administrative duties that preclude a leave, other faculty in the same department are taking leave, they face some kind of pressure not to take a leave, they apply for a leave and are denied.
	+ Are there differences in who takes leaves? For example, it could be that younger faculty are more likely to take leaves than are older faculty.
	+ What are the criteria for non-tenured faculty (particularly those not on the tenure track) taking leaves? This happens, but the criteria do not seem to be written down.
	+ What would be the effect of shortening leave cycles? Given that many faculty aren’t taking leaves who could, it seems like the impact could be minimal, and for those faculty who do take leaves, it could accrue to the benefit of TCU’s academic profile.
* We agreed to pursue three next steps:
	+ Andrew will draft a resolution calling for a shortening of the merited leave cycle from every 8 years to every 7 years.
	+ Dan will draft a resolution calling for clarity regarding policies for leaves for instructors/PPPs.
	+ Andrew will ask Cathan if Institutional Research discovered reasons for not taking leave (particularly, how many apply and are denied) and the identity of those who take leaves.
1. Update about Monday (2/11) meeting with Human Resources.
* Andrew, Greg, and Alyssa updated the rest of the committee about the meeting initiated by Human Resources on Monday (2/11).
	+ The overall calendar for the HR year has major decisions about premiums occurring in the summer.
	+ Future HR projects include an on-site employee health clinic, an employee emergency grant program, and a phased retirement program.
		- Greg asked for a volunteer from FRC for the emergency grant committee, and Marinda volunteered.
	+ They are consolidating vendors; VOYA is going away, and current VOYA enrollees will be moved to TIAA. This is due to underperformance and high fees associated with VOYA.
	+ HR will hold these meetings every semester.
	+ Andrew indicated that it would be advantageous if someone or a subcommittee from FRC could meet with HR during the summer, so that we can have input as decisions are being made rather than after the fact. Greg indicated that it may be possible for faculty to receive compensation for that work.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 PM.

TCU Faculty Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 21, 2019

3:30 – 4:30 PM

Mary Couts Burnett Library, Lizard Lounge

Members present: Emily Herzig, D. Lynn Jackson, Andrew Ledbetter, Jeff Moore, Marie Schein, Susan Ramirez, Dan Williams

1. Discussion of resolution on shortening the merited leave cycle

After wordsmithing, the FRC passed this resolution, by unanimous vote, for further consideration by FSEC:

**TCU Faculty Senate Resolution on Frequency of Merited Faculty Leave with Pay**

The first goal of TCU’s Vision in Action strategic plan is to “strengthen the academic profile and reputation of TCU.” We can only accomplish this goal through faculty excellence in both teaching and research/creative activities.

Regular merited faculty leaves provide faculty with the time, attention, and energy needed to achieve such excellence. Accordingly, the 2018-19 TCU Faculty/Staff Handbook indicates that “The University supports the concept of merited leaves with pay for full-time faculty” and that they are “awarded to faculty whose leaves enhance the academic profile of their college or the University.”

The 2018-19 TCU Faculty/Staff Handbook also indicates that “Normally, seven academic years at TCU must pass between applications for leave of absence. Hence, one applies for a leave in the fall of the seventh academic year since the previous leave with the award taken in the eighth year of service.” In contrast, most of our peer and aspirant institutions offer a seven-year leave cycle, and we are unaware of any other comparable institution that offers an eight-year leave cycle.

Therefore, to facilitate faculty excellence in teaching and research/creative activities, the TCU Faculty Senate recommends revising the TCU Faculty/Staff Handbook to change the eight-year leave cycle to a seven-year leave cycle (i.e., with six years of service and leave taken in the seventh year). The revised handbook language would read, “Usually, seven academic years at TCU must pass between leaves of absence. Hence, one applies for a leave in the fall of the sixth academic year since the previous leave with the award taken in the seventh year of service.”

This resolution does not preclude the awarding of more frequent leaves in exigent circumstances (such as fellowships, grants, invitations, and other special opportunities) where a leave would greatly enhance the academic profile of the University.

1. Discussion of resolution on clarifying policies regarding

merited leave for non-tenure-track faculty.

After wordsmithing, the FRC passed this resolution, by unanimous vote, for further consideration by FSEC:

**Resolution on Clarity Concerning Faculty Leave Policies**

Submitted by the Faculty Senate Faculty Relations Committee

March 21, 2019

Whereas TCU affirms a campus culture that promotes equity, fairness, collaboration, and connection; and

Whereas TCU’s strategic plan, Vision in Action: Lead On, identified raising the university’s academic profile as a primary objective; and

Whereas all TCU faculty members should have an equal right to advance their professional development and raise their academic profiles; and

Whereas the number of full-time non-tenured faculty has steadily grown over the past decade; and

Whereas current confusions in the *Faculty/Staff Handbook’s* wording concerning leave policies limit access to opportunities to professional development for full-time non-tenured faculty; and

Whereas the specific use of the ambiguous word “normally” in reference to who qualifies for academic leave contributes to an inconsistent, and thus unfair, granting of academic leave among TCU’s various colleges and schools1; and

Whereas such inconsistency allows some, but not all, full-time non-tenured faculty to take academic leave, thereby limiting access to professional development opportunities; and

Whereas such inconsistency is incompatible with TCU’s commitment to equity, fairness, collaboration, and connection;

Whereas TCU, and particularly the TCU Faculty Senate, has previously endorsed the conviction that TCU faculty should not be separated into gratuitous tiers of greater and lesser privileges;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the TCU Faculty Senate strongly suggests that the wording in the Faculty/Staff Handbook be clarified to indicate that “Leaves can be awarded to all full-time faculty whose leaves enhance the academic profile of their department, college, and/or the University.”

1”Normally, leaves are awarded only to tenured faculty and are awarded to faculty whose leaves enhance the academic profile of their college or the University.” (TCU 2018-19 Faculty/Staff Handbook, p. 53)

1. We adjourned early at approximately 4:10 PM, to facilitate attendance at the Faculty Assembly on DEI and the Core.

TCU Faculty Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 11, 2019

3:30 – 4:30 PM

Mary Couts Burnett Library, Lizard Lounge

Members present: Marinda Allender, Emily Herzig, D. Lynn Jackson, Andrew Ledbetter, Jeff Moore, Marie Schein, Greg Stephens, Susan Ramirez

1. Discussion with Mica Bibb about using Faculty 180 for the promotion and tenure process.

Mica visited our committee to garner feedback regarding the addition of Interfolio RPT, a module for Faculty 180 that would enable information from the database used for Faculty Annual Reports to be plugged into P&T documents.

* They will demo/pilot the system on the “dead days” of Thursday and Friday after the last day of classes.
* The system would be in effect for faculty going up in Fall 2020.
* The system would allow review committees to easily access the data. Some discussion ensued regarding the functionality to print the documents, which may be undesirable in the case of external review letters.
* The committee indicated that the system needs to be flexible across units and should adhere to existing policies regarding promotion and tenure review.
* One challenge to the Faculty 180 system overall is that not all faculty have inputted all of their information to the start of their careers. This therefore would generate incomplete reports and CVs from Faculty 180. Some student worker support is available for inputting such information.
1. Discussion of possible charges for next year.

The committee brainstormed possible charges for the Faculty Relations Committee next year. Ideas include:

* **Ombudsman and conflict resolution policies:** It would be worthwhile to keep conversation open with Human Resources about these things.
* **Sabbatical resolutions:** We should check in with Provost Dahlberg about this; more generally, it would be helpful to start a tradition whereby the Provost updates the Senate, at least annually, regarding the administrative response to resolutions passed by the Senate.
* **Timing of tenure and promotion decisions:** We noted that the new deans and new provost are coming in with highly-accelerated tenure timelines. We also discussed the timing of going up for emeritus status (e.g., does a year need to pass after retirement to obtain that status?). Some discussion also addressed the timing of promotion reviews for non-tenure track faculty. These may be worth discussing for clarity and consistency regarding procedures.
* **Processes of faculty review:** We considered the possibility that there are differences across Colleges regarding processes of faculty review. For example, some may review tenured faculty across different intervals of time, and some may include a heftier mid-cycle review during the tenure clock. It may be worth considering what consistency versus flexibility should occur regarding faculty reviews across TCU.
* **Phased retirement:** We should continue to discuss with Human Resources regarding whether and when this will be implemented.
* **Workload:** We noted that there is a certain lack of clarity regarding expected conditions of workload and the degree of flexibility in determining workload. For example, Marie Schein noted that some instructors may do research but receive no acknowledgement for it. Andrew noted that the Dean of his College does not seem to consider the size of the class to be relevant in determining the workload attached to that class. From Greg Stephens, it sounds as if the Neeley School may have somewhat more precise mechanisms for negotiating this, although clarity may still be lacking in Neeley as well. It has been some time since FRC has considered workload as it pertains to service. Perhaps a broader investigation of workload would be helpful.
* **Value of all types of faculty:** Recent conversations have raised the ugly reality that some in the TCU community may believe that tenured faculty should have a greater voice than non-tenured faculty, and that non-tenured faculty may be fearful about speaking up regarding university matters for fear of reprisal. Also, some of the matters referred to above (workload, faculty review, timing of promotion) may or may not reflect a commitment to equity across different types of full-time faculty. Some time ago, this committee investigated the experience of adjunct faculty members. It may be worth conducting a similar appraisal of the experience of full-time faculty who are not eligible for tenure, particularly as the number of non-tenurable faculty continues to grow.
* **Respectful dialogue:** At TCU, we should treat each other as professionals, particularly across different types of faculty. Following the conversations about civility in the Senate, this may be worth considering further.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM.

**Appendix B**

**Data from Institutional Research on Merited Faculty Leave**



*Note*: In the Tableau report available from Institutional Research, it is possible to click on each year and get a further analysis of the number of leaves taken at each rank in each year. In most years, more associate professors take leaves than full professors, even though the number of eligible professors in each of those ranks is roughly equivalent.

