University Committee Year-end Report

Committee: Unit Standards (USC)

Academic year: 2015-2016
Number of meetings: 9
Committee members: 8

Schools (four)
Donna McCrea, Mansfield Library
^Lee Banville, Journalism (Chair)
^Kimberly James, Music (Chair)
Carol Bruneau, Accounting & Finance

Humanities (Two)
^Ona Renner-Fahey, MCLL
VACANT

Sciences (Two)
Sarah Certel, Biological Sciences
Dan Reisenfeld, Physics (Chair Elect)

Social Sciences (two)
Daniel Sencer, EVST
VACANT

^ term ends this AY

Topics addressed (Action Items)

• Received approval to create a anew timeline to improve speed and efficiency of the unit standard review process.
• Typically spent 1 meetings (2 hours) in full-committee review of each Unit’s standards; this was preceded by two primary reviewers and the USC Chair reviewing and marking up the submitted documents
• The USC also compiled a list of recurrent issues we faced this year when reviewing standards (see Actions Taken)

Actions Taken (resolutions, proposals, and recommendations):

• Implementation of the new prescribed timeline (FS procedure 501.10) should aid in the committee's work:
  o Many Unit Standards are transmitted to the committee after the November 30 deadline
  o The Unit Standards Committee even this year struggled to turn standards around in a timely way, sending feedback up until the end of the semester.
Several units have begun developing a “Progress Toward Tenure Review” component of their reviews. While the committee welcomes the idea of faculty having a clear picture of their own performance and how that aligns to the expectations of the unit, we would like the Provost’s Office, along with the UFA or Faculty Senate, to come up with a non-binding set of recommendations as to how these unofficial reviews should be conducted, by whom, how they are stored and who has access to them. We are concerned that the creation of a separate, non-official review as part of the unit standards could be used for more than simply offering the faculty member a sense of progress and may unduly affect any given year’s evaluation by the Faculty Evaluation Committee or other evaluations set out in the CBA.

The key elements of the Unit Standards that both the Faculty Senate and the Provost’s Office would like to see should be clearly stated to units. There has been a desire from the Provost’s Office to see a more clearly defined set of standards about how the unit gauges below normal, normal and outstanding performance by its faculty members so as to aid in the judging of merit increases and awards of promotion and tenure. This is something that has clearly not been heard by units as most standards lacked this component.

Common, recurrent recommendations for this year’s Unit Standards addressed:

- Transparency with regard to what a faculty member needs to do to distinguish him/herself in Teaching, Research, Service.
- Consistent CBA referencing throughout the document.
- Quantification and qualification of normal, above-normal, and outstanding evidence
- Unit Standards must address General Education teaching (many did not)
- Many standards offer a separate “Progress Toward Tenure” review that runs in parallel to the FEC process with varying degrees of overlap and unclear outcomes.
- The creation or revision of Unit Standards should be faculty-driven; the evaluation process is faculty-driven
- The UFA, Provost’s Office, and USC view the use of standardized templates differently – we have generally suggested that units say that faculty members “may” use them, not “must”
- All criteria for evaluation must be in the Unit Standards
- Some Units express that there is a tangible difference between promotion to Associate and the awarding of Tenure; it is often unclear how a faculty member would secure numerous additional achievements in the span of potentially one AY; additionally some faculty members elect to apply for promotion and tenure together
Similarly, some Units struggle to outline how faculty members can be successful in their applications for Full Professor; some Units were not aware that Associate Professors seeking promotion to Full Professor would be governed by new Unit Standards (not the ones under which they were hired)

Process issues – they can be succinct but must accurately mirror the CBA

Units should be aware that when the CBA changes, Unit Standards will likely have to be edited to comply with the newest version of the CBA

Units should keep in mind that the goal is to make sure that new faculty members to the Unit will know how to be successful in the evaluation process; additionally, since merit awards are competitive within unit and across campus, criteria for establishing a record of above-normal or outstanding activity in teaching, research and creative activity, and service should be provided
Please describe your experience on the committee (What information would you share with a faculty member who is considering service on this committee?)

I actually remained on the Unit Standards Committee for an additional year to serve as its chair. This was partly a result of need for consistency from year-to-year but mainly due to the camaraderie I felt with my fellow committee members. As a member of the Unit Standards Committee, you come to thoroughly understand the CBA and how their own Unit’s Standards relate to the CBA. This is a great committee for understanding how other Units operate, what other Units value, and how faculty contribute to high caliber teaching, research & creative activity, and service at the University of Montana (and beyond).

The work is difficult and could be done in isolation – we could assign standards to a two-person team and then never convene as a body of the whole, but I think the process is really illustrative for junior and intermediate faculty to see and understand.

Submitted by:

Lee Banville
Associate Professor
Chair, Unit Standards Committee

7/10/16
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Standards under Review</th>
<th>USC Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School of Media Arts</td>
<td>reviewed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of English</td>
<td>Returned for additional work</td>
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<tr>
<td>School of Physical Therapy</td>
<td>Returned for additional work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences</td>
<td>Not Reviewed (Received April 12)</td>
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