**Committee on Faculty Roles and Reports**

Faculty Senate Annual Report: AY 2023-2024

**Committee Charge**

The University Standing Committee on Faculty Roles and Rewards is charged with ensuring that the processes and timelines proposed to achieve the five goals laid out in the Task Force on Reimagining Faculty Roles and Rewards final report of Fall 2022 are implemented. These goals include:

1. Creating transparent workload guidelines that are equitable and inclusive of all faculty appointment types.
2. Redesigning reappointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure (RRPT) guidelines that represent more inclusive frameworks for all faculty work.
3. Developing a strategy for implementing continuous contracts (i.e. formulation of tenure) for full-time instructional (term) and clinical faculty.
4. Clarifying the relationship between the annual review criteria and the RRPT criteria.
5. Creating a robust culture of faculty cohesiveness through career development for all.

The Committee shall report to the Faculty Senate on the progress toward these goals at least once each year and shall confer and collaborate with the appropriate committees and campus offices. The Committee shall recognize tenure as a major safeguard of academic freedom, the quality of education offered, and the continuity and stability of the institution.

The Committee shall be co-chaired by a member from the Faculty Matters Committee and the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Development. The overall composition of the committee must include representation from at least 6 different schools and colleges. There are also three additional Provost appointees for the committee: 1) an Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs or Dean’s office representative who can speak about faculty issues; 2) another LAU head/department chair; and 3) a Research Council representative.

**Committee Co-Chairs**

* [Kim Eby](https://provost.gmu.edu/profiles/keby1) (Faculty Affairs & Development, Provost Office)
* [Mohan Venigalla\*](https://volgenau.gmu.edu/profiles/mvenigal) (Faculty Senate [FS] Faculty Matters Committee, College of Engineering and Computing)

**Committee Members**

* [Regina Biggs](https://cehd.gmu.edu/people/faculty/rbiggs/) (College of Education and Human Development-elected by FS, term ends 2025)
* [Sebahattin (Seb) Demirkan\*](https://business.gmu.edu/profiles/sdemirka) (Costello College of Business-elected by FS, term ends 2024)
* [Daniel Garrison\*](https://volgenau.gmu.edu/profiles/dgarriso) (College of Engineering and Computing-elected by FS, term ends 2025)
* [Emily Ihara](https://publichealth.gmu.edu/profiles/eihara) (College of Public Health-appointed chair/LAU head rep)
* [Naoru Koizumi](https://schar.gmu.edu/profiles/nkoizumi) (Schar School of Policy and Government-appointed Research Council rep)
* [Alison Price](https://www.law.gmu.edu/administration/aprice) (Antonin Scalia Law School-appointed Associate Dean rep)
* [Jandos Rothstein](https://art.gmu.edu/jandos-rothstein/) (College of Visual and Performing Arts-elected by FS, term ends 2024)
* [Kelly Schrum](https://historyarthistory.gmu.edu/people/kschrum) (College of Humanities and Social Sciences-elected by FS, term ends 2025)
* [Solon Simmons\*](https://carterschool.gmu.edu/profiles/ssimmon5) (Carter School; Faculty Handbook rep)
* [Mark Uhen](https://science.gmu.edu/directory/mark-d-uhen) (College of Science-elected by FS, term ends 2025)
* [Kathleen Wage](https://people-ece.vse.gmu.edu/~kwage/) (College of Engineering and Computing-elected by FS, term ends 2024)

\*Asterisk indicates Faculty Senator

**Timeline and Meeting Schedule**

The Committee on Faculty Roles and Rewards is a new university standing committee that was given its charge in late spring 2023. In early fall of 2024, Faculty Senate elections were held, and Provost appointees were invited to join the committee. The first meeting of the CFRR was held on November 3, 2023, and the CFRR has been meeting monthly since that time. In total, the CFRR had eight meetings in AY 2023-2024.

**Committee Initiatives & Updates**

Our initial meetings were spent orienting committee members to our charge, discussing our goals, and imagining how we could positively impact issues currently affecting faculty members related to our charge. This committee's charge is complex and there are several other committees engaged in related work. Therefore, we decided to prioritize our work, recognizing the following constraints: 1) we cannot do everything all at once; 2) we need to accommodate the Provost transition; 3) we need to be sensitive to the workloads of ourselves and our colleagues; and 4) we need to assess the current state for each of the goals.

After a comprehensive discussion of the above constraints, we prioritized the goals as follows:

1. Creating transparent workload guidelines that are equitable and inclusive of all faculty appointment types. **Moderate/High Priority**
2. Redesigning RRPT guidelines that represent more inclusive frameworks for all faculty work. **High Priority (Begin Spring 2024)**
3. Developing a strategy for implementing continuous contracts for full-time instructional and clinical faculty. **Moderate/High Priority**
4. Clarifying the relationship between the annual review criteria and the RRPT criteria. **Hold for Now**
5. Creating a robust culture of faculty cohesiveness through career development for all. **Hold for Now**

The CFRR membership agreed on prioritizing Goal 2: Redesigning RRPT guidelines representing more inclusive frameworks for faculty work. Since establishing this priority, we have created two working groups: *A Policies and Practices Working Group* and a *Contemporizing Criteria Working Group*. For each working group, we have developed a preliminary set of tasks. We are also determining the research, both external and internal, that we need to conduct to complete these tasks. We have created two resource documents to support our work, one that is capturing links to resources and national reports to support our work and another with links to potential peer institutions that could serve as models for desired changes.

Considerations for the Policies and Practices Working Group

* Need to assess (survey or focus group interviews) the current state of the practice across colleges and among peer universities; Similarities / differences across units and among peers; Identify best practices
* Need to assess the current model vis-a-vis Genuine Excellence in Teaching versus Genuine Excellence in Research
  + Consider the development of various tracks for tenure and/or promotion (e.g., teaching, research, leadership); if recommended, then criteria would need to be developed
* Need to consider Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary (I/M) guidance (for faculty with joint appointments)
* Need to ensure that reviews are approached from a holistic lens and account for the proportionality of teaching, research, service & leadership workloads. What guidance can we offer about aligning workload with promotion guidelines?
* Need to assess whether our current structure meets institutional needs (e.g., do we need a university-wide P&T committee? What might be the pros and cons?)
* Is there a need for an orientation/ training requirement for L1/L2 members of RRPT?
  + Basic expectations (e.g., reading the dossiers ahead of meeting(s), strictly adhering to the published criteria)
  + Mandated procedures (e.g., voting methods, writing and distributing review letters)
  + At least once (after the first promotion); maybe every 5 years?
  + How do you make the orientation/training for L1 and L2 committees engaging, relevant, and short.
* Questions to explore for the group:
  + Is the GET track unpopular? Obtain historic data on promotions based on GET and GER
  + Get a pulse on the current culture: Are we doing a disservice to students by actively encouraging junior faculty to ignore (through mentoring or workload policies) teaching (and service)?
  + How does mentoring grad students count among units? Teaching or research?
  + When does ‘service’ become impactful ‘leadership’? How should it count?
  + Philosophical: Political influence on tenure – how does it impact recruitment and retention?

Considerations for the Contemporizing Criteria Working Group

* Need to explore criteria that are comprehensive and contemporary (e.g., entrepreneurship & innovation, IP, leadership & service, inclusive excellence, community-engaged work/ public engagement, societally impactful research, professional development)
  + It’s a little easier to keep up with scholarship elements, because we are going to conferences, reviewing, editing journals, etc.
  + How do we ensure professional development (e.g., continuing ed) in the teaching and mentoring space?
* Considerations for how to think about impact?
* Need to ensure that reviews are approached from a holistic lens and account for the proportionality of teaching, research, service & leadership workloads.
* Need to consider Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary (I/M) guidance (for faculty with joint appointments)
* Questions to explore for this group
  + How do we make the space for positive change?
  + Noted that not everyone in our community understands requirements for high competence
  + How do we assess research, what counts, and impact?
    - Create more room for complexity and the ability to present a more holistic picture
  + Addition/clarification of service and leadership?
  + How do we create a culture and/or infrastructure for review of teaching and learning?
    - What does peer review look like?
    - Should we encourage departments/LAUs to have a teaching committee that regularly engages in peer review?
    - The formative assessment is where we could make a difference moving forward

We have also developed a set of proposed outputs, or outcomes, for our initial work on this goal, which include:

* Ensure that all RRPT guidelines are public, inclusive of tenure-line and term faculty, and aligned with Provost Office guidance re: Genuine Excellence and High Competence in Teaching.
* Create recommendations for university guidance that transcends schools/colleges, including what needs to be included in the criteria, with information for candidates, Level 1 and Level 2 committees, academic leadership, and other key stakeholders.
* Include suggestions for a review process to ensure that school/college guidance is aligned with university-wide guidance and understandable to others in the university and outside the university.
* Create templates than can be part of university guidelines, with the idea that these resources and guidance can save time and energy.
* Propose the creation of a university wide RRPT website on the Office of the Provost website.
* Develop an implementation, engagement, and communication plan.

**Action Plan**

* Summer 2024: The committee co-chairs and some committee members have expressed interest in further advancing this work over the summer semester. We intend to make some progress in the summer.
* Fall 2024: The committee will engage with the new Provost and broader members of the Mason faculty community.

**Responses to Questions from Faculty Senate Executive Committee**

During the past calendar year has the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President (or their respective offices) announced initiatives or goals or acted upon issues that fall under the charge of your Committee? If so, was your Committee consulted by the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President in a timely manner before the announcement or action? If not, do you believe your Committee should have been consulted? Would it have been helpful to have had the input of your Committee from the outset?

* Not applicable. The Committee was not fully constituted until a bit late into the Fall semester (our first meeting was in November). The Committee first focused on prioritizing goals and objectives and then spent time on Goal 2 as the top priority.

Did your Committee seek information or input from the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President or members of their staffs? If so, did they respond adequately and in a timely manner?

* We did not seek any information, at least not formally. However, we are confident that the response from the administration would have been adequate and timely.

Please suggest how you believe the President, Provost, Senior Vice President and/or their staffs might more effectively interact with your Committee in the future, if necessary.

* Once the new Provost joins us, early in the fall semester, we will invite the Provost to engage with the committee as needed.

Please relate any additional information you may have regarding interactions between your Committee and the President, Provost, Senior Vice President, or their staff.

* N/A