

Texas Tech University
Provost's Task Force on Faculty Success

Final Report
February 21, 2020

Introduction and Charge

The Provost's Task Force on Faculty Success (Faculty Success Task Force or FSTF) was commissioned in Fall 2017 to provide input on considering faculty responsibilities in the form of an annual individual faculty plan facilitating a balance in teaching, research, service, and administrative activities. The FSTF was to recommend ways that recently tenured and promoted faculty, particularly associate professors, can be guided and supported in continuing professional development commensurate with expectations for subsequent promotion. This would include support of faculty whose strengths and aspirations may vary from the primary activity with which they earned tenure, but which is nonetheless and perhaps increasingly important to the institution. It is also to include recommended revisions to faculty workload policy and other related University Operating Policies.

The work of the FSTF spanned more than two years. This report first outlines preliminary themes and recommendations following from the first year of task force deliberations, then describes two focal themes and a set of additional considerations that emerged in the second year. The report concludes with a list of summary recommendations. Former and current members of the Faculty Success Task Force are listed at the end of this document.

Initial Themes and Recommendations

Three general themes emerged from the FSTF's monthly discussions over the Fall and Spring semesters of 2017-2018. Several preliminary recommendations were associated with each theme. The list of themes and recommendations as outlined below were submitted for the Provost's review on May 1, 2018. Preliminary recommendations felt to be most directly relevant to the FSTF's charge were identified (highlighted with >).

- I. The role of the department chair is pivotal in faculty success.
 - a. Promote and foster stronger shared governance between faculty, chairs, and deans.
 - b. > Equip chairs with common best-practice strategies to mentor faculty, including strategies particularly relevant to women faculty and faculty of color.
 - c. > Better explanations as to what is expected in elements of tenure and promotion procedures that lack specificity or clear uniformity (e.g., what external letters should contain; weighting teaching effectiveness; weighting engaged scholarship).
 - d. > Provide more structured guidance to chairs on how to prepare, deliver, and follow-up on annual faculty reviews.
 - e. Better assist chairs in distinguishing roles and expectations for Instructor and Professor of Practice faculty, including evaluations and rank advancement

- II. Individual faculty members need better guidance and resources.
 - a. > Clarify and make more readily accessible university and college policies central to faculty responsibilities, expectations, and success.
 - b. Make permanent the opportunities provided by the university for faculty compensation increases aside from merit and promotion raises.
 - c. Begin discussions of the feasibility of extending the standard length of the tenure probationary period (e.g., to ten instead of six years).
 - d. Consider discussing a Horn Professor-like rank in recognition of highly exceptional achievement in teaching.
 - e. > Stipulate and clarify a more reasonable balance of expectations for teaching, research, and service in the assessment and awarding of salary merit.
 - f. > Clarify expectations for engaged scholarship and public scholarship in faculty success and provide standard policy for its assessment.

- III. Assessment and enhancement of what is provided by the Office of the Provost could be fruitful.
 - a. > Work with Office of Engaged Scholarship to define “engaged scholarship” for Texas Tech and how it fits into faculty success.
 - b. > Coordinate with the Research Advisory Council about its parallel recommendations on faculty expectations and assessment regarding externally funded research.
 - c. Conduct an audit of what is done already to support faculty from hire to retirement.
 - d. Continue discussions with faculty, chairs, and deans (perhaps facilitated by the Task Force) about “alternative pathways” to promotion and tenure.
 - e. > Engage Faculty Senate, chairs, and deans in review and revisions of relevant OPs.
 - f. Consider a more formalized “Office of Faculty Success”.
 - g. > Revise OP 32.18 on faculty workload calculation to bring it up to date with expectations for the varieties of ways faculty contribute more time and effort in teaching, research, and service, including engaged scholarship.

The Provost and the Senior Vice Provost (Convener of the FSTF) discussed the preliminary themes and recommendations and identified key recommendations which helped to set the FSTF’s agenda for 2018-2019.

Narrowing the Themes and Foci: Expectations of Faculty and Faculty Workload Policy

Based on the May 2018 preliminary report and consultation with Provost Galyean, in the Fall of 2018 the FSTF undertook (a) review of the University’s faculty workload policy, OP 32.18 Academic Workload Calculation, (b) consideration of stating expectations for faculty responsibilities, and (c) planning a faculty forum or focus group series. Each of these objectives was assigned to a separate working group of the FSTF. By the end of Fall 2018, the FSTF had

decided to forestall a faculty forum or focus group series and devote its attentions to stating expectations for faculty responsibilities and to OP 32.18.

Stating Expectations for Faculty Success

The working group on expectations for faculty success provided several factors requisite in formulating a protocol for developing faculty annual plans.

- ◆ Clearly documented conditions and expectations of appointment
- ◆ Navigating changes in department, college, or university needs or priorities
- ◆ Updating OP 32.18 Academic Workload Calculation
- ◆ Better and more consistent guidance for and implementation of Chairs' annual evaluations of faculty
- ◆ More clearly articulated and regularly referenced expectations for promotion at the unit and college levels.

Review of OP 32.18 Academic Workload Calculation

The working group on OP 32.18 reviewed the policy in light of other Texas institutions' similar policies, of Texas Education Code (Sections 51.402, 51.403) and of the FSTF's discussions to date. The working group presented a list of recommendations in consideration of revisions to the OP.

- ◆ Determine whether to retain all the teaching equivalencies currently listed, such as, for example, those on writing intensive course and teaching distance courses.
- ◆ Retain the baseline teaching load of 18 semester credit hours of instruction in organized classes each year.
- ◆ Include provision for faculty members in a given unit to earn up to 3 credits for relevant research or creative activity and up to 3 credits for service activity that meets the unit's expectations.
- ◆ Add language to account for doctoral qualifying and comprehensive exam committees.
- ◆ Update the current OP language to account for the variety of forms of online teaching and keeping online course delivery as well as content up to date.
- ◆ Add language to indicate structured procedures for faculty complaints regarding workload to be addressed and resolved.
- ◆ Consider the workload of contingent faculty as also covered under OP 32.18.

Additional Considerations and Recommendations

As the FSTF's discussions of expectations for faculty success and workload policy developed, another task group appointed by the Provost was underway to identify and plan implementation of strategies to address areas of improvement stemming from the 2017 COACHE survey of faculty. Some of the general data and recommendations of the COACHE task group were reviewed by the FSTF for meaningful overlap, particularly data about women faculty and faculty of color and recommendations pertaining to clearer communication and faculty governance. Together, the FSTF recommendations up to this time and the work with

COACHE made apparent other factors pertinent to the charge of the FSTF. The FSTF took up these factors with greater focus in the Spring and Fall of 2019.

The Scholarship of Engagement

Discussions with Associate Vice President John Opperman and Director Birgit Green of the Office of University Outreach and Engagement, and a one-time visit with Dr. Hi Fitzgerald of Michigan State University, highlighted to the FSTF the need to work toward codifying engaged scholarship as relevant activity for faculty success and advancement. OP 32.01 on tenure and promotion, OP 32.34 on continuing appointment, and OP 32.18 on workload calculation, as well as corollary guidelines in the colleges and academic units, should be revised to include the scholarship of engagement.

Mentoring Programs

Mentoring of faculty at Texas Tech University varies widely in quality and extent across academic units and colleges. The FSTF recommends the encouragement of self-selected mentors by faculty, with relevant guidance from their department chairs. It is also recommended that mentoring of faculty recently tenured or granted continuing appointment also be encouraged as part of faculty annual plans. More generally, department, college, and university administration should work together to formulate a standardized but flexible set of expectations and approaches to systematize faculty mentoring, which is to include workload credit for bona fide, active mentors.

Women Faculty and Faculty of Color

The FSTF early recognized that the experiences, and often the expectations for women faculty and faculty of color may vary from the opportunities and pathways commonly assumed to be the bases of institutional and unit level policies and practices. Expectations for faculty success at Texas Tech University should account for some of these differences with more inclusive policies and practices, such as in the weighting of alternative forms of scholarship and creative expression, the provision and assignment of service opportunities, more clearly articulating and increasing support for spousal accommodations and diversity hiring, developing better administrative remedies for evident bias in student evaluations of teaching, and appropriate mentoring opportunities. Implicit bias training is already underway in an effort to address some of these and related concerns. The FSTF recognizes that mentoring is increasingly important for associate professors wishing to be promoted to full, but perhaps especially for women faculty and faculty of color. Further, on behalf of some faculty concerns, Provost Galyean recently enlisted the involvement of the FSTF in convening an ad hoc committee on faculty of color to help clarify and address some of these matters.

Contingent Faculty

By the end of its first year, the FSTF had become aware that planning for faculty success had to include contingent faculty – those appointed in titles of instructor, professor of practice, and research professor. Two associate professors of practice were added to and currently serve on the task force. Discussions have prompted revisions (underway)

to OP 32.17 on faculty titles, OP 32.18 on workload calculation, and OP 32.34 on continuing appointment of contingent faculty. In particular, the FSTF recommends using the instructor title for any part-time teaching appointments, using the lecturer title and establishing senior lecturer for full-time teaching-only appointments, and to make the lecturer titles eligible for continuing appointment along with the professor of practice and research professor titles. OP 32.34 is also recommended to be revised to institutionally codify general procedures for third-year review and continuing appointment review of these faculty members.

Executive Leadership Communication

With an aim to underscore the importance and timely implementation of the recommendations herein reported, the FSTF encourages the President, the Provost and Senior Vice President, the Vice President for Research and Innovation, the CDO/Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the CFO/Vice President for Finance and Administration to distribute a joint memo to all faculty and academic administrators outlining and endorsing these recommendations.

Continuation of the Faculty Success Task Force

We recommend that the Provost continue the FSTF as a standing committee, potentially named the Faculty Success Advisory Committee. Its purpose will be to provide guidance in the implementation of accepted recommendations from this report, to advise on relevant policies, procedures, and practices, and to interact with other committees and councils on such matters as warranted. Members will be appointed by the Provost based on recommendations from the faculty, with proportional representation of tenured and continuing appointment faculty from various colleges, along with a representative number of department chairs and deans.

Summary Recommendations

1. Establish faculty annual plans as an element of the annual faculty review process. The focus of annual faculty plans will be to enumerate the faculty member's expected professional activity for the coming year and how the activity contributes to the faculty member's outlook toward future activity and advancement.
2. Formally adopt the scholarship of engagement as a means for faculty who do this work to be fairly evaluated and awarded for their contributions to this element of the University's mission.
3. Equip department chairs with training and resources needed to conduct faculty annual plans in constructive, equitable, and actionable fashion, including appropriately conducting annual faculty reviews.
4. Establish formal, systematic, but flexible faculty mentoring programs.
5. Revise relevant University Operating Policies so they are current with and future-ready for the changing roles and expectations of faculty, with intentional consideration of women faculty and faculty of color, and contingent faculty.

6. Formally and consistently communicate from executive leadership the value and importance of these expectations.
7. Establish the Faculty Success Advisory Committee as a standing advisory body to the Provost.

Current and Former Members of the Faculty Success Task Force

- Jaclyn Cañas-Carrell, Professor of Environmental Toxicology, Chair of the President's Gender Equity Council
- Sean Cunningham, Associate Professor and Chair of History
- Mayukh Dass, Professor of Marketing and Associate Dean, Rawls College of Business
- Francisco Delgadillo, Associate Professor of Practice, Information Systems & Quantitative Sciences
- Linda Donahue, Associate Professor and Associate Director, School of Theatre & Dance
- Tina Fuentes, Professor of Art (ret.)
- Michael Giesselmann, Professor and Chair of Electrical & Computer Engineering
- Lynn Huffman, Executive Associate Dean, College of Human Sciences (ret.)
- Stephanie Jones, Professor and Program Coordinator, Higher Education
- Jo Grant Langston, Associate Professor of Practice, Public Relations
- Cynthia McKenney, Professor of Plant & Soil Sciences (ret.)
- Brian Ott, Professor of Communication Studies, formerly Department Chair
- Seshadri Ramkumar, Professor of Environmental Toxicology; President, TTU AAUP
- John Schroeder, Professor of Atmospheric Sciences, Director, National Wind Institute
- Jean Scott, Professor of Human Development, formerly Faculty Ombudsperson
- Sindee Simon, Horn Professor of Chemical Engineering, formerly Department Chair
- Tara Stevens, Professor of Educational Psychology, Faculty Ombudsperson
- Rob Stewart, Senior Vice Provost, Convener of the Faculty Success Task Force
- Abigail Swingen, Associate Professor of History, Associate Vice President of Research & Innovation
- Gene Wilde, Professor of Biological Sciences, formerly President of the Faculty Senate
- Margaret Williams, Dean, Rawls College of Business
- Aliza Wong, Associate Professor of History, Associate Dean of the Honors College