

Draft Liberal Arts Council

Zoom Meeting

18 November 2020

Presiding: Dean Mary Brennan

Present: Council members: Manda Anderson, Susan Day (recording), Beth Erhart, Ken Grasso, Craig Hanks, Lucy Harney, Paul Hart, Jeff Helgeson, Bill Kelemen, Yongmei Lu, Gloria Martinez, John Mckiernan-Gonzalez, Aimee Roundtree, Chad Smith, Vicki Smith

Guests: Natalie Ceballos, Toni Watt,

Absent: no one

The minutes of 28 September 2020 minutes were approved without dissension, pending typo and omission corrections, on a motion by Dr. Kelemen and a second by Dr. Grasso.

An audit for off-site equipment was an audit of property management. The administration is anxious about equipment loss during the pandemic. Departments should have a policy and a log that can, in tandem, demonstrate that the department knows where their equipment is (i.e., who has the equipment and where the equipment is).

The Salon Series with Drs. Romero and Harris will be tonight. Next month, the Salon will feature Jill Pruetz from Anthropology.

The Covid Impact on Tenure-Track Faculty statement, discussed previously, which has been circulated to Personnel Committees, was discussed. For the most part, PCs had no concerns or very minor concerns, with the exception of two departments that worried that the statement would weaken standards. Dean Brennan reiterated that the intent of the memo is to help people—four or five years from now—remember the impact of the Covid period on faculty productivity. Dr. Helgeson shared a rubric generated by the U of Wisconsin (<https://consortium.gws.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/368/2020/11/Tenure-Review-document-final-Nov-2020-2.pdf>). Dr. Harney will distributed a MLL PC-modified version of the policy.^[1] Dean Brennan agreed that as long as the first paragraph is retained, other reasonable modifications are acceptable.

In general, the administration expects a number from the State Comptroller in January that will provide more information about future budgets.

Dean Brennan thanked chairs for their draft budgets. The administration will allow shadow sections of courses and will likely fund those sections once other sections are filled. Student preferences for on-line vs f2f are unclear, making difficult the optimal scheduling of classes. Students from families with annual adjusted incomes of \$50K or less, will have tuition waived. New scholarships are being created, and old scholarship amounts are being increased. Work study students are available to departments. Graduate enrollment is doing well, but many currently enrolled graduate students have not registered for the spring. Texas State is currently down 7.4% in undergraduate spring registrations.

There is collective concern about the potential for rising Covid rates after Thanksgiving. Faculty are allowed to take their classes totally on-line when we return on November 30. Free and painless on-campus testing will return in the spring.

Tracks will end December 15, 2020. Files will be “read only” after that date, but the onsite Canvas time line reads “2021: Spring-fall TRACS (Sakai) archival access to course materials.” Whether “access” includes the ability to readily move files to Canvas after December 15 is unclear. Clearly course content should be moved from TRACS to Canvas quickly. Dr. C. Smith will clarify this issue with TRACS.

New faculty and staff hires will no longer require President Trauth’s signature. The Provost will provide the last signature needed.

Around the Screen

Dr. Roundtree revealed an email she will send to allow chairs to rank potential NEH reviewers.

Dean Brennan thank Dr. Roundtree for her work and noted that, largely through her efforts, Carnegie Foundation nominees Louis Valencia and Cyrus Cassells have had their applications forwarded from the University.

John Mckiernan-Gonzalez noted that he can assist departments in bringing in outside speakers to campus next semester.

The meeting ended at 2:57 p.m.

[\[1\]](#) Date: 21 October 2020

To: Personnel Committee Members

From: Mary C. Brennan, Dean, College of Liberal Arts

Liberal Arts Council

Re: Covid Impact on Faculty Evaluation

Over the next several years, you will be called upon to evaluate for merit, annual review, and tenure and/or promotion, faculty who have been variously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, it is hard to determine the myriad ways faculty will have felt the effects of the disease itself, the disruption to research agendas, or the new demands on teaching and service. The academy must recognize that, in dealing with this unprecedented situation, all of us are reinventing higher education. **Though minimum publication and evaluative standards for tenure and promotion have not changed**, the purpose of this memo is to remind evaluative committees of the challenges faced by all our colleagues, challenges that might alter the overall “look” of a CV (e.g., longer gaps between publications or alterations to planned research agendas).

Those challenges may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Delays in reviews and publication calendars for publications submitted to journals and presses.

Delays or cancellations of major and regional conferences, workshops, and institutes.

Disruptions to research travel.

Shifts in research agendas caused by the inaccessibility of sources or subjects.

Delayed or cancelled grants, fellowships, and other sources of external funding.

New and additional demands upon the time of faculty teaching online and hybrid classes.

New service and leadership demands due to the pandemic.

Need for new preps for existing classes.

Increased demands for childcare, remote school, and caregiving responsibilities.

Negative impact of pandemic-related circumstances on physical and mental health.

Disproportionate effects of the pandemic on underrepresented groups in our faculty.