

The twenty-seventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by Provost Epstein via Zoom at 2:00 p.m. on Monday, June 27, 2022. Present via Zoom, in addition to the provost, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Schroeder Rodríguez, and Vaughan and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder. President Martin and Professors Martini and Umphrey were absent.

Provost Epstein noted briefly that the board of trustees had held a retreat June 22–June 24. Michael Elliott, president-elect of the college, had been present for part of this event, during which members of the senior staff had shared goals for their divisions. In addition, the trustees had hosted a celebration in honor of President Martin during the retreat, a biennial trustee event devoted to sharing ideas and long-range planning, the provost noted.

In other trustee-related news, Provost Epstein informed the members that, at its May meeting, the board had voted to approve the removal of the “institutional considerations” language from the “Criteria for Tenure” section of the *Faculty Handbook*, as recommended by the Committee of Six, and the minor changes to the termination language that the provost had shared with the committee earlier. The members thanked the president and provost for bringing this issue to the board’s attention.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Clotfelter asked about the details of the presidential transition. Provost Epstein said that President-Elect Elliott will assume the presidency of the college on August 1. The Tenure and Promotion Committee will consider his tenure case at the end of the summer, she noted. Professor Clotfelter asked when the newly formed Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) will begin meeting. The provost responded that the first meeting is set for September 12, and that the FEC will select its chair in July.

The members then reviewed a draft of an agenda for the faculty meeting that will be held in person, preceding convocation, on August 31, and voted four in favor and zero opposed to forward it to the faculty.

Much of the remainder of the meeting was devoted to committee assignments. As part of this process, the members discussed the desire expressed by some tenure-track colleagues not to be “protected” from committee service during their pre-tenure years. It was noted that tenure-track faculty will have representation on the FEC, the membership of which includes two tenure-track faculty who serve for one year. Untenured faculty will thus have a greater voice in faculty governance than they have in the past. On a related note, some members wondered about the place of the Consultative Group for Tenure-Track Faculty. Provost Epstein said that she anticipates that the group will be dissolved, since there will be a conduit for tenure-track faculty concerns to be brought forward through the FEC. It was agreed that the FEC should consider this issue as part of its work to streamline the committee structure more broadly.

As they engaged in the committee nomination process, the members expressed support for appointing more tenure-track faculty to committees. The provost said that she favors this approach, depending on colleagues’ personal circumstances and scholarly trajectory while they are on the tenure track, given the need to balance progress on scholarship with service during this career stage. The committee also noted the problem of some tenured faculty members serving on committees and assuming other key service roles on a regular basis, while others do not. The members agreed that the FEC should consider the issue of how to create greater equity when it comes to service responsibilities, as it was noted that all faculty should participate in the life of the college. Provost Epstein said that she would bring these issues forward to the FEC for its consideration; the chair of the FEC and the provost’s office will collaborate on setting the body’s agenda.

Conversation turned to proposals for departmental tenure criteria that had been shared by four departments. The members offered feedback on the documents, which the provost agreed to share with the chairs. In addition, after reviewing a significant number of the tenure criteria documents at this point, the committee felt that it would be useful for the provost to offer some general guidance and

feedback to departments beyond the Committee of Six's suggested template for departmental tenured criteria (shared with chairs earlier). For example, it was agreed that all of these documents should reflect that the primary audience for the departmental criteria is tenure candidates within each department. (In addition, departmental tenure criteria should be shared with job candidates, external reviewers, and the Tenure and Promotion Committee.) These documents should also focus on the department's tenure criteria. They are not meant to be mentoring documents. The provost agreed to share this and other feedback with department chairs about general features that should be common to all departmental tenure criteria documents, while recognizing that some of the information will clearly be field-specific.

The meeting ended with a brief discussion about concerns expressed at the last faculty meeting by some faculty members about the process used to adopt Workday Student (specifically the view that faculty were not consulted sufficiently), and mechanisms for faculty to share feedback with their experiences with the software going forward. Some members noted that it is possible for faculty to advise outside of the system and then to simply "hit the button" to approve a student's choice of courses, after having advising conversations with students. Other faculty may wish to make use of features within the system as part of their advising process, it was noted. It was agreed that it will be important to give Workday a try over the next academic year and then to create channels, for example making use of faculty surveys, to learn about how things are going. Professor Manion said that she would like to see more emphasis placed on engaging in broad conversations about issues such as what a great liberal arts education is, and the substance of advising, rather than continuing to focus on advising tools. She feels that having so much discussion about the technical issues surrounding the Workday software is a distraction from what is most important. Other members concurred.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Provost and Dean of the Faculty