This was a particularly active year for the Promotion and Tenure Committee, with a number of important charges handed to us at the beginning of the year. In addition, other ongoing discussions intersected our purview (e.g. the review of P&T by AFAPC) during the year.

At the beginning of the year (July 2006), the Faculty Senate Promotion and Tenure committee was given three specific charges:

1) Examine the guidelines in face of the creation of fixed term extension faculty
2) Role and expectations for service in P&T
3) Review the post tenure review process

In addition, a number of proposed revisions to the guidelines developed by an ad hoc committee last year (chaired by Becky Johnson) were passed to us in August 2006. These revisions were designed to address a number of issues that had arisen over the previous several years with respect to the existing guidelines.

In the sections below, I will discuss what the committee’s actions were on each of the items. Additional information exists as part of other Faculty Senate meeting minutes and will not be reproduced here (I have tried to reference appropriate documents).

**Original Charges**

**Examine the guidelines in face of the creation of fixed term extension faculty**

This charge represented the major focus of our efforts this year. The extent of the resultant revisions had less to do with the specific issue (fixed term extension faculty) than with the discovery was that different units within the university were using very different methodologies for describing their positions. It was the judgment of our committee that that disparity in process put fixed term faculty in a particularly vulnerable position, and needed to be addressed if we were to successfully complete our charge.

In effect, our P&T guidelines and merit evaluation are based on individual position descriptions. However, previous to this year there existed no internally consistent set of guidelines or definitions to help unit supervisors write them. The specific result of this divergence in methodology was that some units were using terms such as Research completely differently from others. Our first goal as a committee was therefore to develop a set of internally consistent definitions for the duties that make up faculty positions. This year we focused primarily on Research, Extension, Other Assignments and Service.

A separate document was written and presented to the faculty senate that describes the nature of the changes to the guidelines and the guidelines for position descriptions. Slightly updated versions of those documents are attached to this report.

**Role of separate documents on position description guidelines**

It is important to re-iterate here that one of our major accomplishments this year was the generation of the first several drafts of guidelines for what constitutes appropriate components of a position description, and who is responsible for its construction. We developed this document originally to be part of the guidelines - in collaboration with Academic Affairs and University Legal Counsel.

At the end of the process (early Spring), Legal Counsel advised us that such information belonged outside of the guidelines. This decision began a series of conversations about who should take the leadership in providing a uniform method for writing position description to the university community. Our committee’s recommendation is that it should be Academic Affairs, with collaboration from the FS P&T committee and affirmation from FS executive committee. It represents a management (practice) issue rather than a guidelines issue.
Role and expectations for service in P&T
The committee made a number of alterations in the guidelines to emphasize the role of service, and accepted slightly altered changed from the ad hoc committee chaired by Becky Johnson last summer. The changes we proposed include:

- Definition of institutional (unit and university) and professional service
- Emphasis on accountability for faculty service duties and importance for all faculty to participate
- Definition of peer validated professional service as scholarship
- A recommendation was made for all faculty to have some unspecified % FTE service in their position descriptions. That was further specified in the separate document on position description criteria.
- Clarification of what types of service can be considered for P&T. This section puts greater emphasis for community service outside the university that promotes the university mission.

Things we discussed but did not recommend:
We considered specific minimum %FTE for service – we felt that was too formulaic. Instead, we recommended that position descriptions be configured to represent time spent doing the specific task/duty. This remains somewhat controversial in some units, where a metric of “value” of the task or duty has been traditionally used. Our committee feels that the university community needs to use some basic, common metrics for speaking of our positions.

Post-tenure review
The original goal of post tenure review was for all tenured faculty to be reviewed every 5 years by a peer committee from within the unit. To date, some departments have not done the review at all (since 2001). Our committee was asked “could the current process be fixed without causing an undue burden on the units”? In short, the answer is no.

Our first task, done by last year’s committee (2005-6) was to collect information on the current processes being used in a number of units. We discovered that many units did not do anything other than standard merit review, and used that as the post tenure review. Others are conducting a full review that is similar to a P&T review. However, there are so few consequences, and the process is so labor intensive, few units will attempt to use it to address problem faculty.

It was the committee’s opinion that the current system cannot be fixed. In effect, great effort is being expended with no hard evidence that any of the original goals are being met. The committee recommendation is below.

Observations from P&T cycle
Many of the observations made in this cycle by our committee members were consistent with the following:

Problem cases often combined mediocre performance of the candidate with
1) poor preparation of the case by the unit,
2) separation of the candidate from campus (off site) and poor communication of goals/PD workload
3) complex position description
4) bad/late advice from a supervisor – example – repeated good reviews based on a mediocre record.

Most of these problems are traceable to management practices rather than to the guidelines. An exception relates to the position descriptions, where there were no existing guidelines on how to write them. In addition, many units have no specific benchmarks for promotion or tenure. Faculty
have little idea, independent of what they are told during their annual review or by their unit colleagues, of what is required of them.

On a broader theme, we as a community should decide on what our goals are in the overall process. Are we attempting to get everyone promoted or to obtain the clearest picture of everyone’s record so that we feel confident in making firm decisions on the marginal cases. That decision has a great effect on the faculty expectations of the process, both from the perspective of the candidates, and of the faculty in the units who we rely on to help construct the dossiers and administer P&T.

**Recommendations**

Most of the issues below refer to proposed changes in practice – how we might better implement our guidelines to obtain more consistent outcomes for P&T – and to get what the faculty and university administration expect out of the process.

**Service** – see specific recommendations above – in addition, we recommend that service duties be documented in dossiers using outcome based metrics. Specifically, candidates should discuss what they accomplished on each of the committees, etc. where they served. For candidates where service was an important part of their record, specific effort should be made to document the outcome of their work – pro or con.

**3rd year review** – One of the most obvious outcomes from our observations was the significance of the mid term review. Unfortunately, there are no current standards for that review, either with respect to the format of the information, nor to its timing. We recommend that be formalized to be similar to the P&T dossier, but without external letters (unless one such letter would provide helpful information for the review).

The timing of the review is critical. A review should take place at the end of the 3rd year, and need not happen during the normal P&T cycle. Therefore, it could begin after the 7th quarter of employment. Our observations (and our observations from other years) indicate a bad outcome can very often be traced to that a delay in the review.

**Quantitative review of P&T** – One of the concerns that has arisen within the committee has been the number of individual, focused studies of P&T processes that have been conducted over the past couple of years. Many of these are being done within colleges, or by individual interest groups – with the best of interests. However, when an individual group conducts such a study, they have neither the resources nor the perspective necessary. The result can be a series of reports that are used to modify some of our critical processes – reports that are created with flawed data and interpreted without consideration for all of the variables that may be driving the system.

Promotion and tenure is one of the most important functions the university performs. It is worth our time, resources and a sustained effort to maintain an open database on what we are doing and how effective our process is (and how we would judge “effectiveness”). Towards that end, our committee recommends that the university undertake a quantitative study of the outcomes of promotion and tenure over the past several years. This study should not be specifically focused on any particular group, but should include the candidate’s discipline, their, department, their position (tenure track, senior research, FRA), their distribution of work (e.g. % teaching, service, research, ..), location (on campus, off campus), group (gender, etc), and what the decision was at each level.

**University wide metrics** – Academic Affairs should take leadership in setting basic, university wide metrics for the duties as set in position descriptions. Specifically, some baseline for the distribution of work with respect to teaching should also be set. It is inherently unfair for some faculty to get 40% FTE credit for teaching 2 graduate courses in one unit and others to only get 50% FTE credit for teaching 6 large undergraduate courses in another.
We do not think that a solution to this would need to formulaic. However, the inequities represented across our campus must be addressed.

This is in addition to the recommendation described above under “Role of separate documents on position description guidelines”.

**Post-tenure review** – Our committee recommends that a separate committee be set up to develop a new review system using a two negative PROF review trigger system. We had no specific recommendations as a group further than that the committee should evaluate a number of options. An effort should be made to support units who have been making an effort to develop post-tenure review processes, in spite of the flaws in the current system – perhaps by continuing to support their ongoing initiatives with specific faculty identified as needing help.

**Topics for discussion for next year**

**Engagement and Outreach**: what definitions do we use for these activities when writing position descriptions and where do they fall in the guidelines? What specifically do we mean by engagement at OSU – how broad is it within the system – does it include engineers who collaborate with industry?

**Affirmative action and the fairness of P&T with respect to under represented groups.** This issue was raised by the AFAPC report, and by the discussion around the text proposed for the guidelines related to the composition of unit P&T committees. This is a case where the need is for a full, clear discussion of the specific issues, aided by good data on our current processes.

**Library**: Some of the issues are similar with respect to engagement and outreach above. However there are others of significance with regards to the nature the metrics of scholarly authority.

**Flexible timeline for tenure**: use of a longer timeline for disciplines where it is appropriate (already the case for COAS). Very preliminary discussion in some areas of Chem, Geo, Pharm.

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**Other – Input to distance education committee**

Our committee was asked last year for input on the role of distance education courses on P&T. Our feedback is part of the minutes of their committee report. In short however, our group provided input late last year (AY2005-6) and early this year to the effect that faculty should be rewarded for teaching distance education courses in the same way they are rewarded for teaching face to face courses. That should be based on their level of effort and the learning outcomes.

**Final note on accountability for service**: When I met with the executive committee at the beginning of the year, we discussed methods by which we could make faculty more accountable for their service. At that time, I suggested that committee chairs report on the activity of each of their committee members. I will be sending in a separate report to that effect, but hope that you can follow up with all committees to get equivalent information.