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Georgia Southern University

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Senate Executive Committee Discussion Item Request

Motion to discuss a draft copy of the transitional tenure and promotion policy

Submitted by: Jonathan Hilpert

1/23/2019

Subject of Discussion:

Motion to discuss a draft copy of the transitional tenure and promotion policy

Rationale:

In the Fall of 2018 faculty senate began renewed discussion of a transitional tenure and promotion policy. The purpose of the policy is to provide guidelines for how faculty will transition to the new tenure and promotion expectations for the consolidated Georgia Southern. The senate discussion, and subsequent feedback solicited from faculty thereafter, revealed three areas of the policy that need to be considered further.

- 1) The rank of faculty affected by the policy
- 2) The length and effectiveness of the sunset clause
- 3) The implications of workload changes for transitioning to new expectations The faculty welfare committee requests continued discussion of the policy with specific focus on these areas. The committee recommends that the faculty senate consider motions from the floor to adopt portions of the policy that are acceptable, as well as consider motions from the floor to make edits or changes to the policy, or to send portions of the policy back to FWC so they can be reworked for consideration during the next senate meeting.

Response:

1/25/2019: The SEC agrees to move this to the floor for discussion. This item is returning after the November meeting, so should come to a resolution after this discussion. Senators from each college have distributed surveys to their faculty requesting input for the DI's primary question, and will share that feedback data at the head of the discussion.

2/5/2019: Minutes

a. Discussion - Tenure & Promotion Transitional Policy – Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) spoke on behalf of Jonathan Hilpert (COE), Faculty Welfare Committee, Chair, who was not in attendance (page 3).

Before this discussion began, Dustin Anderson (CAH) spoke briefly about some comments made on these surveys. Many of these were incredibly positive, sensitive, and uplifting, and some were “down-right mean”. He stated that we will not tolerate mean-spirited comments. He asked the Senate to ensure that their comments reflected the practical actualities of our existence rather than what we thought we were or should have been. Anderson commented that he regretted Dr. Hilpert was not able to be here considering the amount of work that Hilpert and his committee has put into the following items. Anderson asked Helen Bland, from the Faculty Welfare Committee to introduce these items. He noted that the transitional P&T policy discussion was the only item that he was not imposing a time limit on. The university, he stated, was a year out from it needed to be in having an encompassing transition policy. He emphasized the importance of this to the Senate, and informed the body that 52 people are currently in the tenure and promotion process right now. He said we must do right by those colleagues, and must make some decisions today.

Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) introduced this by reviewing the discussion brought to the Senate a month beforehand. She explained that the Faculty Welfare Committee members represent a mixture of different levels of rank. Those of lower rank were concerned that their voices wouldn't be heard. Thus, a Google questionnaire was sent out to faculty members to provide numbers based on three simple questions: Should we have a transitional policy? To whom should it apply? What time period should it cover? All nine colleges participated, and the response rate was over 80%. Two colleges slightly altered the questions, but the results resoundingly indicate that faculty believe we should have a transitional policy and that it should apply to all ranks. How long the sunset clause should last varied among respondents.

Summary of Discussion Points and Questions: Much of the discussion concerned the date at which the sunset clause would expire and who would be covered by it. Discussion revealed that the proposed policy should apply to all of those going through a watershed moment of evaluation (i.e., major review): those under post-tenure review and those seeking promotion at any level including lecturers seeking promotion, and tenure-track faculty. Jack Simmons (CAH) asked for specific details about what this policy would entail. Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) responded that people hired prior to fall 2018 would be evaluated according to the policy in place when they were hired. For anyone hired after fall 2018, there will be on one universal policy. Ted Brimeyer (CBSS) asked what will happen if this policy is voted down. Dustin Anderson (CAH) explained that the policy won't be a motion until our March meeting. If it were voted down, we would default to old GSU guidelines, which would not be fair to many of our colleagues.

The larger discussion then turned to the time frame designated in the sunset clause. Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) reiterated that the transitional policy impacts people who were hired from 2012 to 2018 to give them allowances to promotion and tenure according to what they were hired into. Since the online survey seemed split between 2023 and 2025 as a proposed cut-off date, she proposed that 2024 might be a middle ground. Maura Copeland (Legal Affairs) noted that if the policy included the language “most recent major review” (including post-tenure review), the sunset clause wouldn't actually be necessary.

Another aspect of the discussion, brought up by Ted Brimeyer (CBSS), involved whether we should have separate transition policies for advancements to associate and to full. Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) responded that the policy is broadly written so that it will cover everyone. Further, 74% of respondents

want the policy to apply to all levels. Her preference is for a single policy. Dustin Anderson (CAH) suggested that we don't want to over-engineer, but this idea of separate policies can go back as a suggestion to Faculty Welfare. Alex Collier (COSM) encouraged faculty senate members to send feedback on this policy to the Welfare Committee. He explained that the old Armstrong language describing promotion to full professor did include a record of sustained scholarship, but this was based on the Armstrong teaching load. Dustin Anderson (CAH) noted that many folks who are close to promotion would have the rug pulled out from under them without a policy in place.

The Senate agreed to send this feedback through Helen Bland back to the FWC, which will craft a Motion that will be submitted for the March meeting.

Attachment: [Draft Transitional T and P policy \(for senate discussion\) \(3\)](#)