

JCAC Meeting 9/23/14 Report

In attendance: Chris Byrne, Jill Lund, David Shapiro, Terence Hsiao, Gina Lorenz, Rosemary Sutton

Meeting began at 3:30.

This meeting was a “study session,” rather than a contract management meeting. (Every other JCAC meeting, we take on some topic to increase our shared understanding of it; for instance, last spring, we spent a meeting talking about Priority Hire, not in order to negotiate any changes, but rather to make sure everyone was on the same page with what the contract calls for in regards to it.)

The study session item under consideration was Tenure.

The main topic of discussion, and what gave rise to the decision to have this study session, is the Board of Trustees’ interest in developing more of what they have referred to as a “human connection” with tenure candidates. In their Board retreat this summer, Board members expressed that our most recent model of Tenure, in which the Board doesn’t really have the opportunity to meet with candidates during the process, seems lacking to them. They want more of a chance to “connect names with faces” at some point during the process.

We talked about the historical framework for this perspective.

As probably people know, in years past, starting at least in 2005, when Chris Byrne and David Shapiro were in their third year of the tenure process, candidates were expected to do some sort of presentation/teaching demo for the Board. This was never specified in our CBA, but became one of those Cascadia practices that became “reified” and ultimately, a de facto expectation of tenure.

The problem with this, as we discussed in our meeting on Tuesday, is that it potentially turns into an evaluative component, one that is outside the scope of our contract.

More recently, in an effort to be more consistent with our CBA, CCCFT has worked with the Board to clarify their role in the tenure process. Our position, (as again, we talked about on Tuesday) has been that Board’s role is not to evaluate candidates, but rather to adjudicate the process; the idea is that the Board is like the judge in a courtroom process; the TRC, by contrast, which evaluates the candidates, is more like the jury.

In any case, as a result of these efforts, we have, in the most recent version of the Tenure process, eliminated the Board presentation as a component; for the most recent candidates, the TRC chair answered any questions the Board had about candidates’ portfolios in what we’ve sometimes referred to as a kind of “dissertation defense” by the TRC chair.

The first part of our JCAC meeting on 9/23, we talked over this history; Dave S. shared this history to help provide context for why CCCFT is reluctant to return to a model where the Board has significant face-to-face interaction with candidates; Dave’s point was that he finds it hard to see how any such interaction would not be evaluative and again, if the Board’s role is not to evaluate *candidates*, but rather to adjudicate the *process*, then, it’s unclear to him why such interaction is called for.

Gina Lorenz made the point that this idea of a “human connection” with candidates is really important to the Board. She noted that for the first time in her whole career at Cascadia, the administrative contract management team was invited to the Board’s summer retreat just so they could hear the Board’s position on this issue. It was emphasized that the Board likes the feeling of connection to teaching and learning at Cascadia and that making the “human connection” with tenure candidates is a component of that.

So, for the last 30 minutes or so of the meeting, we explored various scenarios that would meet the interest of the Board without compromising the tenure process.

One key point that Chris Byrne made during this discussion was that we want to clarify the difference between “risks” and “costs” of any interaction between tenure candidates and the Board. While there was a general sense, given the current make-up of the Board, and given the built-in checks and balances of a 5-person Board, that there may not be a very high *risk* of the Board overstepping their role in the process, there is still potentially a high *cost* in terms of time and energy for candidates preparing for any sort of presentation/meet-and-greet with the Board. So, while risk may be low, any model we want to adopt should also be low cost, too.

Another key point is that our CBA does seem to allow the Board some say in the process. We looked at the following article in our meeting on Tuesday, focusing on the highlighted language:

10.11 Committee Recommendation(s) and Board Decision(s) Regarding Tenure

10.11.01 Tenure Review Committee’s recommendation(s) shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees through the President’s Office and Chief Academic Officer and will include copies to the President and Chief Academic Officer.

10.11.02 The Chair of the Tenure Review Committee for third year candidates shall present the committee’s tenure recommendations to the Board of Trustees. **The Board of Trustees shall determine the manner in which the recommendations will be received.**

So, it does seem like the Board can specify some preference for how to receive the TRC’s recommendations; this does potentially leave the door open to some kind of interaction with candidates.

Ultimately, therefore, in our meeting on Tuesday, we arrived at a potential model whereby when the TRC submits their Comprehensive Reports for 3rd year candidates (on 2/15 according to the CBA), which is when the portfolios go to the President and the Board, that candidates would have a brief face-to-face with the Board (at which the TRC chair would be present) to simply answer a single question, which would be something like, “What item or items in your portfolio are you particularly interested in having the Board look at in their review of it? What accomplishments or growth, in other words, do you consider most significant over the last three years?” This would be like 5-10 minutes tops with each candidate.

Gina is taking this proposal back to the Board for their response to it. Dave S. is bringing this proposal (via this report) to CCCFT. No decisions will be made without the approval of all parties.

The JCAC meeting ended at 5:00.