

## Unit Standards Committee End of Year Report (AY 2018-2019):

### Members:

Ramona Grey, Political Science, Committee Chair

Alex Butler, Student

Jackson Bunch, Sociology

Doug Coffin, Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences,

David Erickson, Teaching and Learning

Andrew Larson, Forestry and Conservation

Donna McCrea, Mansfield Library

Oliver Serang, Computer Science

The Unit Standards (US) Committee reviewed unit standards from six departments during this academic year cycle: Anthropology, Ecosystem and Conservation Sciences, Forest Management, Mansfield Library, Native American Studies, and Public Administration and Policy. Most of the unit standards required revisions and we provide recommendations below to common, recurrent issues:

- Many unit standards needed to address the evaluation of non-tenurable faculty. However, the US Committee found the procedure and terminology around the evaluation of NTT faculty confusing. Specifically, it appears from the CBA that the evaluation of NTT faculty is the same as the evaluation of TT faculty to the point of a request to be evaluated for merit, at which point it is not clear whether the NTT faculty applies instead for an Outstanding Performance Award for non-tenurable faculty under CBA 13.245 or for both merit and an Outstanding Performance Award because “Merit and promotion requests for non-tenurable faculty including research faculty must be paid from grant, school or college funds” (<http://www.umt.edu/provost/faculty/faceval/fags.php> - Salary Increments). Further, CBA 9.110 refers to ‘satisfactory’ performance by NTT faculty as a requirement for contract continuance, and clarification needs to be made in the CBA about whether this is the same as a ‘normal’ evaluation by the FEC or whether the NTT faculty should instead apply for a ‘satisfactory’ evaluation.
- Units need to update their standards under new CBA 10.230 language: “individual units may opt to allow the FEC to solicit and use anonymous peer review to assist the FEC in decisions for promotion and tenure.” The committee noted that it was incumbent on each department to indicate in its unit standards whether or not it will allow these anonymous submissions. If the department wishes to solicit anonymous external peer review, then under the CBA, this process should be initiated by the FEC.

With regard to CBA 10.230 new addition: “Notwithstanding the above, individual units may opt to allow the FEC to solicit and use anonymous external peer review to assist the FEC in decisions for promotion and tenure,” The US Committee suggests the CBA clarify who is the appropriate individual to solicit external anonymous letters; (for example, can the FEC request that the Department chair solicit external anonymous letters?)

- Another related issue the US Committee encountered was faculty access to external, solicited anonymous letters. Given the stipulation in CBA 10.230 that: “With the

exception of solicited material from non-tenure-track, probationary faculty, and students, other persons submitting material to the FEC have no expectation of anonymity and all materials submitted to the FEC will be signed” there was concern this could compromise anonymity of the external author who submits requested letters for a faculty member. US Committee suggests greater clarity in the CBA to assist units in handling these external anonymous letters after they are received

- Frequently, units used the terms research, scholarship, and creative activity interchangeably in their standards. We requested that they clarify the meaning of these terms, or use the same language consistently in their standards to avoid potential confusion.
- Units should be aware of another new CBA change: (10.110) provision notes “failure to submit an IPR for evaluation. . .” is grounds for less-than-normal & should be added here.
- Units need to update their standards with the new CBA language (10.220): “Unit Standards may require more than one or all courses to be evaluated each semester.” Recommended that if the dept wishes to have all courses evaluated, consider adding a provision that stipulates courses with low enrollments will be weighted in proportion to all courses taught. In soliciting student evaluation comments in courses with very low enrollments, (3 or 4 students) the US Committee would recommend that units adopt measures to protect student anonymity. In addition, units may wish to consider how “heavily” the FEC/Chair will rely on student evaluations in the overall evaluation of faculty teaching, as there is known bias against women, people of color, new teaching methodologies, etc. in student evaluations. Committee suggests that the CBA allow for dismissal of evaluations that are prejudicial, pejorative or statistically insignificant; or, those evaluations should be clearly identified in the IPR as such so that evaluators are aware of the flaw.
- Units need to clarify if all faculty in the unit are using the same teaching evaluation form. Are the scores allowed to vary by type of course (e.g., will the course evaluation ratings be directly compared between introductory-level and higher-level courses?)
- Many units list regularly attending and presenting research at national conferences as part of ‘normal’ scholarly activity. Units should consider whether this is mandatory in the current funding environment. Does the department cover the full costs for these conferences? If not, do/should they require national conference participation?
- US Committee recommends there be more clarity in CBA 10.240 about department chair participation on the FEC. The US Committee has interpreted 10.240 as precluding the chair from attending and/or participating in the FEC meetings because each provides a separate review and are distinct entities under the CBA. Moreover, the unit chair must rely on the FEC recommendation, which *implies* chairs should not have access to information during the FEC deliberation that might sway their evaluation. For these reasons it is the opinion of US Committee members that the department chair should not be a member of the FEC. However, the CBA language does not explicitly prohibit the department chair from attending and/or participating in FEC meetings, and

language on the Provost's Faculty Evaluation website implies that the Chair can be a member of the FEC (see <http://www.umt.edu/provost/faculty/faceval/faqs.php> under the heading "Evaluation of Department Chair/Director."

- The US Committee frequently encountered confusion in department unit standards regarding the non-reappointment process: CBA 9.230 says: "The President may request and review, but shall not be obligated to adhere to, recommendations from the unit, dean and the Provost regarding questions of renewal of probationary appointments," while 10.230 says "The (FEC) shall apply standards to review the performance of each faculty member in the unit and make a written recommendation . . . which shall, where appropriate, specifically address: (1) retention. . ." Specifically, it is often unclear what exactly the FEC's role is in recommending non-renewal, and what is the criteria for non-retention.