

Section I

Name of Committee: Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure

Submitted by: Jill Theresa Messing, Chair, School of Social Work, Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions, Downtown Campus

Date Submitted: April 25, 2022

Membership Roster:

Majia Nadesan, West Campus, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Pamela Swan, Downtown Campus, Health Solutions

Aaron Hess, Downtown Campus, Languages and Cultures

Xihong Peng, Polytechnic Campus, Department of Physics

Angelica Afanador Pujol, Tempe Campus, School of Art

Marco Janssen, Tempe Campus, School of Sustainability

Aya Matsuda, Tempe Campus, Department of English

Alan Gomez, Tempe Campus, School of Social Transformation

Rida Bazzi, Tempe Campus, School of Computing, Informatics, and Decisions Systems Engineering

Shawn Jordan, Polytechnic Campus, Sch EGR Prgms

Kristin Mickelson, West Campus, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Overview Narrative:

The following summarizes committee work accomplished throughout this past year:

During AY 2021-22 the chair of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure (CAFT) also chaired the Grievance Clearinghouse Committee (GCC). There were four new cases presented and no cases were carried over from AY 2020-2021. Of the four cases presented, two were forwarded to the Ombudsperson Committee at the request of the Grievant, one was dismissed after a request for further information from the Grievant received no response, and one is pending.

Office of the University Senate

Section II

Grievance Cases Assigned to CAFT:

There were no grievance cases assigned to CAFT.

Grievance Cases Pending as of April 25, 2022:

At this time (April 24, 2022), there is one grievance case pending which has not been assigned by GCC to either CAFT or GGC.

Section III

Item to carry-over into AY 2022-23:

At this time (April 24, 2022), there is one grievance case pending which has not been assigned by GCC to either CAFT or GGC but may carry over into AY 2022-2023.

Section IV

Recommendations to the Senate or Final Comments

Academic freedom is crucial and is of utmost importance to the intellectual health of the university; it must be clearly understood in concept and scope. It may be helpful for CAFT to develop some guidance to help faculty members understand what constitutes academic freedom. Arbitrary, irresponsible, or incompetent administrative actions rarely rise to the level of academic freedom. Claims of discrimination are properly before the Office of University Rights and Responsibility. While these issues should be redressed through the proper channels, they do not fall under the purview of CAFT.

With regard to tenure and promotion decisions, grievance committees do not have jurisdiction to evaluate the *substance* of a faculty member's original case. CAFT developed some standard language to assist grievants in understanding that grievance committees may hear cases where an allegedly material substantive policy or procedural violation may have occurred. For an alleged violation to be material, it must have had an impact on the outcome of the case. The relief available for a policy or procedure violation is for the matter to be sent back to the level at which the violation allegedly occurred.

Unit promotion and tenure criteria should be reviewed carefully by faculty. Examples included in tenure and promotion criteria, even when clearly labeled as examples, may be interpreted by administrators (or faculty) at various levels of review as requirements. It is particularly disconcerting when administrators and faculty have consistently different interpretations of stated promotion and tenure criteria throughout the review process. While independent review at all levels is required, it is difficult to identify what constitutes an independent review.