

## **EPP Task Force Report/Recommendations**

The Equity in Personnel Processes (EPP) Task Force was developed in May, 2021 with the following roles/charges:

1. Explore bias in teaching evaluations as it relates to gender, race, ethnicity, etc.
2. Make recommendations to mitigate issues of bias in teaching evaluations.
3. Make recommendations for specific policy language that FPPC will use to craft policy language.

Over the course of the 2021 Spring/Summer semesters, the EPP Task Force (Emily Frigo, Amy McFarland, Karyn Rabourn, Christine Rener) met several times to approach the roles above. The task force consulted work completed and in progress at GVSU (EIC, FPPC, FTLC), relevant scholarly literature, and emerging practices at higher education institutions nationwide. Review of the above resources, reflection and discussion among our group resulted in the following recommendations.

Recommendations have been organized into those that apply directly to using LIFT teaching evaluations and those that apply to mitigating bias in promotion and tenure processes university-wide. Broadly, however, we believe it is necessary to approach mitigating bias across LIFT and in promotion and tenure processes collaboratively. To this point, there appear to be related efforts across multiple entities (EIC, FPPC, FTLC, ECS/UAS). Moving towards mitigating bias and increasing equity requires a comprehensive plan involving the aforementioned areas as well as the Provost's Office, Human Resources, faculty ombuds, and Inclusion & Equity.

A note about consideration of recommendations: some recommendations may be relevant immediately, while others may not. Additionally, some recommendations may be irrelevant if others are adopted. As such, we ask that recommendations are considered individually rather than as a set.

Finally, we are awaiting a forthcoming report from the American Council on Education (ACE) that will offer specific policy language examples aimed at increasing equity in tenure and promotion processes.

We have included some quick access to examples and resources below, we can supply additional resources and information upon request.

Thank you,

EPP Task Force

## Recommendations re: LIFT Teaching Evaluations

- 1. We recommend LIFT teaching evaluations no longer be used for annual review and tenure and promotion processes. We further recommend these be used for formative purposes only and are only viewed by instructors and chairs/deans (with explicit guidelines for appropriate use).**

Please see reports from EIC and FPPC and significant evidence from academic literature acknowledging bias across student evaluations of teaching.

- 2. We recommend the university generate and disseminate a document/statement on the GVSU website that acknowledges bias in student evaluations with relevant evidence and resources to help mitigate bias.** Explicitly share how student evaluations will and will not be used with regard to annual review and tenure and promotion processes.

- Ex. The Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas offers this statement:
  - “It is well established in the academic literature that some metrics have known racial or gender bias, including at least 1) letters of support, 2) student evaluations, and 3) the peer review process for accepting or rejecting publications (if not double blind)” Para. 1. (<https://www.unlv.edu/engineering/promotion-tenure-avoiding-bias>)
  - Evidence/resources:
    - American Sociological Association (2019): [Statement on Student Evaluations of Teaching](#)
    - Peterson et al. (2019): [Mitigating bias in student evaluations of teaching](#)

- 3. We recommend the university explicate and publicize the process for faculty to request a student evaluation that demonstrates explicit bias in their written feedback be removed from record.**

- Please see the final item on the Principles regarding the use of LIFT results for summative evaluation of faculty teaching: “*Remember that each faculty member has the right to request that comments that they deem prejudicial be redacted from LIFT documents used for summative evaluations.*” It is currently unclear what the process of redaction is (who requests, what the resulting evaluation reports entail, and who may or may not still have the ability to view original LIFT evaluations). (<https://www.gvsu.edu/lift/principles-for-summative-evaluation-16.htm>)
- Support: Final EIC Report to ECS on Diversity of Faculty, Staff, and Students across Colleges

- 4. We recommend the university develop a more comprehensive ‘rubric’ to identify effective teaching and evidence that could be used as a part of tenure and promotion processes.**

[Already in progress at FPPC]

- Ex. Kansas University (<https://cte.ku.edu/benchmarks-teaching-effectiveness-project>)
- Ex. University of Colorado Boulder (<https://www.colorado.edu/teaching-quality-framework/about-tqf>)

## Recommendations re: Mitigating bias in promotion and tenure processes and evaluations of teaching for non-tenure-track faculty

5. **We recommend a thorough and regular review of university, college, and department guidelines for instances of bias. We further recommend immediate review of unit-specific requirements/expectations that exceed college and university requirements that introduce and/or perpetuate bias and that such expectations/requirements be immediately remedied.**
  - a. Ex. Requiring a teaching award for early promotion and tenure: *'For early tenure and promotion to associate, a faculty member must have external recognition of their teaching excellence; e.g., college or university teaching award, award from professional organization, model syllabus published, etc.'* (current guidelines from one GVSU academic department.)
  
6. **We recommend the university design and facilitate leadership training and ongoing professional development for ALL department chairs with an equity and inclusion lens.**
  - a. Include content that helps academic department leadership identify how bias can impact faculty and staff experiences and the ways in which it is presented (in workload and service assignments, hiring processes, student and peer evaluations of teaching, interactions with colleagues, etc.).
  - b. Pay special attention to how annual processes impact workload equity across all faculty but especially for societally and institutionally marginalized faculty (BIPOC, women, LGTBQ+, etc.).
  - c. Please see previous work from ULEAD Task Force with relevant resources related to leadership development on campus.
  
7. **We recommend the university require and appropriately train all evaluators that participate in promotion and tenure processes about how to identify and reduce bias and increase equity in review of promotion and tenure materials.**
  - a. Include information about the promotion and tenure process, considerations at each level of review, considerations related to evaluating teaching, research and service through a lens that acknowledges potential and/or unconscious bias, etc. This may require tenure and promotion committees to engage annually in norming activities to ensure personnel documents are evaluated with an equity-minded approach.
  - b. Create and promote a best practices document for participation in the personnel process for candidates and evaluators aimed at increasing equity and reducing bias.
  - c. Reward connections to strategic goals of the university in faculty efforts (space in integrative statement). Example: participating in community-based teaching or scholarship/service efforts designed to enhance the experience of marginalized students/peoples.
    - i. Ex. University of California Office of the President statement: *The University of California is committed to excellence and equity in every facet of its mission. Contributions in all areas of faculty achievement that promote equal opportunity and diversity should be given due recognition in the academic personnel process, and they should be evaluated and credited in the same way as other faculty achievements. These contributions to diversity and equal opportunity can take a variety of forms including efforts to advance equitable access to education, public*

*service that addresses the needs of California's diverse population, or research in a scholar's area of expertise that highlights inequalities. Mentoring and advising of students and faculty members, particularly from underrepresented and underserved populations, should be given due recognition in the teaching or service categories of academic personnel policies.*

<https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/academic-personnel-policy/appointment-and-promotion/index.html>

- d. Explicitly indicate the inclusion of work that relates to strategic goals of the university (including inclusion work) in teaching, scholarship, and service on unit-level and college-level tenure and promotion documents.
  - i. Ex. IUPUI Faculty Council voted to approve the addition of an integrative diversity, equity, and inclusion case to the IUPUI Promotion and Tenure Guidelines. This historic measure is the first in the country to allow promotion based on engagement in activities that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion.  
<https://academicaffairs.iupui.edu/AAContent/Html/Media/AAContent/02-PromotionTenure/PromotionAndTenure/ptguidelines-current-year-final.pdf>
- e. Evidence/resources/examples:
  - i. Laursen & Austin (2014): [Strategic Intervention Brief #6: Equitable processes of tenure and promotion](#)
  - ii. Ex. Retention, Tenure, and Promotion Bias-Literacy Training Guide Creating an Inclusive and Equitable Process, ADVANCE Project TRACS, Montana State University:  
[https://www.montana.edu/nsfadvance/documents/RTP\\_TrainingGuide\\_6.18.18.pdf](https://www.montana.edu/nsfadvance/documents/RTP_TrainingGuide_6.18.18.pdf)
  - iii. Ex. 2021 Promotion & Tenure Process for Administrators, The University of Arizona (training through the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs):  
<https://facultyaffairs.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2021.03.12%20Administrators%20Workshop%20on%20Promotion%20Process.pdf>

**8. We recommend an external advocate as a non-voting member on all personnel decision committees at all levels of the process.**

- a. See Utah State University [https://www.colorado.edu/eeer/sites/default/files/attached-files/6\\_tenurepromotionbrief123015.pdf](https://www.colorado.edu/eeer/sites/default/files/attached-files/6_tenurepromotionbrief123015.pdf)
- b. Please see how the Math Department Bylaws 3.6 'Personnel Committee': [Mathematics Department Bylaws - Mathematics Department Policies, Procedures, and Resources](#).

**9. We recommend enhanced faculty onboarding with specific attention to personnel actions:**

In addition to new hire onboarding, establish orientation for faculty going through the personnel process (contract renewal, tenure, promotion) one year prior to their scheduled action. The goal is to provide ongoing, scaffolded support of the candidate and formal opportunities to clarify tenure and promotion expectations.

- a. Topics to include:
  - i. Evaluation Principles: "The evaluation process is designed to create an open, uniform, and equitable procedure for the review of faculty by their peers. The central principle of this process is to have an informed, candid, and open, job-

related discussion of the candidate in a unit meeting followed by a unit vote and written recommendation.” Shared Governance Policies 3.07F

- ii. Roles and responsibilities of candidates, Designated Unit Head, Dean, Provost (Provost website)
  - iii. Required deadlines and policies
  - iv. Department mentoring, feedback opportunities (i.e. sample portfolios, faculty volunteers to read drafts), and campus support (i.e. FTLC Portfolio mentoring, faculty affinity groups)
  - v. Organization, workload, and self-care strategies to complete portfolio
  - vi. Department culture
- b. Evidence/resources:
- i. Lisnic, R., Zajicek, A., & Morimoto, S. (2019). Gender and Race Differences in Faculty Assessment of Tenure Clarity: The Influence of Departmental Relationships and Practices. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 5(2), 244–260. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649218756137>
  - ii. Example: Emory College of Arts and Sciences, Tenure and Promotion Orientation Session: <http://college.emory.edu/faculty/documents/tenure-track/ecas-tenure-and-promotion-orientation-session-final-2021.pdf>

**10. We recommend the university develop a procedure to collect and maintain annual and over-time aggregate data and reporting from Inclusion & Equity and/or Human Resources on demographics of faculty departures to determine whether patterns emerge that may necessitate further exploration of whether bias and/or climate issues impact departure.**

- a. Support: Final EIC Report to ECS on Diversity of Faculty, Staff, and Students across Colleges

**11. We recommend the university explore and report on GVSU faculty decisions to pause or continue the tenure clock (FMLA leave, COVID pause, etc.) to uncover whether decisions are disproportionately skewed for any minoritized or underrepresented faculty status. We further recommend examination and projections of how pauses impact future salaries.**

- a. <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/07/07/response-pandemic-better-alternatives-pausing-tenure-clock-should-be-considered>