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## [TPAC-RL Resources on Provost Website](#)

### **Thursday, December 8th, 2023 - TPAC-RL meeting**

Jordan Hall 302,

Mike Kitz, Chair

Emily Beck, Chair-Elect

#### **I. Introductions/Welcome - Mike Kitz**

Mike welcomed the group and introduced Emily Beck, the Chair-Elect, information about Emily can be found [here](#).

#### **II. University's preparations for HLC (Higher Learning Commission) Reaffirmation of Accreditation (Slides 3-9)**

**Maura Ryan**, Vice President and Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs

**Demetra Schoenig**, Director of Academic Affairs

**Caroline Maloney**, Associate Director of Academic Programming and Accreditation

Maura Ryan introduced herself and her role in the HLC Reaffirmation and Accreditation process. She explained briefly why we are part of this process. More information on the HLC and Notre Dame's status in the process can be found on the [HLC's website](#).

Maura stressed that the timing for the site visit and reaffirmation/accreditation is perfect for ND as we just rolled out our new [Strategic Framework 2023](#) and are in the midst of thinking about where we are, what our strengths are, and where we want to go in the future. We are ready to "tell our story as an institution". Then, she went briefly over the timeline of the process that is coming up in the Spring (Slide 6). The site visit will take place in April 2024 which concludes the 10-year cycle from the previous reaffirmation/accreditation process. Last summer the Quality Initiative report on an assessment framework of the Core Curriculum was submitted. Please find information on our [Core Curriculum here](#).

When explaining the criteria of the accreditation (Slide 7), Maura stressed our focus on "Mission" but also pointed out how a Core Curriculum, besides learning and academic growth, affects other aspects of student life, i.e. residential life et al.

The clear goal for ND is to receive a "clean" reaffirmation/accreditation without any follow-up action to be necessary.

Q&A followed. Some questions were related to procedure or access, and other questions raised concerns about skewed data to which Maura Ryan and Demetra Schoenig answered this:

- The assessment framework document will be **published** and made accessible to us after a collaborative process with Mary Flannery's office is finalized
- The **previous report** was published on the [Provost's website](#).
- **No significant changes** in requirements were made by the HLC in this cycle compared to the last cycle other than simplifying some criteria and consolidating some information. On the other hand, some changes we made will be important to the HLC, e.g. increase in health benefits eligibility and progress in addressing DEI questions across campus.
- The **self-evaluation reports of the departments** will be used to inform colleges in this process.
- The fact-finding process also involves a **student survey** that is sent out at the end of February, one month before the submission of our documents. This late timing is prescribed by HLC and it is assumed that it serves to prevent the university from making statements with the knowledge of students' views.
- Regarding the relationship between **teaching and research**, the latter will primarily show up in the report as an effective method to show student learning as students gain access to this research through TPAC. Other administrative units will be more focused on research.
- The issues surrounding **generative AI** and assessment cannot be answered by ND in this cycle but we expect to receive guidance from HLC moving forward although they have not been very specific so far.
- A concern was voiced around those courses that are on the **intersection between college and university requirements** leading to different results depending on the way data is collected for these courses. One of the relevant Deans is already aware of this and might bring up the issue to M. Flannery. Maura underlined that the accreditation process looks mostly at courses that are taught from a disciplinary basis to evaluate how courses change, how students evaluate courses, and what is different after changes were implemented.

### III. TPAC - RL profile - updates compared to '22-'23 (Slides 11-15) (Mike Kitz)

In summary:

- The total number of TPAC-RL has increased by 22 to 554 from last year.
- TPAC-RL faculty represent 37% of all faculty at ND, trending upwards. (Slide 12)
- Regarding promotions (Slide 14), our increased efforts in the areas of transparency, accessibility, and mentoring continue to pay off.
- A lot of the new hires are "Professors of the Practice" which contributed to their high number overall (127) vs. Teaching professors (254).

#### IV. Faculty Promotions / Career Advancement (Slides 16-18) (Mike Kitz)

Slides 16-18 list promotions and advancements this AY which was celebrated with applause in our group. Mike noted that it is important to remember to help each other on the path to promotion and he encouraged us to consider mentoring. The upward trend creates a momentum we should take advantage of. All documents to study for the promotion process are posted on the Provost's website, see the header of this document, also on Slide 18.

A concern was expressed that some units/departments might still disseminate outdated documents or standards/procedures to their faculty. Mike asked to send him reports of such a case so that the Provost's office can reach out to rectify the situation.

#### V. TPAC-RL Committee Representation (Slide 19) (Emily Beck)

Emily pointed out that in many committees, our group of TPAC-RL is underrepresented but effort has begun to look at all committees and create a proposal for more representation. To receive first-hand feedback on the work in such committees, TPACs who served on them are being consulted. The proposal serves to bring about a more equitable change to the Academic Articles by aligning the breakdown of TPAC-RL in committees with the percentages on campus. As it stands, we constitute approx. 40% of all faculty but teach 66% of the classes and are therefore in much closer contact with the student body than many research faculty members. This explains the strategic goal of considering committees for undergraduate issues vs. those surrounding faculty research. If you have any thoughts or ideas for this process, please reach out to Mike and Emily. All these ideas will be sent to the *Committee of Committees*. Its Chair is prepared to receive this proposal.

Q&A and comments from faculty followed:

**Q:** Are there standards in departments for promotions and is there a committee for that?

**A:** There are general standards and those for each unit, e.g. for "Professor of the Practice". There is an informal committee and we are interested in changing that to a formalized committee.

**Q:** Can we get numbers and stats about how many of us teach undergraduate courses vs. non-TPAC?

**A:** The group will look into that.

**Q:** What is the actual makeup of current committees?

**A:** Jim Frabutt has gathered the current information and Mike will provide the lists to those working on the proposal.

**Several comments** connected this topic of **representation** with the topic of **tenure** based on the following question:

**Q:** Can we have a committee to explore secure funding for our positions? Other places offer secure positions for up to 5 years if funding is secured.

**A:** If there is benchmarking in other places, it would be interesting to see.

**Several TPACs commented** on this with examples from institutions they know or worked at but also noted that the benefit of potential tenure as a teaching professor came with the additional requirement of a research component, often 10% or more.

**One TPAC** expressed concern that some of the very important decisions with a long-term impact on us, e.g. choosing or reappointing deans, are made exclusively by tenured faculty. Therefore, by pushing tenure for TPAC and equitable representation in committees, we avoid a hiatus that disables us from participating in these decisions as an unintended consequence.

A general comment was made to draw attention to departments/units where only very few TPACs are present, thereby leaving the reviews of the standards almost entirely to the TTP.

Furthermore, to alleviate some of the concerns around tenure and insecurity, a TPAC pointed to the high number of promotions recently which, if on higher levels, come with 3-5 year contracts presenting in themselves a certain degree of security.

Lastly, one TPAC called for a comprehensive salary survey that is commensurate with our service.

## **VI. Newsletter / Announcements (Slides 20-24) (Emily Beck)**

Emily introduced a new initiative for a semi-annual Newsletter for TPAC-RL which could be more effective than the website by reaching out to the members directly with information and reminders about the mentoring program and highlighting some of the great work of our members (Faculty Spotlights). She will send out a Google Form mid-semester to gather information from us for the Newsletter. Examples of achievements or other noteworthy news are listed on Slides 21-23.

Comment: This TPAC meeting is the first that includes RL. All communication will from now on include this group.

Patrick Clauss announced briefly a **Conference on College Teaching** and encouraged everyone to consider signing up for this teaching retreat with workshops for all disciplines: Slide 24. Please watch out for an email with more details in January. This email will also include resources for funding options.

## **VII. Susan Del Valle - "First Day Access" (Slides 25-32)**

Susan Del Valle reported about a new program her Chemistry department has piloted with 1000 ND students so far. The pilot continues in the Spring semester with additional Math courses. This program came about the growing need for a streamlined process to improve access to digital textbooks (including their work platforms for homework assignments) from the first day of class or even earlier to prevent missing work, confusion when ordering the titles, extra costs for shipping or express service, loss of funds after a class was dropped rendering the purchase superfluous, but most importantly, to support students on financial aid. Incoming First Year students have reportedly the most problems in this area in addition to their inexperience with the university system.

The plan as visually outlined on Slide 28 and as practiced in the pilot program (and at other universities), puts access links of textbooks and their platforms on the Canvas course of the professor. Students sign in and begin working or lose access after dropping a class. Charges for the textbooks are only made after the drop/add period if the students stay in the class. All financial transactions are handled for the student

and billed as "Book expense" to their account. The process to get the textbook on Canvas is handled in the department in collaboration with the publisher/rep for the textbooks.

The advantages are clear:

- Immediate access to the textbook when signed into the Canvas course.
- Student only pays for what they end up using.
- Students do not need to deal with payments directly.
- No issues were reported in the pilot program.

Unclear is whether a student who already has access to a textbook has to pay again if this is an automated process for the class as a whole. The pilot program did not use an opt-out button but it is a consideration to include this in the future. The pilot program might not work for each textbook.

## **VII. Introduction of new members**

Several new faculty introduced themselves.

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Respectfully submitted by Eva Hoeckner, 12/11/2023