

January 7, 2014

From: Senate Council on Research and Scholarship

To: Dr. Marc Heft, Senate chair

Re: Presidents' proposal to expand and reorganize the APB

SCORS acknowledges current problems and dilemmas associated with the assignments and tasks of the Academic Personnel Board as outlined in the Presidents remarks to the Senate. It is clear that APB members' workload (cases reviewed/week) has expanded as the University has grown. In addition, some APB members find it challenging to evaluate tenure and promotion cases across disciplines and cultures as individuals with more diverse assignments are reviewed. The SCORS members support the expansion as the only feasible way to reduce the workload on individual APB members and retain the necessary level of review the Board should be providing the President and the applicants.

SCORS believes that expanding the membership from 6 to 10 or 12 members will clearly reduce the workload for individuals, but only if each applicant's file is not reviewed by each board member. This is a major change in how APB has traditionally functioned and raises additional questions about how these new board members will be selected (e.g., elected at large, fixed representation, appointed, etc.), how many there will be, how assignments will be allocated, etc. What appears simple on the surface (expanding membership, especially if it is to two separate groups) is a major, fundamental change that would benefit from examination in the broadest possible context.

Looking forward, for example, there will likely be additional changes needed if the APB is to continue to function in a fair and rigorous manner. SCORS would like to point out that the President's expansion proposal may be best viewed as the first step toward more extensive restructuring plans for the APB and we recommend the faculty senate work with the President to establish an Ad hoc committee to address APB restructuring in more detail and to review the fairness and appropriateness of current processes associated with T & P review. We realize the magnitude of this suggestion, and do not see this as a task to be completed in the time frame suggested by the President for expansion of APB. We suggest the ad hoc committee consider the entire process as currently employed at UF and at our peer institutions, but should at a minimum examine the following topics:

- Effort reporting and faculty assignments need to be aligned and applied uniformly to each T & P applicant (e.g., 3 contact hours = ?FTE)
- Appropriateness of a single format for all T/P/Permanent status applications
- Role and impact of open access and self-publishing in T & P

- Declining response rates for student evaluations
- How on-line instruction/instructors will be evaluated and FTE assigned (including when on-line activity is an overload, rather than an assignment)
- Role of peer-reviews of teaching
- Constitution of membership, method of selection, and viability of discipline or assignment-based sub-committees
- Conflicts between Unit policies and University policies, particularly regarding external letters
- A review of these and other topics by an Ad Hoc committee does not preclude a temporary expansion of APB as the President suggested. Longer term, however, the process would likely benefit from a thoughtful review of all policies and procedures in the awarding of promotions and tenure/permanent status at the University.