Summary of discussion on Prof of Teaching rank
Working Meeting, December 15, 2011
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Present: Anne, David K, David P, Ed, George, Gregor, Ian, Jim L., Kelly, Michiel,
Patrice, Paul, Rachel, Steve, Will plus guest Vanessa Auld (Associate Dean,
FoS).

Following are a list of questions (Q) that were raised at the meeting,
along with some discussion points (D) that provide answers which seemed
to be well-received by those present.

Q: Who should be on the standing committee?

D: Since many of us consider the Instructor track to be a parallel
track to the Professorial track, it would make sense in our department
to have the standing committee comprised of Full Professors and
Professors of Teaching. For this to be the case, we would need for
all eligible members (those above plus Associate Profs) to vote. We
can arrange that and perhaps broadcast our practice to influence other
practices at UBC.

Q. How to resolve the seeming contradiction between two statements in
the Guidelines
(www.hr.ubc.ca/faculty-relations/files/Guidelines-for-Promotion-to-Professor-of-Teaching.pdf):

(a) "The candidate is expected to have advanced scholarly approaches
to teaching, learning and curriculum practices."

(b) "The Professor of Teaching rank does not require achievement in
the scholarship of teaching and learning"

D: One interpretation of (a), which does not contradict (b), is that a
candidate should be up to date on scholarly findings with respect to
effective pedagogy and should communicate how their teaching practices
are informed by these findings. However, the candidate need not have
scholarly publications, which is more the intent of (b).

Q: Does a candidate have to have an international reputation? (This
comes up when we ask for letters for promotion to Full Professor.)

D: Having a reputation outside UBC is excellent; a national or
international reputation would be fantastic. Having a reputation
outside of one's unit is also quite valuable. The further the reach,
the stronger the case.

Q: What are examples of leadership outside of UBC?

D: Being a consultant in industry, video lectures, creating
repositories of problems or software that others are using, organizing
WCCCE (Western Canadian Conference on Computing Education) or other
conferences, publishing concept maps or other educational tools that
are used by other institutions, publishing text books, mentoring of
colleagues. See also the Guidelines.

Q: How to choose external referees and ensure that they understand
the criteria?

A: Because job descriptions for teaching-track faculty at North
American institutions varies a lot, it's reasonable to expect that

well-chosen referees would read our criteria and just assume the
criteria at their institution. It's ok to ask people at the Senior
Instructor or equivalent rank at institutions where few if any people
have already been promoted to a higher teaching-track rank. It's ok
for referees to be at teaching-intensive, rather than
research-intensive schools. We'll need to consider who would be good
referees for each case separately as we do for other promotions,
taking into account the experience and credentials of potential
referees.

Q: How to evaluate contributions to advising?

D: Best to point to leadership in establishing advising practices,
rather than trying to delve into the quality of individual advising
sessions.

Q: How to do effective peer teaching evaluations?

D: In some cases, in-class evaluations are difficult to do because (a)
the day picked is not representative, e.g. a review session in which
the instructor is not using typical pedagogical techniques, (b) it may
be difficult to assess what's going on in a classroom where students
are solving problems in small groups, (c) in case (b) and other cases
it may be difficult to do the evaluation if the evaluator hasn't had a
chance to check the materials that students were expected to read/view
prior to class, (d) while it's possible to evaluate class management
aspects of teaching if you're not an expert in the material, it can be
hard to evaluate other aspects of the quality of teaching without some
match in expertise or perhaps prior experience in teaching the class.

Suggestions for conducting peer evaluations of candidates for
professor of teaching (and perhaps other faculty) included:

(a) Examine learning goals, pre-class and post-class activities and
other materials such as homeworks and exercises, prior to the visit.
(b) Instructor and evaluator agree on a date in advance, have a
pre-meeting where the peer evaluator learns about the instructor's
approach, what pedagogical techniques they use, what learning goals
will be covered in the class where the visit is planned. (Evaluations
of this type could be done in addition to the "you don't know when I'm
coming" type.)
(c) Ensure appropriate people are on the peer evaluation committee,
including several senior instructors.
(d) Faculty of Science has new guidelines which include suggestions
such as those above.
(e) Find other departments and arrange for cross-departmental
evaluations.
(f) Adapt the practices developed by the Skylight Peer Teaching
Network.

It was noted that external peer evaluations are not mandatory but add
strength. It was noted also that objectivity is not really feasible
when the evaluator is not anonymous.

Q: What exactly would be in the teaching portfolio?

D: A high level summary plus appendices with detailed materials. Could
be on the order of a couple of hundred pages. Alternatively, DVDs and
e-portfolios can be provided, or a pdf can be provided on the
web. DACOPAT only gets a paper copy. Vanessa has samples.

Q: Guidelines for promotion to Senior Instuctor already use the word

"outstanding". In what ways would Professors of Teaching be even more outstanding?

D: They should be persistently outstanding! Also, leadership roles are more important at the Prof of Teaching rank.

Q: Should there be breadth of teaching, across several domain areas and course levels?

D: This is not a requirement. Most instructors have breadth, but some teach the same course a lot (outstandingly).