



Department Faculty Meeting
Friday, April 12, 2024, 3:30pm

Location: Denny 213, remote option on Zoom: <https://washington.zoom.us/j/92909269538>

Attendees: Bahrawi, Bhowmik, Cao, Cho, Choi, Dubrow, Hamm, Handel, Iwata, Jesty, J. Kim, U. Kim, Lü, Ma, Marino, Nishikawa, A. Ohta, Pauwels, Rominger, Takeda, Turner, Wang, Won, Van Scoyoc, Zielonka

Minutes

I. **Call to Order 3:35pm**

II. **Vote:** Approval of Minutes (February) (*standing item*; Handel) 3:30-3:35

Minutes were approved.

III. **Announcements** (*standing item*; Handel) 3:35-3:40

Announcements were made regarding streamlining of timing of salary increases, this year's convocation speaker, the status of language testing, the Asian Languages and Cultures major, changes to the main office's operating hours, and a retirement announcement.

IV. **Updates** (*standing item*; Handel) 3:40-3:50

Updates were presented regarding successful conclusion of search for Assistant Teaching Professor of Hindi, searches for temporary lecturers in Sanskrit and Khmer, the listening sessions with Dr. Taranath, our recently approved promotion guidelines (still under consideration by the College Council), ad-hoc committees for additional promotion guidelines, and the ad-hoc committee for the drafting of bylaws.

V. **Discussion:** Faculty Meeting time for 2024-2025 3:50-4:00

Discussion took place regarding moving faculty meeting time to 2:30pm for Autumn 2024.

Decided: Faculty Meeting time will be moved to Fridays, 2:30-4:00pm beginning Autumn 2024. Those with existing conflicts will endeavor to reschedule them. We will reconsider the meeting time at the end of each quarter.

VI. **Discussion:** Merit Review procedures (Appendix 1) 4:00-4:45

Discussion took place regarding the procedures we have used since spring 2020 and the advantages and disadvantages. The chair presented a new proposal, still in draft form, for a different method of determining merit. An ensuing discussion of about 30 minutes discussed the pros and cons of the new proposal, and additional suggestions were made for fleshing out the proposal.

A motion was raised to send the current draft back to the Executive Committee to be further refined, with additional input from all faculty, into a policy proposal for the faculty to vote on at the next meeting. Seconded.

Vote results:

21 yes. 0 no. 1 abstain.

Motion passes.

VII. Discussion: Sharing Faculty Activity Reports *4:45-4:50*

A proposal was made to create a shared space where faculty can optionally place their Faculty Activity Reports for viewing by other department faculty. This will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

VIII. Adjournment to Personnel Meeting (voting faculty only) *4:50-5:00*

Appendix 1: Proposed New Merit Review Procedures (draft)

This is not a finalized proposal. If the faculty approve of this general approach, this draft will be refined into a final proposal. Background information on the rationale for revising our merit review system can be found in the [longer document on Google Docs](#).

Faculty Code only contains references to “merit/meritorious” and “no merit/non-meritorious”. No distinction between levels of merit is specified or required.

Current situation

The department’s current merit evaluation procedures were approved by faculty vote in March 2020. Each faculty member is evaluated by a committee of two colleagues superior in rank (or, in the case of full professors, equal in rank). The committee prepares a report recommending a “meritorious” or “non-meritorious” determination. Voting-eligible faculty members then vote to assign “No Merit”, “Low Merit”, “Merit”, “High Merit”, or “Exceptional Merit”. The committee report is not shared with the person being voted on, but the resulting vote totals are shared.

The results of the votes are transmitted to the College dean along with the Chair’s merit recommendations.

The problem

Several aspects of the current process are problematic.

1. **Workload:** Only full professors can serve on committees evaluating merit of associate professors and full professors. Over the last few years each full professor in the department has had to sit on 5 or 6 committees. It is too much work. The level of work for committee members of other ranks is also high. Our current procedures require a review of files over a three-year period and write-up of a report, which is time-consuming and often duplicates other report-writing and assessment processes in the department.
2. **Lack of clear standards:** The distinction between No Merit and some degree of Merit is clear. But there are no clear guidelines for distinguishing the four levels of merit that our department uses. Individual faculty apply different standards, with the result that the vote totals provide little guidance to the Chair or Dean about relative merit.
3. **Lack of equity:** Each committee applies different standards and prepares different styles of reports. Two colleagues with equivalent merit may look very different because their committees present their accomplishments in different ways. Unless each voting member

reviews all colleagues' records in detail instead of relying on the committee reports, it is impossible to make a fair comparison when assigning merit.

4. **Irrelevance:** In most years, a salary raise of 2-4% is given to all meritorious faculty. Only occasionally are small additional increases made available based on the degree of merit.

In short, the merit review process places an enormous burden of time and effort on faculty, but yields results that are perceived as arbitrary and often irrelevant. It is left up to the Chair to interpret the merit vote results for the Dean, introducing the possibility of additional subjectivity and bias into the process.

Proposed new process for merit reviews

This process decouples merit determinations from performance assessment and feedback. It simplified merit determination into two categories: **meritorious** and **non-meritorious**, as required by Faculty Code. It is meant to *reduce workload* and *bias*, and *increase transparency*. Workload is reduced by eliminating multiple merit committees. Bias is reduced and transparency is increased by having a clear set of criteria for each category of faculty.

Faculty deemed **meritorious** are eligible for merit-based annual salary increases.

Qualifications for merit

A faculty member is deemed meritorious if they are meeting the basic expectations of their position. Because of this, the distinction between merit and no merit is a simple one to determine.

Lecturers are deemed meritorious if:

- They have taught their assigned classes, submitted final grades, and received acceptable student and peer teaching evaluations.

Teaching professors are deemed meritorious if:

- They have taught their assigned classes, submitted final grades, and received acceptable student and peer teaching evaluations.
- They have carried out departmental service as appointed by the chair in accordance with the list of service roles published on the department web site, and/or university service outside the department that is deemed equivalent.

Tenure-line professors are deemed meritorious if:

- They have taught their assigned classes, submitted final grades, and received acceptable student and peer teaching evaluations.
- They have carried out departmental service as appointed by the chair in accordance with the list of service roles published on the department web site, and/or university service outside the department that is deemed equivalent.
- Their record shows evidence of research progress over the previous three years, such as scholarly publication, scholarly presentation, scholarship submitted for publication, scholarly projects in process, sabbatical leave.

Process for determining merit

Each year, the chair will appoint a committee of three full professors (teaching and/or tenure-line) to review all faculty files. The committee may divide up the work as they see fit. The chair will review the faculty files of the professors on the committee. Unlike most standing committees in the department, merit review committee membership will rotate so that no one faculty member remains on the committee for more than one consecutive year unless necessary due to a lack of faculty at rank.

The committee will prepare four simple reports, consisting of a list of faculty names with a recommendation of “meritorious” or “non-meritorious” for each, based on the criteria in the previous section. There will be one report for each faculty rank: lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor. The chair will prepare a similar report for the three full professors on the committee.

Example:

Professor X	meritorious
Professor Y	non-meritorious
	[justification for non-meritorious recommendation]
Professor Z	meritorious

Meritorious designations do not require further elaboration. In the case of a non-meritorious designation, the committee will include a justification in the report.

The reports will be made available to voting members of the faculty in advance of a scheduled meeting in May. All faculty of sufficient rank will have the opportunity to review faculty files in light

of the recommendation reports, with the expectation that non-meritorious recommendations will receive additional scrutiny.

At the merit review meeting, all permanent faculty will vote on the merit of lecturers. Then assistant professors will be excused. The remaining faculty will vote on the merit of assistant professors. Then associate professors will be excused. The full professors will vote on the merit of the associate professors. For merit votes on full professors, there will be a “round robin” in which each faculty member being voted on is excused in turn.

Because the determination of “meritorious” vs. “non-meritorious” is in most cases straightforward, the voting can take place quickly without a need for more thorough review and discussion. With unanimous consent, multiple recommendations for merit can be voted on in a single ballot. All ballots can likely be completed at a single 90-minute meeting.

In the case of a non-meritorious recommendation by the committee, it is required that there be a discussion of all voting-eligible faculty before the vote takes place.

What about additional salary increases based on relative merit?

What happens if the provost approves an additional salary increase limited to a subset of faculty deemed to have higher merit? As a hypothetical: The provost approves a 3% raise for all meritorious faculty, and an additional 1% to be distributed among highly meritorious faculty making up no more than 20% of the faculty.

With a new provost coming on board this year, we are not sure how likely this is to happen. But we need a procedure in place in case it does.

Some possible ways to manage this situation might be 1) The decision on recommending high merit could be left entirely to the Chair (as is done in many departments); 2) The Chair could recommend faculty based purely on salary inequity considerations (see Faculty Code 24-70 and 24-71) instead of merit; 3) The merit review committee could be re-convened to make recommendations on additional merit to the Chair; 4) The faculty could approve a set of priorities which will guide the chair in all future recommendations of merit-based salary increases. **Other suggestions for how to handle this situation, consistent with Faculty Code 24-55, are welcome.**