

Academic Senate Research and Professional Development Committee Winter 2009 Quarterly Report

During the Spring 2009 quarter, the met every other week for about one and a half hours.

This report briefly describes the issues discussed in the meetings.

Support for Research and Professional Development at Cal Poly and Status of R&PD at Cal Poly

The committee invited the provost, Dr. Robert Koob, to its session on February 9, 2009 to present the committee report produced in 2008 at the request of the previous provost, Dr. Durgin. Dr. Koob offered his feedback on the report, leading to a discussion ranging from specific aspects of the recommendations like release time, funding issues, and space allocation, over the relation between scholarship and teaching, to Cal Poly's vision (or lack thereof). After Dr. Koob's departure, the committee discussed the question of how to proceed. Since there are already two significant efforts going on with the WASC self study and the work on the Strategic Plan, we decided to concentrate on reviews of the outcomes from those efforts, rather than engaging in our own attempt at defining research, professional development, the role of a teacher-scholar, and related aspects. The committee also explored possible opportunities to engage the Cal Poly community in a discussion of these issues within the context of the Science Café activities at Cal Poly's library. However, it is not clear what kinds of activities are most effective, and if the Science Café is the best venue. More entries were added to the informal [list of activities related to the review of scholarship, research, and professional development at Cal Poly](#) that is being compiled by the committee.

Conflict between R&PD and Cal Poly's Mission

The committee continued the discussions from the previous quarter, resulting in the statement below that was forwarded to the Academic Senate leadership:

"On an interim basis, the Research and Professional Development Committee will hear complaints from faculty about initiatives that are perceived to be in conflict with Cal Poly's Mission Statement. If the Committee finds merit in a complaint, it will forward it to the Academic Senate Executive Committee.

This is a temporary increase in the Committee's duties. We urge the Academic Senate to find a more permanent way to resolve such concerns."

Review Cal Poly Strategic Plan

The committee reviewed the draft version of the [Cal Poly Strategic Plan](#). A document with the committee's [comments on the Cal Poly Strategic Plan - Feb 09](#) was forwarded to the authoring team of the plan. The committee will continue to review upcoming versions, in particular those parts describing metrics to be used for the evaluation of progress towards the goals and objectives.

Review of the Cal Poly RPT Focus Group Report

The committee was charged by the Senate president with a review of the Retention Promotion and Tenure Focus Group Report (version of February 5, 2009). This report was produced in response to a request by the former provost, Dr. Durgin. The committee will examine the report from the perspective of research and professional development, and its role in the considerations for retention, promotion, and tenure. In its initial discussions, the committee, expressed some concerns about the composition of the focus group, which consisted almost exclusively of administrators and senior faculty, and had no representative from untenured faculty, which is arguably the constituency most seriously affected by the topic. The emphasis of the focus group and the resulting report on the other hand is mostly on procedural aspects, and not so much on the actual criteria for RPT decisions. This topic will be on the agenda for the next quarter, with the intention of producing a document

expressing the views of the committee. The committee will also consider a recommendation of endorsement of the focus report to the Academic Senate.

Infrastructure, Community, and Culture for R&PD at Cal Poly

This topic appeared implicitly in all of the discussions of the topics described above.

Student Involvement

This topic was discussed briefly within the context of the above topics, but the committee did not dedicate specific meetings or time slots to it.

Committee Organization

The Wiki as a repository for committee documents, see [<http://wiki.csc.calpoly.edu/senate-research-prof-def/wiki>] continues to work reasonably well, but some aspects are not convenient for the needs of all members. We will continue its use throughout this academic year.

Preparation for Spring Quarter

The committee will put a high priority on work towards a resolution on the RPT report produced by the focus group. It will also work on two other resolutions (albeit with lower priority), one on expanding the use of the Digital Commons, and one on sustaining the community of RP&D activities. Pending the feedback from the Senate President, the committee may also propose the above statement on conflicts between Cal Poly's mission and research and professional development activities as a Senate resolution. Finally, the committee will review "best practices" by colleges and departments concerning the use of research-related release time.

Franz Kurfess

Chair, Academic Senate Research and Professional Development committee

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