Faculty Roles and Structure Topic Team Report

What trends in higher education are having the most significant impact on this topic?

What are the most important considerations regarding this topic?

Fundamental Idea: Creating and sustaining the highest quality faculty and entrusting faculty with academic freedom is the best means to achieving the mission and vision established for PSU in by the campus Strategic Plan. Clarification of faculty roles and responsibilities—coupled with professional development, strong integration in academic advising and renewed commitment to diversity and robust shared governance—will substantially strengthen the impact and achievement of the faculty and PSU.

Imperative: What major action must be accomplished over the planning horizon?

Objectives: How will we measure success?

1. Faculty at PSU—including tenured and tenure track faculty, full-time non-tenure track faculty, and adjunct faculty—enable PSU to achieve its missions related to instruction and learning; scholarship, research, and creative activity; community engagement; and service.

2. Faculty life at PSU is strengthened through a system of shared governance that recognizes a systemic partnership with campus administration, a partnership based upon mutual respect, recognition of the critical importance of academic freedom through tenure, and the centrality of peer review as a fundamental element of faculty recruitment, hiring, and assessment.

3. Faculty are committed to pursuing an active intellectual agenda as a core element of their responsibility as faculty members supported by ongoing professional development.

Initiatives: What collective actions do we need to take, that are transformative in nature?

Initiative One: Align Faculty Rights and Responsibilities to Advance PSU’s Mission as an Urban Research University through Heightened Transparency in Decision Making and an Expansion of Academic Freedom

Rationale: In order to effectively advance the collective mission and vision of PSU, it is critical that faculty rights and responsibilities, incentives and rewards, workload expectations, and hiring and evaluation procedures are appropriately aligned and transparent. The composition of the overall faculty workforce should be determined through an intentional process that promotes core faculty values (see item #2 of Guiding Principles), explicitly articulates the
differentiated roles of different faculty appointments (i.e., tenure track, non-tenure track, and adjunct faculty), and crafts an appropriate balance of faculty appointments to promote the university’s mission. In crafting balances optimal for their programs, Deans and academic units will be guided by the professional principles of transparency and accountability so as to ensure that their units set, uphold, and operationalize standards of excellence, academic freedom, and shared governance at every stage of the faculty career: from recruitment to retirement. Expectations for a faculty member’s work should be determined in consultation with the department and should be detailed and articulated in writing in the letter of offer and approved by the appropriate Dean and the Provost.

Suggested Strategies:

1. In order to stabilize teaching faculty and ensure their academic freedom, PSU should explore building a system for teaching-intensive faculty that includes tenure. Faculty with jobs emphasizing teaching and service as well as those with jobs that include research should enjoy parity in pay, workload, and opportunities to participate in shared governance. By extending rigorous hiring and review protocols and the protections of tenure to faculty members in full-time, teaching-intensive positions, we honor the university’s commitment to excellence in teaching and create the infrastructure for healthy shared governance.

2. In accordance with Article 18 of the agreement between PSU and PSU-AAUP, PSU should explore implementing a system of “continuous employment” that will offer non-tenure track faculty who have demonstrated sustained excellence in their position, as assessed through appropriate faculty governance systems, appointments that will be continuous and ongoing (unless financial exigency in a program is declared or a major program modification eliminates the need for the position). Such appointments contribute to professionalism, recruitment and retention, and recognition for contribution to the university’s academic mission. This system should include the expectation that the individuals considered for continuous employment were hired through an open and competitive process that adopted best practices for recruiting faculty from underrepresented populations to ensure that faculty reflect PSU’s diverse student body.

3. PSU should explore ways to expand full-time positions, whether they be tenure-eligible and/or “continuous employment” appointments, so that a greater overall percentage of faculty have a long-term investment and commitment to the university. As it works to stabilize the faculty, PSU should ensure that recruitment and hiring of new full-time positions follow best practices for advancing the diversity of the PSU faculty.

4. Where full-time positions are not desirable for programmatic reasons, PSU should improve conditions for adjunct instructors by recognizing adjunct faculty members who have provided quality instruction over an extended period of time. The University should consider establishing a new adjunct appointment category that recognizes quality service and longevity, offers a higher minimum salary level than the general adjunct salary appointment, and includes language addressing academic freedom.
Initiative Two: Ensure ongoing opportunities for faculty to engage in professional development that will inform and strengthen scholarship and research, creative activity, teaching, and engagement.

Rationale: Ongoing professional development will contribute substantially to a faculty prepared to actively engage in research, scholarship and creative activity, teaching and learning, community engagement, and shared governance. Professional development can take many forms. It may mean attending a conference, speaking at a conference, creating a culturally relevant community event, joining a professional organization and so on. While vying for professional development funding has a place in higher education, all faculty regardless of appointment type deserve support for ongoing learning and growth.

Suggested Strategy:
1. Organize resources within the Office of Academic Affairs, academic units and other appropriate units to support ongoing professional development and learning throughout lifespan of faculty appointment.
2. The non-tenure track faculty (NTTF) and adjunct faculty are critical components of instructional capacity and quality at PSU. They contribute very importantly to PSU’s overall educational mission. In order to appropriately advance these faculties the university should continue to provide support for and promote appropriate professional development for non-tenure track and regularly active adjunct faculty members to advance their skills relevant to their respective responsibilities.

Initiative Three: Actively connect faculty to student success through greater role in academic advising.

Rationale: Faculty at PSU are actively engaged in promoting student learning success through effective delivery of the academic curriculum, including an expanding types of instructional pedagogies. Faculty roles in supporting academic advising are less well-formed at PSU.

Strategies:
1. Deans and units should consider how to train faculty in best practices and how to ensure networking opportunities with full-time academic advisors on campus.

Initiative Four: Advancing the Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty at PSU

Rationale: Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice are core elements of the Strategic Plan for Portland State. Pursuing this commitment requires greater attention to expanding the overall diversity of our faculty.

Strategies: Advancing the diversity of faculty at PSU involves international networks and efforts. During the tenure process, international faculty and/or faculty with deep international connections need to nurture those relationships in order for them to grow and become
sustainable. If these relationships are allowed to languish due to the emphasis on peer-reviewed publications during tenure and promotion, then diversity of our faculty is greatly diminished. These connections need to be honored in the tenure and promotion process. The community building and ongoing commitment to international work are critical to the faculty member’s career and to future international connections for PSU. This work must be honored as part of a portfolio for promotion and tenure.

**What are the resource implications?**

**What are the interdependencies?**

Are there other topics or areas that are dependent on this topic’s success? What does this topic need to have happen in other areas to meet the defined objectives? These types of interdependencies should be highlighted in this section. Please keep the interdependencies to those that are most critical – in the end, all topics are dependent on each other in some way.

**What are the trade-offs? What should we stop doing?**

For each initiative, there will be trade-offs. In order to focus our resources and attention on this initiative, we will need to give up on other efforts at the University. These trade-offs should be within the purview of the topic; in other words, the tradeoffs cannot be at the expense of other topics. In this section, outline what the trade-offs could and should be, so that the objectives of this topic can be achieved.

**How does the equity lens apply for this initiative?**

Each of the Topic Teams will also be asked to answer these Equity Lens questions. These questions will be asked twice: first considering race/ethnicity, and then again considering women, transgender and gender non-conforming persons, those in the LGBTQ community, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized communities that the team identifies as significant. The answers to these questions will be reviewed by each of the respective Equity Lens advisory groups, and suggestions for improvement or mitigation will be returned.

**People**
- Who is affected—positively, negatively, or not at all—by the elements of this part of the strategic plan and what are the specific advantages and/or barriers to each group?
- How have we considered environmental justice in this (initiative/plan element)—that is, how will these initiatives support the rights of all people to live in a healthy environment?

**Process**
- How does this (initiative/plan element) foster the development of processes that address barriers to inclusion and contribute to the development of community capacity?

**Power**
The Equity, Opportunity and Access team needs to consider which demographic groups have the greatest need for greater inclusion and which steps PSU as a whole should take to mitigate these needs. Each Topic Team will also be asked to answer these questions, tied to each initiative proposed:

- How will this (initiative/plan element) support the empowerment of people from historically marginalized communities?
- What are the specific ways that this (initiative/plan element) is expected to reduce disparities and advance social justice?

What are the major risks to implementing these initiatives, and what mitigating factors have been identified?

This is likely self-explanatory. Please keep the risks at a high level, between 3-5 is fine.