

SDSU-COHE  
Meeting with Provost  
February 11, 2011, Wagner Hall 114  
PROVOST'S RESPONSES TO OUR QUESTIONS  
**BOLD ARE QUESTIONS/COMMENTS BY COHE MEMBERS**  
*(Italics are my thoughts, questions, and comments for your consumption.)*  
*By Gary Aguiar*

- 1. We agree that “shared governance” is an important model of decision making. Please share with us what you mean by shared governance.**

First, it is a philosophy and a belief. 1) philosophy about how you view a university 2) belief, implement, practice it every day, transparent as we can be with interview, can't always everything, but can share a lot, posting, email, meeting,

Invite, shared decision making, everybody is invited to the discussion, gather, make best possible decision you can

At a university, through a structure, we want a very strong faculty senate, to take leadership on lot of issues. Primarily through faculty committees, invite membership, provide leadership

Other thing, Councils, includes non-faculty, professional staff council, career services council.

Faculty governance is the most important structure. Faculty are the heart and soul of the university, you provide the strong leadership we need on campus. KEY: Faculty own the curriculum, you are the leaders of that curriculum, what it looks like, how it is delivered.

1. Faculty should be the decision maker on academic policy, grading system, admissions criteria particular program, plagiarism
2. Faculty play a critical role in the hiring of our colleagues, including administrators. I see the faculty who populate the search committee, make a recommendation, ultimately went with the recommendation from faculty

**Faculty input in the hiring process is not clear.**

It is implied in the document, but you should look at the linked document, which spells it out. *(We need to read other linked documents.)*

**We need to change our schedules so we can get first crack at candidates, interviews at conferences.**

**We need more flexibility to become in line with national practices.**

Yes, we sent Ruth Harper to two conferences with announcements about their opening, need to talk about more about how to do this. Maybe less advertising, but more recruitment at key conferences.

**We need to provide training for chairs and other search committee members.**

*(no response)*

- 2. Faculty approaching P & T realize the rules are changing and are worried about the transition between the old models and a new, higher standard. How will the years worked under previous set of standards be considered in P & T evaluations? In general, what are the relationships among standards documents, PSEs and the decisions made on P & T?**

Expectations are rising, especially on research outcomes.

We have been very kind on tenure, really protected faculty, don't tenure like most institutions, look at peers, we are significantly higher, almost everyone got tenure, as we move forward, more rigor, disagreement among faculty, we won't auto give everyone tenure as we have been in past. We will give a lot of leeway for those going up for tenure. Last year, dealt with a couple of tenure application, maybe should not have gotten tenure, but they got tenured. At some point, faculty must get there, or at some point some faculty will receive tenure.

Where we are going to see rising expectations is promotion to full, more rigor there, applying standards, fair process. We expect them to be at the pinnacle of their career, fully functioning, where they are going to go, at a peak of where they will be (not an up or out decisions).

**Need to communicate to junior faculty, have seen standards documents revised three times in last five year, sense of doom.**

Happy to help there with third-year review process, help faculty who are on track on tenure, meaningful feedback, how is the work I am producing, can you give me any feedback. Pilot this year, all junior faculty who are eligible next year. It cannot hurt you at all.

That is not unique to SDSU. Tied to tenure, not just an SDSU thing.

**Does tenure mean what it always meant? As an full older professor, I feel like you are being set up to being knocked.**

Nervous about budget cut, but I had not heard that senior faculty are demoralized because of these other changes.

**We need better channels of communication. Provost has communicated that the issue about the too generous, but it has not been clearly explained by lower management.**

We are trying to be rigorous and fair, must have an element of rigor, many PSEs haven't been fair. Must be fair. Must be hand-in-hand with P&T, an annual evaluation leading to P&T decisions. They are the same, it is loose connection, but should not be.

**It is disheartening when we hear this about our annual review codes, and other people are receiving higher evaluations when we think we deserve it. Then, we hear administration is "Tightening that up."**

We are not trying to do faculty in, applying standards, fair in the process, there are broken links on this campus. It is creating a bit of unease.

some dept heads have share with me, "I know I inflate evaluations, but I do it, because it is the only way to increase salaries." If we could not make that relationship be quite so strong. She introduced draft on slight change in allocation of salary policy.

*(Doesn't BOR mandate this percents?)*

15% distinguished performance, not by a formula, but discretionary

20% all kinds of institutional priority

3. **We notice there is an apparent contradiction in the minimum number of years required to become a full professor (10 vs. 12) between the BOR-COHE Agreement and the *Draft Proposal in Strengthening Faculty Success* document. This is confusing to new faculty. Can you please explain?**

Not aware, will have to back it down. In “Road Map to Success” diagram. Should say may apply in 11<sup>th</sup> year.

4. **The Professional Activity Policy makes a distinction between preparations and courses taught (section II, C., 2), but it does not appear that this is considered in the calculation of time percentages. Is there a distinction between courses taught and course preparations? Given the new emphasis on remaining within the 15 professional activity unit limit, can you explain how faculty who teach the same number of preparations and often the same number of students (with more time devoted to reading and writing exercises, and more website/computer development) have substantially more time to devote to research?**

You own the curriculum, what can we do to make it more manageable for you? I think we do need to make life as manageable as we can. I like to hear you say you are more rigorous in your teaching. Can curriculum be streamlined? How we offer the courses? It would be an interesting conversation with a dept. Do we need to push to larger lecture format. Some departments are offering four classes in rooms that could hold 200 students, but they are not filling them up. We have the faculty. Maybe be at a two courses per semester. We want to have those discussions in the departments. I would like to get away from course designation values.

**Frankly, we don't have any say in these matters.**

Sorry to hear it, we need to reduce faculty teaching load.

**Last semester, I was in the classroom 22 hours per week, with two classes that overlapped.**

One course can take over your life. I want conversation to be less about units, more about loads. *(Lots of workload conversation, especially among members.)*

“Less is more.” In old days, universities grew by adding curriculum. Now, many universities are curtailing/tailoring curriculum. She provided link to the article she cited (*See attached*). Within all of that, it is not intended to cut faculty positions, but eliminate low-producing programs, majors, minors, etc. Please let's get rid of them. If a program has only four or five majors, that is too few students. This effort is not intended to cut faculty positions, but to make better use of them.

Don't do more than you can do. Figure out what is essential. If you can't cut it back more than a certain line, tell us that. Accreditation may play a role. Online courses are totally up to the program. They can make a lot of money, which totally flows back to the college and dept.

5. **Department heads have been instructed that they are assigning too high evaluations when they are utilizing current standards documents. Can you please explain the relationships between the new PDP and the standards documents? How might both of**

**these be used more consistently and objectively within departments while recognizing the diverse roles of faculty?**

The PDP is your plan, it begins with the dept standards, what does it take, PDP. Tell us how your PDP fulfills the mission of the dept and to be successful as a faculty member. Keep it short. PSE and annual evaluation are judged against PDP. It is an annual check against your plan. I read every one of them and give feedback.

**PDP quantifying part. Not really meaningful. How do keep rid of quantitative measures?**

Outcomes have to be clear, must be clear that you are successful or not successful. Don't need to assign a percentage. What do I often read in these PDPs? "I am going to research this topic." (*Implies she thinks this is insufficient.*) Instead, say, "I plan to publish every other year and present a paper at a conference every year." Must be concrete enough, so you can say in PSE, I was not able to do this in year 1, but I did it in year 2 and 3.

**Should we put objectives in PDP? This is all a time-consuming, take from research and teaching, additional work, new opportunities. As a faculty here more than 20 years, we see more effort and forms every year. News ones are added, but old forms are not removed.**

I wish we had something degree of freedom, but they are mandated by the BOR. We don't control them on the campus. We do not want endless trivia in the annual evaluation, they should cut to the chase. Should be reported against PDP.

We want to give faculty support and not belabor with the 20<sup>th</sup> form. I understand about increasing number of forms. We want a focus on the nature of your scholarship, not the dollar value of your grants. There is a minimum level expected of all faculty. Everyone must a scholar, I am sure you all want to be scholars, it is the reason you choose this profession. Of course, it should be weighted by course load and number of course preps.

*(Due to time constraints, we skipped question #6, which reads: **How can department standards be adjusted to reflect the variations in realities of workload, scholarship, teaching and resources among departments and among colleges? Also, the new PSE format does not provide a place to indicate class sizes, which influences workload. Can a column for this information be included in a revised Appendix A? It was partially answered above.**)*

**7. We have noticed there are large variations between PSE evaluations within and among departments. Is the goal to have a universal standards document? How might that document address the diversity found among programs across the university?**

Yes, it is critical, document your work in p&t dossier, not PSE. This is something I have struggled with for that 15 years at SDSU. Please give us a context for your work. What is like to do, for example, medieval history, how much work does it involve to obtain documents, what kinds of translations do you have to

do, etc. Give us the opportunity to understand the nature of the research. Tell us that it took three years, including travel to Wales, translation from Latin. We want more of a context to evaluate the scholarship. The P&T committee asked, to try to give them a better read on the impact of your work. Do your external peers view this as a significant publication? That is, no one has done this kind of work before?

University standards apply across the university. Use the university standards. Make sure your explanation fit within the university standards.

*Attendees: Profs. Dean Isham, Kathleen Danker, Charles Vollan, Liz Johnson, Jeff Heinle, Jason Owens, Renee Oscarson, Ann Wilson, Suzette Burckhardt, and Tom Chase.*

*FYI, I will be meeting one-on-one with the Provost on Thursday to follow up on some lingering questions from this session. I will not share the questions below with her directly, but just ask them verbally. If you have further questions or refinements, please respond immediately.*

1. Faculty do not really “own the curriculum.” First, Department heads have complete veto. No avenue to sidestep them. Second, outside forces control decisions. Other programs require our courses and accreditation plays a role.
2. For PDP I will publish makes it completely untenable. Publication depends on so many factors that are beyond our control: editorial decisions, non-findings (statistically insignificant results), funding.
3. Some faculty do not trust their supervisors. Dept heads are sometimes obstacles to change. We are concerned about how these policies get translated at the bottom level. Some supervisors have not embraced the research initiative. Maybe they see it as a fad or they think that budget cuts might take us back to a primary teaching priority.
4. We hear many complaints about upper level management from rank and file. They cannot see and/or do not understand how this vision will be implemented. I think the vision is clear, but much uncertainty about its permanence and how it will be implemented with fewer dollars and resources.