

Annual Report for the Senate Committee on Faculty and the Administration (SCOA) – 2021-2022

General Committee Charge

The Committee on Faculty and the Administration: The Committee oversees and advises the Executive Committee on matters relating to the faculty's interface with the University's administration, including policies and procedures (e.g., the Patent Policy) relating to the University's structure, the conditions of faculty employment (such as personnel benefits), and information. In general the Committee deals with the matters covered by the following sections of the University's Handbook for Faculty and Academic Administrators: I.A.-D., G.-H.1., I.-K., II.E. III., V., VI. (henceforth referred to as the "Faculty Handbook").

2021-2022 Specific Charges

1. Address systemic racism and other forms of inequity by assessing and evaluating ways to change University structures, practices, and biases at the University, school, departmental, and individual levels. Examples include eligibility for leadership roles, differential standards for faculty evaluation based on race, gender, or national origin, department-level voting privileges, biases implicit in quantitative methods for evaluating faculty, evaluation of effectiveness of campus mental health and wellness programs.
2. Continue to explore existing and alternative models for providing public safety and services to the campus community.
3. Continue to examine the effectiveness of outsourced employee benefits and human resources services (including but not limited to WageWorks and Health Advocate) with respect to how well their processes embody Penn's values.
4. Continue to monitor the effectiveness of university support for online teaching during the coronavirus pandemic.

SCOA expended the bulk of its efforts on charges 2, 3, and 4. Charge 1 was addressed in the context of the other charges.

2. Continue to explore existing and alternative models for providing public safety and services to the campus community.

SCOA met with Dennis Culhane, Professor and Dana and Andrew Stone Chair in Social Policy, who served as the Faculty Senate appointed representative to the Consultative Committee working to identify the next Vice President for Public Safety. SCOA learned that the position of Police Chief will be separated from that of Vice President. (Maureen Rush previously held both positions until her retirement on December 31, 2021.) The Vice President position search is being done on a national level, and Prof. Culhane suggested that the best candidates will likely be persons who have background in policing.

Prof. Culhane reported that the [Public Safety Advisory Board](#), of which he is outgoing chairperson, now includes community representatives. He spoke about the Division of Public Safety [organizational structure](#), and SCOA members discussed potential administrative reorganization to accurately reflect the services offered. For example, a subdivision charged with responding to mental health crises on campus might include social workers who are not police officers but would be accompanied by a police officer.

SCOA recommends that the committee continue to monitor developments throughout the coming year and collaborating with the Advisory Board where appropriate. SCOA encourages the Vice President to communicate their priorities and any proposed changes to be made to the Division to the greater Penn community and to invite feedback from the Faculty Senate those priorities or proposed issues.

3. Continue to examine the effectiveness of outsourced employee benefits and human resources services (including but not limited to WageWorks and Health Advocate) with respect to how well their processes embody Penn's values.

On the charge to examine the effectiveness of outsourced employee benefits and human resources services, SCOA delegated the work to representatives from the Penn Association for Senior and Emeritus Faculty (PASEF), since PASEF was already concerned about the services provided by some outside vendors based on comments received from some retirees.

PASEF identified the following issues and strategies:

It has become clear that faculty members, both those already retired and senior faculty, vary greatly in their familiarity with and knowledge of benefits, especially retiree benefits. This often causes confusion and leads to misunderstandings. To improve that situation PASEF will continue to work with the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty to identify issues and

collaborative strategies. PASEF now meets regularly with school-level faculty affairs coordinators, as they have the most contact with faculty and are key to communicating information about benefits. PASEF has also consulted with representatives from the Provost Staff Conference Subcommittee (PSCS) to better understand administrative communication about retirement within the schools. PASEF continues to collaborate with leadership from the Division of Human Resources on vendor relationships as the basis for improving the service these vendors provide.

[Enhanced coverage for hearing aids](#), announced in July 2021, was greeted with enthusiasm by senior and retired faculty. Indeed, several faculty members began the process of applying soon after the benefit became available in January. However, PASEF learned that some found the process for obtaining the hearing aid benefit unclear and complicated. PASEF communicated these concerns with Human Resources and progress has already been made. PASEF featured an article on this topic in its February newsletter, a copy of which can be obtained by [contacting the PASEF office](#). PASEF will continue to work with Human Resources and the Benefits Solution Center regarding implementation of the hearing aid benefit.

4. Continue to monitor the effectiveness of university support for online teaching during the coronavirus pandemic.

On the charge to monitor the effectiveness of university support for online teaching during the coronavirus pandemic, the [survey instrument proposed](#) for distribution during summer 2022 was not supported by Provost Office leadership, who instead pointed SCOA members to publicly available information in its [COVID-19 Response Surveys](#). SCOA understands that a more thorough “faculty climate survey” is planned for Fall 2022 and will request an opportunity to collaborate with the Office of the Provost in reviewing results and findings.

Proposed Charges for SCOA in 2022-2023:

- 1. Examine the effects of the US Department of Justice’s [China Initiative](#) on Penn researchers and the role of University policies and practices in supporting and protecting the faculty.**
- 2. Collaborate with the Office of the Provost in reviewing results and findings of the Fall 2022 Faculty Climate Survey.**
- 3. Continue to explore existing and alternative models for providing public safety and services to the campus community.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Baker, Education

Janice Bellace, Wharton

Vera Krymskaya, PSOM/Medicine, Chair

Steven Messé, PSOM/Neurology

Kevin M. F. Platt, SAS/Russian & East European Studies

Erika Reineke, Veterinary Medicine

Ex-officio members:

William Braham, Weitzman Design, Faculty Senate Chair

Vivian Gadsden, Education, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Annenberg, Faculty Senate Past Chair

Peter Kuriloff, Education, PASEF non-voting member