

Office of the Dean of Faculty

2019-20 Annual Report

Submitted by Charles Van Loan, Dean of Faculty

Major Highlights

The Faculty Handbook section on student accommodations was completely renovated. Rules and guidelines associated with disability accommodations, religious observance accommodations, varsity athletic accommodations, medical accommodations, and job interview accommodations were clarified.

Guidelines to deter device-enabled cheating on exams were established.

Protocols were approved that improve the integrity of the grade-change process.

Along with the other assemblies the Senate approved the Fossil Fuel Divestment resolution.

Pandemic-related issues and concerns have defined our agenda since mid-March. Four extra Senate meetings were convened in order to capture faculty sentiments about how we move forward with our teaching and research. Virtually every aspect of a faculty member's job has to be rethought. This work will continue through the summer and beyond.

Because of these disruptions, we were unable to complete two major initiatives. The tenure-track project which aimed to clarify all the processes associated with the mentoring and review of assistant professors and the protocols associated with appeals will carry over to 2020-21. Likewise, a plan to improve how we hire, promote, and retain RTE (research/teaching/extension) faculty will require more work in 2020-21.

Selected Faculty Achievements

Professor **Victor Nee**, the Frank and Rosa Rhodes Professor of Economic Sociology in the College of Arts and Sciences was elected to the [American Academic of Arts and Sciences](#).

Nine assistant professors have been recognized with National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development Program awards, given annually to support junior faculty members' research projects and outreach efforts. The assistant professors are: **Nozomi Ando** and **Robert DiStasio, Jr.**, chemistry and chemical biology, **Kathryn Mann**, mathematics, and **Malte Ziewitz**, science and technology studies, in the College of Arts and Sciences; **Gregory McLaskey**, civil and environmental engineering, **Mert Sabuncu**, in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering and the Nancy E. and Peter C. Meinig School of Biomedical Engineering, and **Andrej Singer**, materials science and engineering, in the College of

Engineering; **Ifeoma Ajunwa**, labor and employment law, in the ILR School and Cornell Law School; and **Adrian Sampson**, computer science, in the Faculty of Computing and Information Science.

Assistant professors **Damek Davis**, **Christina Delimitrou** and **Robert A. DiStasio Jr.** have won 2020 [Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Fellowships](#). The fellowships support early-career faculty members' original research and education related to science, technology, mathematics and economics.

Five faculty members have been elected fellows of [the American Association for the Advancement of Science](#) (AAAS). The award honors their efforts to advance research and its applications in scientifically or socially distinguished ways. The five faculty are: **Ronnie Coffman**, the Andrew H. & James S. Tisch Distinguished University Professor and director of International Programs in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, **Matthew DeLisa**, the William L. Lewis Professor of Engineering in the Smith School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, **Cédric Feschotte**, Professor of molecular biology and genetics, **Catherine Kling**, the Tisch University Professor of Environmental, Energy and Resource Economics in the Cornell SC Johnson College of Business, and **J. Ritchie Patterson**, Professor of physics in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The 2020 Schwartz Research Fund for Women and other Underrepresented Faculty in the Life Sciences was awarded to **Angela Poole**, Division of Nutritional Sciences, College of Human Ecology and **Gerlinde Van de Walle**, Microbiology and Immunology, College of Veterinary Medicine.

Matthias Liepe, professor of physics in the College of Arts and Sciences, **James Sethna**, professor of physics in the College of Arts and Sciences, and **Huili Grace Xing**, the William L. Quackenbush Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering were elected [fellows of the American Physical Society](#) (APS).

Eight faculty receive [Stephen H. Weiss awards](#). Professors **Thomas Gilovich**, Psychology, Professor **Kyle Shen**, Physics, and Professor **Kim Weeden**, were recipients of Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellowships. Associate Professors **Stacey Langwick**, Anthropology, Professor **Tasha Lewis**, Fiber Science and Apparel Design, and Professor **Courtney Roby**, Classics were named Weiss Junior Fellows. Senior Lecturer **Philip Krasicky**, Physics and Professor of Practice **Cindy van Es**, Applied Economics and Management were named Weiss Provost's Teaching Fellow winners.

Four faculty awarded the Kendall S. Carpenter Advising Award: **Jean Hunter**, Biological and Environmental Engineering, **Todd Schmit**, Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, **Jamie Vanucchi**, Landscape Architecture, and **Maren Vitousek**, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

Faculty Senate Highlights

September

Discussions regarding a resolution that concerns device-enabled cheating on exams and a campus-wide ban on smoking and vaping. Many concerns were raised about both issues. There was some conversation about legislation that “makes a statement” versus legislation that “gets at root causes.”

President Pollack gave an update on major accomplishments and concerns. Topics raised in the subsequent Q&A included the direction of eCornell, the implementation of Policy 6.3 (consensual relationships), concerns about international partnerships, and the core values statement.

A resolution that concerns student accommodations was posted last May and refined over the past few months will be acted upon at the October meeting. It involves approval of new text for the Faculty Handbook that is designed to add clarity and provide guidance.

October

Two resolutions passed: “Preventing Device-Enabled Cheating on Exams” creating a new section in the Faculty Handbook and “Handling Student Accommodations and Reaffirming their creating more unified and detailed treatment of protocols and expectations wording in the Faculty Handbook.

A Sense-of-the-Senate resolution passed concerning the campus-wide smoking/vaping ban survey that is about to be staged. The resolution asks that the Senate be given the opportunity to comment on the survey results before any action is taken.

Chantelle Cleary indicated the need for more faculty to serve on the Title IX Panels. Concerns were voiced about the time commitment. At the same time the importance of the work was reaffirmed.

Two resolutions were presented with planned voting in November. Lisa Nishii spoke on a resolution that would improve the approval process for Learning Where You Live Courses. Richard Bensel presented a resolution that would prevent grade changes without instructor consent until the Senate approves a suitable alternative to the current grade-change policy.

November

A resolution concerned with emeritus/a status for retired RTE faculty was presented. There was an update from the Social Sciences Implementation Committee. Most of the discussion revolved around the shape and location of an “entity” that unified Cornell strength in public policy. Discussions will continue into next semester. The status of the Data Science Initiative was reviewed with emphasis on the Center for Data Science for Enterprise and Society. Two resolutions passed: one regarding Learning where You Live Course approval and the other regarding the Grade Change Policy. The latter sets the stage for future discussion of the topic with input from a working group assembled by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education.

December

Two resolutions passed: one was a Sense-of-the-Senate regarding the social science review timeline and the other regarding emeritus/a status for retired RTE faculty. The next step is for the

ad hoc Committee on RTE issues to develop an RTE version of this list of perks and opportunities that exist for retired and emeritus tenure track faculty.

Professor Avery August (Vice Provost for Academic Affairs) and Angela Winfield (Associate Vice President for Inclusion and Workplace Diversity) talked about an upcoming survey titled “Belonging at Cornell” that will be circulated early next semester.

Professor Kevin Clermont, Professor Sherry Colb, and Judicial Codes Counselor Gabrielle Kantor proposed several amendments to Policy 6.4 (sexual misconduct and bias).

Vice Provost for External Education Strategy Steve Carvell discussed eCornell. Concerns were raised about what is perceived to be the singular focus on revenue-generating executive education with hand-picked instructors to the seeming exclusion of other audiences, topics, and faculty that may benefit from using the eCornell platform.

Professor Caroline Levine provided an overview of the fossil fuel divestment issues in anticipation of a resolution that will come before the Senate and the other assemblies next semester.

January

A special Faculty Senate meeting was called in January to discuss the final report of the Social Sciences Implementation Committee. Several Faculty spoke about their, or their department faculty’s, concerns or position about the proposed recommendations in the final report.

February

A call for nominations for the Dean of Faculty, the University Faculty Committee members, Nominations and Elections Committee members and Senator-at-Large members whose terms will expire this year.

Resolutions regarding adding prose to Policy 4.14 (Conflict of Interest) and Fossil Fuel Divestment were presented for discussion with planned future voting. President Pollack talked about the recent snow day, fossil fuel divestment, and the much-delayed revisions of the Campus Code.

The discussion and vote on the resolution to clarify the grade-change policy was deferred to a later meeting. Motions passed to postpone the vote on the super-department resolution, regarding the resolution concerning a cross-college school of public policy and a resolution concerning a college of public policy.

March

Discussion about the COVID-19 pandemic situation, pausing tenure cases and the tenure track project took place. Voting took place for the following resolutions: Fossil Fuel Divestment (passed), Clarify Grade-Change Protocols (passed), proposed amendment to rescind the superdepartment resolution (passed) and the changes to Policy 4.14 (Conflict of Interest) as it pertains to instructors of courses that contain family members (postponed).

April

An extra April meeting discussed the S/U policy and modification due to the COVID-19 situation and changes to online teaching. This resulted in support by the Faculty Senate that grades for all

Cornell University courses to be on an S/U (technically SX/UX) basis for the Spring 2020 semester. All letter-grade requirements are waived and thus deemed satisfied by the receipt of a grade of S in a spring 2020 course. All transcripts will be annotated to indicate that Spring 2020 grades reflect the Cornell University policy in response to the current public health emergency rather than student choice.

On the regular meeting date, there was a presentation from the Law School regarding a proposal that would enable individuals on the clinical professor track to obtain tenure. The Senate's Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty Committee prepared a summary of the proposal. A resolution was presented that deals with what to do if a misconduct allegation targets a faculty member who is undergoing a tenure review. Consideration of a tenure pause policy was discussed; concerns raised were (a) women and minority faculty would see a disproportionate share of pauses, (b) the Pause Panel would have too much authority, and (c) long-running adjudication processes would sully the scholarly reputation of the candidate if they were allowed to pause the review process. Two resolutions were passed: one supporting the College of Veterinary Medicine Professor of Practice title use and one adding prose to Policy 4.14 (Conflict of Interest) to ensure there is unbiased grading whenever a student enrolls in a course that is taught by a family member.