

Report on Law School Faculty Council Activities 2022-2023

In addition to its usual annual tasks (conducting merit review and consulting with the dean on the budget), our committee proposed a new system for conducting merit review, which the faculty narrowly approved. In past years, the merit review operated based on unwritten norms, which might vary from year to year. Because faculty were not told their merit scores, they often felt unsure whether the merit review process influenced raises. Although faculty members expressed significant dissatisfaction with the process, they did not agree on a solution. Some colleagues thought using rubrics for assessing merit would focus on poor measures and increase the burden of annual merit reviews without making reviews fairer. As well, some colleagues thought that increased transparency would lead to demoralization.

Despite these concerns, the faculty council advanced (and the faculty approved) a proposal including the following components (omitting some details):

1. Before the committee meets to conduct merit review, each committee member will circulate tentative proposed scores for each candidate to the entire committee.
2. The committee will assign tenured and tenure-track faculty separate merit scores on a one-to-five scale for scholarship, teaching, and service. RTPC faculty will receive scores for teaching and service only.
3. These scores will be based on a set of publicly disclosed presumptions and factors that are consistent from one year to the next. We recommend a specific set of such presumptions and factors and a system for amending them.
5. Separate merit scores will be combined into a single score to be reported to the provost based on a weighted average. These weights will reflect each professor's time allocation in their faculty profile.
6. Upon request, the chair will provide anyone who asks with their merit scores and with information on the quartiles of scores for each metric. Faculty may request a written explanation of their score. Anyone who does not agree with the score and explanation may seek reconsideration.