USU Promotion and Tenure Process Survey: Report and Recommendations
March 25, 2021

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(image courtesy USU Press Room)
1 Executive Summary

After input and approval from the Faculty Senate, a survey of USU faculty was conducted in January 2021 regarding perceptions of equity in the USU promotion and tenure process. The survey garnered 577 responses, which is a response rate of 49%. The survey revealed a number of findings regarding aspects of the promotion and tenure process that are working well, as well as areas for improvement.

1.1 Existing Strengths

The survey indicated approval from many survey respondents regarding several aspects of the promotion and tenure process. Three widely identified strengths are highlighted below:

**Ombudspersons:** The survey data reflects support for the continued requirement to include ombudspersons in promotion and tenure meetings (refer to sections 6, 7, and 9). This support is widespread among respondents, whether comparing respondents by college, campus location, type of appointment, or other factors. Of note is that comparing respondents by gender revealed that female faculty members are proportionally even stronger in their support of the ombudsperson requirement (refer to figure 21).

**Faculty Code:** Survey responses indicate that faculty members value due process; they find faculty code (which establishes due process) and resources such as trainings and online documentation to be important for understanding, standardizing, and enforcing due process (refer to sections 8, 10.1, and 11.2).

**Mentorship & Support:** Survey respondents also value mentorship and support of candidates pursuing promotion or promotion and tenure. The annual nature of TAC meetings allow
for early and regular guidance, and many survey respondents indicated that the encouragement and support of their PAC/TAC and department head were greatly valued by candidates (refer to section 11.2).

1.2 Areas for Improvement

The survey also revealed areas for improvement, which we briefly describe in this section alongside four qualities of inclusive organizations:

**Representation:** Inclusive organizations are widely representative of various marginalized groups, especially in positions of leadership. Implicit bias, which is relevant to findings reported in sections 10.2 and 12.1 (among others), emerges from one’s worldview and lived experience. When the lived experience among decision makers (such as deans, Central Committee members, and PAC/TAC chairs) is markedly homogeneous, implicit bias disproportionately hurts marginalized groups—often in ways unintended by and invisible to decision makers.

**Transparency:** Transparency supports members of inclusive organizations in understanding what happened and why. Insufficient transparency can create environments where inequities flourish, especially when organizational leadership is not representative of marginalized groups (and therefore less able to perceive those inequities). Sections 12.3 and 12.6 discuss problems with the current promotion and tenure processes related to insufficient transparency.

**Accountability:** Accountability ensures that when an organization’s policies and official processes are violated, those responsible will be held accountable and negative effects will be mitigated. The need for improved accountability is most apparent in section 12.3, whereas the value of ombudspersons in improving accountability is most apparent sections 10.1 and 10.2.

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6 Thank you to Dr. Christy Glass for sharing these qualities and suggesting their relevance to interpreting and responding to the survey findings.
**Formalization:** Formalization directly counters the structural nature of structural oppression by changing formalized, official processes in ways that improve inclusivity. Formal, inclusive processes directly support transparency, and they are a precondition for accountability. Multiple codes identifying aspects of promotion and tenure that currently work well relate to what and how aspects of process have been formalized (refer to section 11.1), whereas much of section 12.3 identifies areas of promotion and tenure with insufficient or ill-fitting formalization.
2 Recommendations

We here present recommendations that are intended to improve the equity, efficiency, diversity, inclusivity, and transparency of USU’s promotion and tenure processes and to limit the possibility that bias, whether implicit or explicit, will affect the equity of these processes. Some of these recommendations are suggested by the survey findings that are presented in this report. Others were suggested in meetings with faculty members and administrators before and after the survey was administered.

On 4 December 2020, a meeting with USU administrators and faculty members was held to evaluate the ombudsperson program and to make recommendations for improvements in its efficiency and effectiveness. Discussions in this meeting motivated and informed the development of the survey, which was open from 11 January 2021, when the USU Faculty Senate authorized its distribution, to 1 February 2021. Meetings on February 16 and March 5 to discuss survey findings with faculty members and administrators resulted in other recommendations for improvements to USU’s promotion and tenure processes.

One outcome of the survey and the associated discussions is the formation of a term faculty task force, whose purpose is to clarify promotion procedures for term faculty members and to incorporate these clarifications into the faculty code. The survey found that term faculty members are less likely to report sufficient experience to assess the promotion and tenure process than tenured and tenure-eligible faculty members (Fig. 4), that term faculty members were less satisfied with the equity of the PAC and TAC evaluations than tenured and tenure-eligible faculty members (Fig. 6), and that many survey respondents suggest improving the promotion process for term faculty (section 12.1). This task force has been formed and is engaged in the process of clarifying procedures for term faculty.

We assert that the recommended actions below offer a good start in responding to the
survey findings but that additional actions will be necessary to further improve the equity, inclusivity, and transparency of USU’s promotion and tenure processes. Having analyzed the survey data for statistical trends, having read and coded the responses to the free-response survey questions, and having received suggestions from other faculty and administrators for improvements in USU’s promotion and tenure processes (both before and after the survey was administered - refer to the above), we recommend that the following actions be taken to improve the equity, efficiency, diversity, inclusivity, and transparency of USU’s promotion and tenure processes:

1. Representatives from the Faculty Senate, the Office of the Provost, the Deans’ Council, and the Office of Equity shall collaborate on improvements in ombudsperson training materials to list topics that are inappropriate to discuss during PAC and TAC meetings, to clarify what to do if these topics are raised, to include information about the nature and purpose of PAC and TAC meetings, and to emphasize the responsibility of all PAC and TAC members and chairs to ensure that due process is followed and to protect the rights of the candidate and the university.

2. Representatives from the Faculty Senate, the Office of the Provost, the Deans’ Council, and the USU Office of Equity shall collaborate on clarifications to faculty code regarding standards of excellence and standards of effectiveness, as well as to make the process and documentation expectations of faculty more focused and less onerous. This collaboration shall also result in guidelines regarding elements of equitable and convincing PAC/TAC, department head, and dean recommendation letters (including contextualizing student evaluations and discipline-specific standards), as well as guidelines that increase the transparency of the processes and review principles used by the Central Promotion and Tenure Committee.

3. All faculty members holding one of the highest two ranks in the appointment types of (1) tenured or tenure-eligible appointments and (2) term appointments without eligibility for tenure shall complete ombudsperson training.
4. A task force shall be formed to design and develop brief, just-in-time training that shall be required for all PAC/TAC committee members and ombudspersons immediately before (or at the start of) each committee meeting. The ombudsperson need not hold the same appointment type as the candidate.

5. Deans shall maintain lists of ombudspersons in their colleges, and shall prioritize diversity in the selection of ombudspersons in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, rank, appointment type, and campus affiliation, but shall avoid burdening any faculty members with excessive committee service.

6. Deans and department heads shall complete ombudsperson training on a regular basis.

7. The TAC or PAC chair shall notify the dean’s office of any ombudsperson negligence.

8. Department heads shall prioritize diversity in the selection of TAC members, PAC members, and external reviewers in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, rank, appointment type, and campus affiliation, but shall avoid burdening any faculty members with excessive committee service.

9. Department heads shall not select TAC members, PAC members, or external reviewers with the intent to bias or inappropriately influence tenure or promotion recommendations.

10. Department heads shall not attempt to bias or inappropriately influence PAC and TAC recommendations or external reviews through any means, including through off-the-record communications with PAC / TAC members or external reviewers.

11. Deans shall not attempt to bias or inappropriately influence PAC, TAC, and department-head recommendations through any means, including through off-the-record communications with PAC / TAC members or department heads.

12. Recommendations 2-11 shall be incorporated into faculty code and into training for deans and department heads.
3 Survey Overview

The following tables give the exact wording and response scale for each question in the survey.

### Quantitative response scale questions

1. How well do the USU promotion and tenure processes succeed in encouraging faculty excellence regardless of gender and minority status? (6-point scale: “Not well at all”, “Insufficient experience”, “Slightly well”, “Moderately well”, “Very well”, “Extremely well”)

2. Please describe your satisfaction with the equity of faculty evaluations performed at each of the following levels:
   - Promotion and Tenure Advisory Committees
   - Department Head
   - College Dean
   - Central Promotion and Tenure Committee

   (5-point scale: “Very dissatisfied”, “Somewhat dissatisfied”, “Neutral or insufficient experience”, “Somewhat satisfied”, “Very satisfied”)

3. How well do USU ombudspersons do their job to ensure that due process is followed and that the rights of the candidate and the university are protected? (6-point scale: “Not well at all”, “Insufficient experience”, “Slightly well”, “Moderately well”, “Very well”, “Extremely well”)

4. Have you witnessed instance(s) in which an ombudsperson intervened to protect the rights of the candidate or the university? (No/Yes)

5. Do you think that all PAC and TAC members should help to ensure that due process is followed and that the rights of the candidate and the university are protected? (No/Unsure/Yes)

6. Do you think that USU should continue to require an ombudsperson at every PAC and TAC meeting? (No/Unsure/Yes)
Demographic questions (and abbreviations used in this report)

1. What is your college affiliation?
   “Arts” = Caine College of the Arts; “Ag” = College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences; “Eng” = College of Engineering; “HSS” = College of Humanities and Social Sciences; “Sci” = College of Science; “EdHS” = Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services; “Bus” = Jon M. Huntsman School of Business; “NR” = S.J. & Jessie E. Quinney College of Natural Resources; “Lib” = Libraries; “PrefNot” = Prefer not to say

2. Where are you based?
   Logan campus; “SC” = Statewide campus; “PrefNot” = Prefer not to say

3. What type of faculty appointment do you hold?
   “TT” = Tenured or tenure eligible; Term; “PrefNot” = Prefer not to say

4. What is your gender?\(^a\)
   Male; Female; Non-binary; Other; “PrefNot” = Prefer not to say

5. Are you a member of an under-represented ethnic minority (Hispanic/Latino, African American, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander)?
   Yes; No; “PrefNot” = Prefer not to say

\(^a\)Because a very small number of faculty reported Gender as “Non-binary” or “Other”, those faculty were combined with the “Prefer not to say” responses to help keep their responses anonymous.

In addition to the quantitative-scale questions, faculty were asked three free-response questions:

- Please share information about the ombudsperson-intervention incident(s), excluding identifying information.
- Please list aspects of USU’s promotion and tenure processes that work well.
- Please list suggestions to improve USU’s promotion and tenure process.

Findings are presented question by question, beginning in section 3.
Responses were received from 577 faculty members, and the data were examined for statistically significant\textsuperscript{7} response differences based on five demographic factors. Rather than focusing on exact numeric results, this report instead presents the results in summary\textsuperscript{8} and visual form. In the following table, statistically significant trends are summarized, with ordinal direction (>) indicating greater satisfaction or agreement with the question; these trends are visualized in later figures in this report. Trends enclosed in square brackets [ ] did not quite meet the statistical threshold for significance, but did exhibit notable visual trends possibly worth attention. Demographic levels in parentheses ( ) are not significantly different from each other.

Summary of significant differences in quantitative survey results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Appt Type</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnic Minority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Overall</td>
<td>[Ag&gt;PrefNot]</td>
<td>(Logan,SC)&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td>[TT&gt;(Term,PrefNot)]</td>
<td>[Male&gt;(Female,PrefNot)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Equity: PAC/TAC</td>
<td>(Logan,SC)&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td>TT&gt;Term</td>
<td>Male&gt;Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Equity: Dept Head</td>
<td>[Ag&gt;Bus]</td>
<td>(Logan,SC)&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td>TT&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td>([Male,Female]&gt;PrefNot)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Equity: Dean</td>
<td>(Logan,SC)&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td>TT&gt;(Term,PrefNot)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Equity: Central P&amp;T</td>
<td>(Logan,SC)&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td>TT&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td>([Yes/No]&gt;PrefNot)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Equity: Due Process</td>
<td>(Logan,SC)&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td>TT&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ombuds: Witnessed</td>
<td>Logan&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td>TT&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. PAC/TAC: Due Process</td>
<td>HSS&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td>TT&gt;PrefNot</td>
<td>[Female&gt;(Male,PrefNot)]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{7}For each of nine survey questions, a chi-square test was performed for each of five demographic factors. For ordinal scale survey questions, the chi-square test accounted for ordinality. To avoid an inflated number of false positives due to the higher number of statistical tests, a Bonferroni adjustment was performed, and “statistical significance” was declared only for p-values less than 0.002.

\textsuperscript{8}In the table on this page and the figures on following pages, abbreviations are used for summary purposes. Abbreviations are defined in the table on the preceding page.
4 How well do the USU promotion and tenure processes succeed in encouraging faculty excellence regardless of gender and minority status?

The following figure is a diverging stacked bar chart, visualizing the percentage of responses in each ordinal scale level. One scale level (“Moderately well”) is chosen as the baseline, and the total number of responses to this question is reported at the top of the bar chart.

**Figure 1:** Overall responses across all demographic factor levels.
In the following figure, responses are separated based on the demographic factor campus location. In this and subsequent figures, asterisks are used to indicate which demographic factor levels are statistically significantly different from each other. Factor levels with one asterisk (*) have significantly more positive responses than factor levels with two asterisks (**). Factor levels without any asterisks are not significantly different from factor levels with asterisk(s). The sample sizes within each demographic factor level are reported at the top of each bar chart, and the demographic factor levels are sorted by descending average response.

**Figure 2:** Faculty on the Logan and Statewide campuses tended to respond significantly more positively than faculty who preferred not to report their campus location.

![Figure showing campus location and response percentages](image)

Figure 3(a) shows that faculty in the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences may respond more positively than faculty who prefer not to disclose their College affiliation; the lack of asterisks for other Colleges indicates there were no other significant differences. Figure 3(b) shows that tenured / tenure-track faculty may respond more positively than term faculty or faculty who prefer not to disclose their appointment type. Figure 3(c) shows that male faculty may respond more positively than faculty who are female or who prefer not to report their gender.

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9The average response is defined by the category “ridit” score, which is a standard approach for ordinal responses.
Figure 3: How well does process encourage faculty excellence? While there is not a statistically significant difference across levels of (a) College, (b) Appointment Type, or (c) Gender (possibly due to smaller sample sizes within some of these demographic levels), these figures exhibit trends that may still be worth attention.
Figure 4: Tenured / tenure-eligible faculty were significantly more likely to report sufficient experience to assess the promotion and tenure process than were term faculty. There is not a statistically significant response difference between faculty who prefer not to report their appointment type and faculty who reported either tenure/tenure-eligible or term appointment type; this lack of significance is possibly due to smaller sample size in the faculty who preferred not to report their appointment type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointment Type</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Row Count</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenured/TT track</td>
<td></td>
<td>442</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PrefNot</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term**</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sufficient experience to assess P&T process?

No  Yes  Total
5 Please describe your satisfaction with the equity of faculty evaluations performed at each of the following levels:

Figure 5 shows that general satisfaction with the equity of faculty evaluations is highest at the department level (PAC/TAC and Department Head), but progressively lower at the college (Dean) and university (Central Promotion and Tenure Committee) levels. It is important to note that there does not appear to be greater levels of dissatisfaction (red colors) with the higher levels of review (Dean, Central P&T Committee), but faculty are more likely to report neutral feelings (gray color) regarding those levels of review.

**Figure 5:** Overall responses across all demographic factor levels.
5.1 Promotion and Tenure Advisory Committees

Figure 6 shows the demographic factors that exhibited significant differences in perceptions of equity of faculty evaluations at the PAC/TAC level.

**Figure 6:** (a) Tenured / tenure-track faculty tended to respond significantly more positively than faculty with term appointments. (b) Male faculty tended to respond significantly more positively than female faculty.

(a) Appointment Type

(b) Gender
5.2 Department Head

Figures 7 and 8 show the demographic factors that exhibited significant or possible differences in perceptions of equity of faculty evaluations at the Department Head level.

**Figure 7:** Faculty at Logan and statewide campuses tended to respond significantly more positively than faculty who preferred not to report their location.

**Figure 8:** Satisfaction with equity at level: DeptHead. While there is not a statistically significant difference across levels of Gender (possibly due to smaller sample sizes within some of these demographic levels), faculty who preferred to not disclose their gender, or who reported gender as not male or female, may respond less positively than faculty who report gender as male or female.
5.3 College Dean

Figures 9 and 10 show the demographic factors that exhibited significant or possible differences in perceptions of equity of faculty evaluations at the College Dean level.

**Figure 9:** (a) Faculty at Logan and statewide campuses tended to respond significantly more positively than faculty who preferred not to report their location. (b) Tenured / tenure-track faculty tended to respond significantly more positively than faculty who preferred not to report their appointment type.

(a) Campus Location

![Bar Chart: Satisfaction with equity at level: Dean](image)

(b) Appointment Type

![Bar Chart: Satisfaction with equity at level: Dean](image)
Figure 10a shows responses by College. Due to smaller sample sizes in some Colleges, differences are not quite statistically significant. The larger sample size in the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences results in a marginally significant difference compared to the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business. Figure 10b shows responses by ethnic minority status, and suggests that faculty who prefer not to disclose whether they identify as an ethnic minority may respond less positively than faculty who are willing to disclose whether they identify as an ethnic minority.

Figure 10: While there is not a statistically significant difference across levels of (a) College or (b) ethnic minority status (possibly due to smaller sample sizes within some of these demographic levels), these figures exhibit trends that may still be worth attention.
Figure 11 shows the only demographic factor that exhibited possible differences in perceptions of equity of faculty evaluations at the Central Promotion and Tenure Committee level. It appears that tenured or tenure-track faculty may respond more favorably than term faculty or faculty who preferred not to report their appointment type.

**Figure 11:** While there is not a statistically significant difference across levels of appointment type (possibly due to smaller sample sizes within some of these demographic levels), this figure exhibits trends that may still be worth attention.
6 How well do USU ombudspersons do their job to ensure that due process is followed and that the rights of the candidate and the university are protected?

Figure 12 shows that the vast majority of faculty feel that ombudspersons are at least moderately effective in ensuring due process and rights. There were no significant differences in responses to this question based on demographic factors.

**Figure 12:** Overall responses across all demographic factor levels
While there were no significant differences in how well faculty perceived ombudspersons’ performance, based on demographic factors, Figure 13 shows that tenured / tenure-eligible faculty were most likely to report having at least sufficient experience to assess that performance.

**Figure 13:** Tenured / tenure-eligible faculty were significantly more likely to report sufficient experience to assess how well ombudspersons do their job than were term faculty or faculty who preferred not to report their appointment type.
7 Have you witnessed instance(s) in which an ombudsperson intervened to protect the rights of the candidate or the university?

Figure 14 shows that the majority of faculty have not witnessed ombudsperson intervention, and Figure 15 shows that tenure-tenure track faculty are more significantly likely to have witnessed such intervention.

**Figure 14:** Overall responses across all demographic factor levels.

![Figure 14](chart1.png)

**Figure 15:** Tenured / tenure-track faculty tended to respond “Yes” significantly more often than faculty with term appointments.

![Figure 15](chart2.png)
Figure 16a shows that faculty in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services may be less likely to have witnessed ombudsperson intervention than faculty in the S.J. & Jessie E. Quinney College of Natural Resources or the College of Science, or faculty who preferred not to report their College affiliation. The other observed differences between Colleges are not as significant, largely due to smaller sample sizes. Figure 16b shows that faculty who are not ethnic minorities may be more likely to witness ombudsperson intervention than faculty who are ethnic minorities.

**Figure 16:** While there is not a statistically significant difference across levels of (a) College or (b) ethnic minority status (possibly due to smaller sample sizes within some of these demographic levels), these figures exhibit trends that may still be worth attention.
Do you think that all PAC and TAC members should help to ensure that due process is followed and that the rights of the candidate and the university are protected?

Figure 17 shows that the overwhelming majority of faculty agree that PAC/TAC members should help ensure due process and rights. Figure 18 shows significant differences based on campus location and appointment type, but even in those sub-groups, the majority agreement is still clear.

Figure 17: Overall responses across all demographic factor levels.
Figure 18: (a) Faculty at the Logan campus tended to respond significantly more positively than faculty who preferred not to report their location. (b) Tenured / tenure-track faculty tended to respond significantly more positively than faculty who preferred not to report their appointment type.

(a) Campus Location

Should PAC/TAC help ensure due process and rights?

(b) Appointment Type

Should PAC/TAC help ensure due process and rights?
9 Do you think that USU should continue to require an ombudsman at every PAC and TAC meeting?

Figure 19 shows a clear majority of faculty favor continuing to require ombudspersons at every PAC and TAC meeting. Figure 20 shows that the larger sample size in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences results in a marginally significantly difference compared to the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business, which had the least positive overall response.

**Figure 19:** Overall responses across all demographic factor levels.

**Figure 20:** While there is not a statistically significant difference across levels of College (possibly due to smaller sample sizes within some of these demographic levels), this figure exhibits trends that may still be worth attention.
Figure 21a shows that tenured / tenure-eligible faculty were marginally significantly more likely to support continuing the ombudsperson requirement than were faculty who preferred not to report their appointment type. Figure 21b shows that female faculty were more likely to support continuing the ombudsperson requirement than were male faculty or faculty who preferred not to report their gender.

**Figure 21: Should USU continue to require ombuds?** While there is not a statistically significant difference across levels of (a) Appointment Type or (b) Gender (possibly due to smaller sample sizes within some of these demographic levels), these figures exhibit trends that may still be worth attention.
10 Please share information about the ombudsperson-intervention incident(s), excluding identifying information.

This question garnered 159 responses from survey participants, which is approximately 27.5 percent of respondents. Thematic analysis produced the following codes (i.e., categories of responses), listed in order from most frequent to least frequent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Number of Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring structural processes are followed</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervening against inappropriate discourse</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General support / reassurance of candidate</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ombudsperson error</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More training needed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.1 Data Patterns

Each survey response was assigned a single code, and only one survey response did not fit into any of the above codes, resulting in 158 coded responses.

The most common type of ombudsperson intervention reported by survey respondents was ensuring that processes are followed. These interventions included things like halting a meeting if there was no signed role statement or if not all committee members were present.

The second most common intervention was against inappropriate discourse during PAC or TAC meetings. Most of these responses did not specify the topic but rather described the intervention as halting a discussion of personal matters and reminding committee members to
discuss issues relevant to a candidate’s role statement. However, of the responses that did specify the inappropriate topic, 30 percent (15 responses) were related to gender: e.g., female candidates’ marital status, parental status, or sexuality/partnership. Gender-related discussions were the most common inappropriate topic identified by survey respondents, with other topics such as medical issues and angry outbursts generating 2-3 responses each.

Seven responses involved general support / reassurance of candidate; these answers included responses such as crediting the presence of an ombudsperson for the promotion and tenure process being followed correctly and for making candidates feel comfortable and supported.

Six responses did not describe how ombudspersons intervened to protect a candidate’s rights but rather described errors on the part of ombudspersons. These responses included an ombudsperson failing to note an aspect of code that was not followed during a meeting and an ombudsperson overstepping their role.

Two responses described incidents in which questions arose during PAC or TAC meetings which should have been covered by ombudsperson training.

10.2 Connections and Interpretation

Responses to this question shed additional light on the support for ombudspersons reflected elsewhere in the survey by identifying specific types of value ombudspersons provide when they intervene. The second most common reason for intervention involves stopping inappropriate discourse, which may disproportionately affect women faculty members. This finding may help to explain why, although support for requiring ombudspersons was widespread (section 9), survey respondents identifying as women were in even stronger support than respondents of other genders.
11 Please list aspects of USU’s promotion and tenure processes that work well.

This question garnered 317 responses from survey participants, which is 54.9 percent of respondents. (Nine responses indicated that survey respondents believed they had insufficient experience to answer; these were counted as null responses, leaving 317 responses as code-able.) Thematic analysis produced the following codes (i.e., categories of responses), listed in order from most frequent to least frequent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Number of Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship, guidance, examples</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General positive</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual nature of reviews</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes and code</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ombudsperson</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General negative</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility that benefits candidates</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops, etc to support materials develop</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interfolio / eDossier</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias or unfairness at DH level or above</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias or unfairness in faculty peer relationships</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.1 Data Patterns

Each survey response was assigned a single code, and only two survey responses did not fit into any of the above codes, resulting in 315 coded responses.
The most common aspect of the promotion and tenure process that respondents identified as working well is “Mentorship, Guidance, and Examples” (80 occurrences). These responses included things like committee members providing specific feedback on candidate performance to help them succeed. Many responses in this category included terms like mentoring, engaged, encouragement, and support.

The second most common code (60 occurrences) was “General Positive.” Responses in this category include both brief statements like “everything works well” and also responses that listed many wide-ranging aspects of the process, suggesting a generally positive view.

The code “Annual Nature of Reviews” had 57 occurrences. These responses indicated that the frequency or regularity of meeting with one’s committee and/or receiving feedback each year works well.

Thirty-three responses were coded as “Processes and Code.” These responses identified aspects such as written role statements, clarity of faculty code, formalized processes for redressing problems, and the list of criteria for promotion and tenure as working well.

Twenty-nine responses focused on the role or presence of ombudspersons. Some responses simply identified ombudspersons as a positive aspect of the process, while others elaborated on benefits, such as supporting professionalism and protecting the dignity of candidates.

Fifteen responses were categorized as “General Negative.” These tended to be brief comments indicating that no aspect of the process works well, while a few responses listed broadly scoped problems such poor treatment, lack of clarity, or failure to hold stakeholders accountable.

Eleven responses were coded as “Flexibility that Benefits Candidates.” These responses included things such as enabling candidates follow their own professional goals, the ability to prioritize teaching evidence other than the IDEA evaluations, and enabling committees to meet
virtually as needed.

Ten responses referenced workshops, trainings, and other formalized events or resources that help candidates develop their portfolio materials.

Eight responses specifically identified Interfolio, e-Dossier, and/or the electronic format of the portfolio as an aspect of the promotion and tenure process that works well.

Seven responses indicated that unfairness at the level of department head, dean, or central committee interferes with the promotion and tenure process (e.g., characterizing reviewers at these levels as overly influential in promotion and tenure outcomes), while five responses indicated similar problems at the level of departmental peers (e.g., affected by departmental politics; if a candidate is not considered likeable among their peers, it can interfere with promotion and tenure).

11.2 Connections and Interpretation

Patterns of responses to this question align with several other patterns in the survey data: for example, reinforcing the pattern of support for ombudspersons that is also evident in section 9.

Also, codes such as “Mentorship, Guidance, and Examples,” “Processes and Code,” and “Flexibility that Benefits Candidates” reveal important priorities that often operate in tension with each other: i.e., both flexibility of process to accommodate faculty members’ circumstances and professional roles, as well as clarity of process to support faculty members in understanding and meeting expectations. And although these codes may operate in tension at times, they all reflect a pattern of valuing due process: demonstrating the importance of processes and code in establishing that process and of examples and mentorship in successfully navigating that process.
Finally, the two least common codes are noteworthy in part because they reflect a pattern of responses identifying *problems* with the promotion and tenure process in response to a question about aspects that work well. These responses are also noteworthy because they mirror patterns that emerge elsewhere in the survey data. For example, survey respondents’ level of confidence in the equity of faculty evaluations decreases as the level of decision makers increases (e.g., less confident in the equity of Central Committee decisions than in PAC/TAC decisions). More than one thematic code reported in the next section reflects similar concerns, such as inconsistencies across levels of decision makers and outsized influence of higher administration. These patterns (and others) are discussed in detail in section 12.

12 **Please list suggestions to improve USU’s promotion and tenure process.**

This question garnered 363 responses, which is almost 63 percent of respondents. Answers to this question ranged more widely than answers to the other qualitative questions—both in breadth of topics within a single answer and in breadth of topics across the corpus of data. Thematic analysis resulted in 22 codes (i.e., categories of responses), and individual responses were assigned up to three codes to account for the breadth of topics within a single response. Thematic codes are listed below in order from most frequent to least frequent:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Number of Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process too onerous</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines too ambiguous</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process problematic for term/non-research faculty</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistencies across/within groups</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More training needed on existing processes/code</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions/processes are black boxed</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to eliminate bias</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher administration has outsized influence</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with senior faculty</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion to full needs more support</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to disaggregate evaluative and advising roles</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of merit should be more flexible</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ombudspersons are unnecessary/should be eliminated</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty should have more say in decisions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous student evals are biased</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s working fine/No suggested improvements</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to follow faculty code</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central committee role should change</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovate; change the whole system</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulating/gaming the system</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of merit should be quantifiable</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ombudspersons are important/necessary</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12.1 Data Patterns: Those For Whom Current Processes Do Not Work Well

One set of codes that emerged from the data identifies groups for whom current promotion and tenure processes do not work as well.

One such code is “Process Problematic for Term/Non-research Faculty,” which had 38 occurrences. Most of these responses identified problems experienced by term faculty and faculty whose area of excellence is not research, though some responses addressed faculty hired with years of experience at a previous institution or faculty who work at regional campuses. These problems include the PAC/TAC being unfamiliar with processes that applied to these faculty members, a lack of clarity regarding how to document excellence in areas other than research, and poor fit of existing guidelines for roles such as professor of practice and agricultural extension faculty. Some responses indicated that these faculty members must navigate promotion processes with significantly less guidance and support than tenure-track and/or research-focused faculty members due to the inexperience of PAC/TAC and/or department heads with promotion processes for other types of faculty.

The code “Need to Eliminate Bias” had 32 occurrences. These responses asserted that current processes allow for inequitable and biased outcomes for marginalized faculty. About half of these responses referenced only faculty who identify as women, and about half mentioned women and people of color or used a general term such as “minorities.” Several of these responses provided example inequities, such as

- Higher service load: Both official service (e.g., faculty of color asked to serve on many diversity committees), as well as unofficial service (e.g., minoritized faculty being disproportionately sought out for mentoring by students who share their minoritized identity factors)

- Higher bar: Such as increased expectations for those who take maternity leave, receiving more scrutiny and less credit for collaborative work, and reduced expectations by
PAC/TAC that minoritized faculty can course correct or "catch up" after a setback.

The code “Anonymous Student Evaluations are Biased” had 15 occurrences, almost all of which specified that evaluation bias disproportionately and negatively affects faculty who are non-male and non-white. This code could be considered a subset of the code above in which 15 survey responses specified a particular inequity against minoritized faculty that is enabled by current processes.

12.2 Data Patterns: Problems Related to Decision Makers

Another set of codes relates to problems involving decision makers at various levels, including general faculty members, PAC/TAC members and chairs, department heads, deans, central committee, and university president.

One of these codes is “Higher Administration has Outsized Influence,” with 20 occurrences. Responses within this code assert problems such as intentionally seeking to influence others’ decisions (e.g., department heads pressuring PAC/TAC committees to recommend one way or another), as well as unintentional but inadvisably powerful influence (i.e., if a dean does not recommend tenure, that decision reduces the likelihood of central committee recommending tenure).

The code “Problems with Senior Faculty” also had 20 occurrences. The problems asserted in these responses included biased faculty members who played favorites on PAC/TAC committees, bullying and other aggressive behavior (usually directed at candidates), and being unqualified to serve as PAC/TAC members because standards had increased markedly since

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10 For a recent, comprehensive literature review of the substantial research documenting the inequities of student evaluations, refer to Heffernan’s 2021 article “Sexism, racism, prejudice, and bias: A literature review and synthesis of research surrounding student evaluations of courses and teaching” in the journal Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, which concludes that there is substantial empirical evidence to justify these concerns.
their own tenure process.

Fifteen occurrences of the code “Faculty Should Have More Say” suggest that additional stakeholders should be involved in decision making. Some responses in this category generally called for greater faculty oversight of the tenure and promotion process, while others included suggestions such as a departmental vote to enable faculty members who are not on the PAC/TAC to weigh in on tenure decisions.

The code “Central Committee Role Should Change” had 9 occurrences. Some of these responses suggested doing away with central committee; others suggested narrowing central committee’s role to addressing only non-unanimous cases or only ensuring that fair processes were followed.

The code “Manipulating/Gaming the System” had 8 occurrences. These involve problems related to a misuse of power by decision makers, such as changing a faculty member’s role statement, replacing PAC/TAC members, or manipulating external reviewer letter requests for the purpose of increasing or decreasing the likelihood of the faculty member achieving tenure.

12.3 Data Patterns: Need for Additional Clarity and Consistency

Several of the codes requested additional clarity and consistency in the promotion and tenure process.

The most common of these codes is “Guidelines are too Ambiguous,” with 44 occurrences. Responses in this category asserted that what exactly constitutes “excellence” is unclear, that the difference between “excellence” and “effectiveness” is unclear, and that guidelines (e.g., regarding how to evaluate publications: number of publications? prestige of publication venue? number of citations? other kinds of impact/outcomes?) and examples of portfolio documents
are both needed.

A related code is “Inconsistencies Across/Within Groups,” which had 36 occurrences. Specific concerns within this code include receiving contradictory advice from faculty and administrators within the same college and even within the same department, concerns that criteria were changed too frequently, and that what constitutes a strong tenure case varies widely across colleges and even within departments.

A third code related to clarity is “Decisions/Processes are Black Boxed,” with 33 occurrences. These responses asserted that more information should be provided regarding how decisions are made, especially at the level of the deans and the central committee. These responses indicate that candidates and PAC/TAC committees need more information about how and why decision makers voted on past tenure cases to enable future candidates to understand how these decision makers evaluate merit so candidates can use that information to build a strong tenure case.

12.4 Data Patterns: Other Specific Aspects of the Existing Process

The next set of patterns focus on other specific aspects of the promotion and tenure process, with four of the six codes being opposing pairs.

The code “Ombudspersons are Unnecessary/Should be Eliminated” had 17 occurrences. Some responses assert that it’s overly difficult to schedule an ombudsperson, while other responses assert that ombudspersons seem unnecessary (e.g., that the respondent has not personally observed an intervention, that the external PAC/TAC member could fulfill the role of ombudsperson), and a few responses assert that ombudspersons can cause problems (e.g., by taking too personal an interest in the success of candidates).
In contrast to this code is “Ombudspersons are Important/Necessary,” which had 8 occurrences. These responses asserted the value of ombudspersons in assuring equity, and some made suggestions regarding the ombudsperson role (e.g., consistently serving on the same candidate’s committee, meeting with the candidate before the PAC/TAC meeting to touch base).

The code “Evidence of Merit Should be More Flexible” had 18 occurrences. These responses included assertions such as relying on quantifiable evidence of merit, such as number of publications, is better suited to some fields than others; that influential publications that are not peer reviewed (such as position statements published by national professional organizations) should count toward tenure; and that teaching excellence should draw upon qualitative evidence of impact.

In tension with the code above is “Evidence of Merit Should be Quantifiable,” which had 8 occurrences. These responses included a suggestion for each department to develop quantifiable metrics appropriate for their own field and a call to develop a shared point system that could reduce subjectivity in the promotion and tenure process.

The code “Promotion to Full Needs More Support” had 18 occurrences. These survey responses asserted that existing code for promotion post-tenure is unclear or is not being consistently followed: e.g., PACs are not consistently formed and third-year post-tenure reviews are not consistently conducted for qualifying faculty members. Some responses noted that this inconsistency disproportionately affects minoritized faculty members, and some responses noted the importance of continued review to prevent “dead wood.”

The code “Need to Disaggregate Evaluative and Advising Roles” garnered 18 occurrences. These survey responses asserted that it is problematic or awkward for PAC/TAC to fulfill a role that is both advisory (i.e., encouraging, mentoring) and evaluative (i.e., recommending whether a peer should keep their job). Some responses just identified these roles as incompatible or difficult to fulfill at the same time, while other responses suggested alternatives such as having
two distinct committees: one advisory and one evaluative.

12.5 Data Patterns: Overall Process

The most frequently occurring code was “Process Too Onerous,” with 48 occurrences. Responses in this category asserted that USU’s promotion and tenure process is too time consuming: committee members attend too many meetings and have to read unnecessarily long portfolios; candidates spend almost as much time documenting their achievements as they do accomplishing them; ombudspersons receive too many requests for their service.

Another common code was “More Training Needed,” with 34 occurrences. These responses suggested additional training on the existing promotion and tenure process, especially for PAC/TAC chairs but also for candidates, deans and department heads, and recently promoted faculty members (i.e., future PAC/TAC members). Some responses identified specific areas of training (e.g., what PAC/TAC chairs should include in their letter), while others just requested additional training for particular roles.

Another code, “Need to Follow Faculty Code,” (13 occurrences) asserted that USU’s promotion and tenure process could be improved by following our existing code. Some responses paired the recommendation to follow existing code with suggestions for additional training or with concerns regarding inconsistencies across/within groups; other responses simply asserted that code should be followed.

Fourteen responses indicated that the process is working well or that the respondent has no suggestions for improving it. (To be clear, null answers were not coded.)

Nine responses suggest the overall process needs innovative or comprehensive change. For example, suggestions include crafting a process which encourages faculty to be more adventurous
or creative and to do away with dogma.

12.6 Connections and Interpretation

Responses to this question ranged more widely than for any other survey question, but many of the patterns emerging from this data reinforced and shed additional light on other findings.

For example, codes such as “Higher Administration has Outsized Influence,” “Central Committee Role Should Change,” and “Decisions/Processes are Black Boxed” all can inform interpretation of the responses reported in section 5, in which survey respondents’ satisfaction with the equity of faculty evaluations decreases as the level of decision maker increases. (In other words, PAC/TAC were rated as the most equitable and Central Committee as the least equitable). If survey respondents do not understand how promotion and tenure recommendations are made at the dean or Central Committee levels, and especially if these respondents believe that some members of higher administration are inappropriately influencing decision outcomes, it is no wonder that respondents are less satisfied with the equity of these groups’ evaluations of faculty.

Similarly, the codes “Need to Eliminate Bias,” “Anonymous Student Evaluations are Biased,” and “Process Problematic for Term/Non-research Faculty” provide examples and details useful for understanding another notable trend in responses reported in section 5: The groups more likely to be satisfied with the equity of faculty evaluations are those who are less likely to be negatively affected by bias and other systemic inequities. For example, survey respondents identifying as men report higher levels of satisfaction with equity than respondents of other genders, as are tenure-track faculty versus term faculty.

Finally, the patterns reported in sections 12.1 (Those for Whom Current Processes Do Not Work as Well), section 12.2 (Problems Related to Decision Makers) and 12.3 (Need for
Additional Clarity and Consistency) can be productively considered alongside each other. As discussed in the executive summary, inequities may flourish or be perceived to flourish when institutional processes are not formalized or conveyed transparently and when those deviating from institutional processes are not held accountable. Section 12.2 identifies aspects of USU’s promotion and tenure process that should be formalized and/or conveyed more transparently, and section 12.3 indicates that at least some faculty members do not believe those who violate these processes are held accountable. Section 12.2 identifies those who are disproportionately negatively affected by these shortcomings: faculty members with non-dominant identities and roles.