

Members of the board – thank you for allowing me to speak with you. As President of the Florida Poly chapter of the UFF, I've always emphasized that the main motivation of the faculty is to do what is best for our students. Here I'd like to give my perspective on issues that may compromise that vision.

Earlier, my colleague Christina Drake offered an excellent discussion of the tenure-like evaluation process proposed by the administration. From my viewpoint of having endured two tenure processes at R1 universities I'd like to expand on this. At a tenure-granting research institution, new faculty typically get up to six years to establish their credentials. They often have generous startup packages, sufficient lab space, an infrastructure to support new research, ample academic course release, and support from grad assistants.

Few of these advantages are available at Poly, however. They may arise sometime in the future, but they are certainly not present now. This gap between our desired versus our actual environment will become painfully evident if the administration's proposal to seek external evaluation letters is implemented. Speaking from my own experience, the acquisition of external letters is the worst part of a tenure review, since it is the one component that is totally outside the candidate's control – even with the resources mentioned earlier.

I deeply fear for my colleagues who came here under the assumption that undergrad education would be valued above all. I worry that faculty who have demonstrated excellence in teaching and devotion to Poly will be put at risk due to a change in evaluation criteria. I'm further concerned that potential new faculty will look at the employment structure here – especially the lack of long-term job stability – and opt to pursue positions elsewhere. None of these represent positive outcomes for Poly or its students.

A more reasonable approach would acknowledge that Poly is in transition. Faculty who came here in the early days and who have distinguished themselves as effective educators should not be discarded – they should be protected. Faculty who have come with

ideas for growing viable research programs should not be penalized because Poly cannot yet support their plans. And faculty fortunate enough to conduct original scholarship should be encouraged to do so – but not at the expense of the work needed to grow Poly to maturity. The contributions of such varying trajectories will be difficult for anyone outside of Poly to assess, but they will be obvious to those who live within our unique ecosystem.

I believe that a multiplicity of career paths is not just good for the faculty, but it's clearly in the best interests of our students. Poly was originally envisioned as a place unlike “every other university”, and both students and faculty have come here to embrace that philosophy. A holistic approach that encourages a range of activities from exemplary education all the way to basic and applied research and points in between represents the vision that Poly had at its inception. It is this vision that will help all of us – faculty, staff, students, and administration – achieve the dream that we have for this institution.