

Senate Document SD 25-22
Approved, 1/12/2026

MEMORANDUM

TO Jeffrey Nowak, Chair
Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Jay Johns, Chair
Faculty Affairs Committee

DATE: 12/12/2025

SUBJ: CASTLE Ad-Hoc Review of SoTL in Departmental Promotion & Tenure Practices

WHEREAS, the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) received a request from CASTLE to endorse the formation of an Ad-Hoc Campus-wide Review of Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) in Departmental Promotion & Tenure Practices. Findings from CASTLE's 2022 State of SoTL at PFW survey indicate that faculty remain uncertain about how SoTL is recognized, documented, and evaluated for P&T.

WHEREAS, FAC completed the review and voted in support of the document going forward;

BE IT RESOLVED, That the attached proposal be considered by the Senate.

PROPOSAL:

CASTLE Ad-Hoc Review of SoTL in Departmental Promotion & Tenure Practices

SUBMITTED BY:

CELT's standing Committee for the Advancement of Scholarly Teaching and Learning Excellence (CASTLE) (Betsy Berry, Jeong Il Cho, Sheena Choi, Shannon Johnson, Sarah LeBlanc, Don Mueller, Mike Kirchner, and Rachel Ramsey)

1. PURPOSE

Recent developments, including post-tenure review expectations and increased attention to the scholarship of engagement, have prompted several departments to reexamine their expectations for Promotion & Tenure (P&T). Findings from CASTLE's 2022 *State of SoTL at PFW* survey indicate that faculty remain uncertain about how SoTL is recognized, documented, and evaluated for P&T.

CASTLE proposes to support departments by conducting a structured review of both written and unwritten departmental expectations related to SoTL and producing guidance that departments may use voluntarily when revisiting their P&T documents.

2. Committee Information

This proposal requests authorization to appoint CASTLE as an **Ad-Hoc CASTLE Working Group**, operating on behalf of the Senate, to carry out this work. The members of CASTLE are: Betsy Berry, Jeong Il Cho, Sheena Choi, Shannon Johnson, Sarah LeBlanc, Don Mueller, Mike Kirchner, John Minnich, Carrie Stumph, and Rachel Ramsey. All members will have voting rights.

The current team consists of nine (10) members: **8 faculty, 1 CELT representative, and 1 Teaching Development Fellow**, allowing the workload to be distributed without burdening departments. Ranks of Professor, Associate Professor, Lecturer, Clinical Assistant Professor, and Librarian are represented.

During the first meeting of the Spring semester, members must vote on a Chair and a Secretary.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The proposed project consists of **two data-gathering phases**, followed by analysis and development of guidance for departments.

Phase 1: Review of Departmental P&T Documents

CASTLE will review approximately 28 departmental and unit-level P&T documents to identify:

- Whether SoTL is explicitly mentioned or implied
- The terminology used (e.g., scholarship of teaching and learning, systematic inquiry, research on teaching and learning, peer-reviewed dissemination of teaching work, etc.)
- The location of this language within each document

- Details illustrating how SoTL is recognized (e.g., as research, as teaching excellence, as professional development)

Phase 2: Interviews with Departmental Review Committees

The team will conduct semi-structured interviews with departmental P&T or Faculty Affairs committees to identify:

- Unwritten or informal expectations regarding SoTL
- Typical guidance given to faculty documenting SoTL
- How SoTL is usually evaluated when included in a dossier
- Perceptions of the value or role of SoTL within the discipline

All interview responses will be **de-identified and aggregated** prior to reporting.

Phase 3: Analysis and Development of Recommendations

CASTLE will:

- Compare documented expectations to reported informal practices
- Identify patterns, gaps, and inconsistencies
- Develop **non-prescriptive, scalable guidance** to help departments more clearly articulate expectations related to SoTL

Importantly, CASTLE **will not** propose campus-wide standardization. Decisions about the role of SoTL in P&T remain with departments through faculty governance.

4. DELIVERABLES

At the end of the project CASTLE will provide:

1. **A written report** summarizing:
 - Findings from document analysis
 - Aggregated and de-identified themes from interviews
 - Discrepancies between formal and informal expectations
2. **Guidance materials** for departments, designed to:
 - Clarify possible ways to describe and evaluate SoTL
 - Support faculty clarity and consistency in documentation
 - Facilitate department-level conversations about expectations
3. **Optional presentations** to FAC, Senate, and/or academic units.

5. PROJECT TIMELINE

If authorized to begin, CASTLE anticipates the following timeline:

- **Phase 1 (Document Review):** ~3 weeks
- **Phase 2 (Interviews):** ~4 weeks
- **Phase 3 (Analysis & Recommendations):** 4–5 weeks

Estimated total duration: ~3 months, depending on start date and scheduling of interviews.

6. INFORMATION HANDLING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Interview data will be **de-identified** before analysis or sharing.

- Departmental documents will be cited or quoted only within the context of their public, written expectations for P&T.
- No individual faculty member or committee will be identifiable in the final report.

7. REPORTING STRUCTURE

- **Final report and recommendations submitted to the Campus Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) for review and discussion.**

8. REQUESTED SENATE ACTION

CASTLE respectfully requests that the Senate authorize the appointment of CASTLE as the **Ad-Hoc CASTLE Working Group** charged with:

Exploring written and unwritten departmental expectations related to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), developing a descriptive report of current practices across campus, and producing guidance for departments wishing to clarify or revise their P&T expectations for SoTL.

With a deadline to submit a report to Campus Faculty Affairs for the April 2026.

9. SUMMARY

This project addresses a clear need identified by faculty, supports departmental autonomy, and promotes transparency and consistency in how SoTL is documented and understood across campus. CASTLE's proposed approach balances systematic inquiry with respect for governance processes, and the resulting guidance is intended as a resource, not a mandate, for departments. We are asking the Faculty Senate to appoint CASTLE to work on this project.