



## Response to Previous Commission Actions

Since its last full reaffirmation of accreditation review, with its Capacity Preparatory Review in Fall 2008 and its Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) in Spring 2010, California State University, Stanislaus underwent two Special Visit reviews, with the first Special Visit Onsite Review in Fall 2011, and the most recent Special Visit Onsite Review on October 1-3, 2014. The 2014 Special Visit was focused on four issues identified from the 2011 Special Visit and were reflected in the Commission's March 7, 2012 action letter:

- 1) Shared Governance;
- 2) Campus Climate;
- 3) Progress on Shared Roles in Strategic Planning; and
- 4) Formulation of Retention, Promotion, and Tenure Policies.

As documented in the Commission's March 6, 2015 letter, the 2014 Special Visit team found that substantial progress had been made in the above four areas, but recommended continued work in the following three areas:

- 1) Shared Governance and Institutional Climate (CFR 3.7);
- 2) Strategic Planning (CFRs 4.6, 4.7); and
- 3) Scholarship and Creative Activity (CFRs 2.8, 2.9, 3.2, 3.7).

The University has taken significant proactive steps to make substantial progress in each of these three areas, with strong evidence supporting our achievements. Descriptions of the three Commission recommendations and actions taken to address them follow.

### **Shared Governance and Institutional Climate. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.10)**

In response to challenges in campus climate and trust between faculty and senior administration documented in the July 13, 2010 Commission letter following the Spring 2010 EER, the [Ad Hoc Trust Restoration Planning Committee \(TRPC\)](#) was established October 26, 2010, comprised of four members, including the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Human Resources and Faculty Affairs, the Speaker of the Faculty, and Speaker-elect of the Faculty. The TRPC was charged with developing a plan to improve campus morale, improve communication between faculty and upper administration, and rebuild a productive working environment. Several [recommendations](#) were developed by TRPC, were acted upon by the University, and acknowledged by the 2014 Special Visit team in their report. However, further progress in this area was recommended by the Special Visit team, and is reflected in the [March 6, 2015 Commission letter](#). Specifically, the University was encouraged to begin shifting the focus from special, ad hoc committees (such as the Ad Hoc Trust Restoration Planning Committee), to the standing committees charged with shared decision making and governance.

Since President Ellen Junn assumed her new post in July 2016, several actions were taken that organically continued to restore trust: the work of the Presidential Transition Team with its focus on soliciting information from multiple constituencies on pressing issues and identifying short and long term priorities; the collaborative process of the University Strategic Planning

Council in the development of a new strategic plan; the President's regular attendance at Academic Senate meetings and Senate Executive Committee meetings; and the [joint faculty and administration resolution](#) demonstrating commitment to shared governance. Subsequently, with the appointment of Provost and Vice President Kimberly Greer, and the clearly apparent restored trust between senior administration and faculty that had been fostered through the work of TRPC since 2010 and which was galvanized by President Junn and faculty leadership in 2016 and 2017, it became clear that the TRPC was no longer required. On March 13, 2017, the [TRPC recommended to President Junn that TRPC be disbanded](#), as it had met its charge. Further, the TRPC recommended that a four-member group continue to meet to maintain open lines of communication, consisting of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs, the Faculty Speaker, and the Speaker-elect. TRPC was subsequently disbanded, and the group of four has consistently held bi-weekly meetings since then. The group calls these bi-weekly meetings Governance Conversations, and they serve as an opportunity for all four individuals to bring issues for discussion. Additionally, the Speaker of the Faculty and the President now meet monthly; President Junn also meets regularly with leaders of other units such as Labor Council, Staff Council, and Associated Students, Incorporated.

A transition from long simmering tensions and a divisive environment, to a thriving environment of trust, has been achieved – a result of diligence on the part of both faculty and administration to keep communication lines open, and an enduring and mutual respect for shared governance. Symbolic of this restoration and transition, President Junn hosted on December 5, 2017 a celebration of the Academic Senate. All members of the current Academic Senate were invited, along with all the past Faculty Speakers. The event was filled with testimonials by Speakers of the past and present about the restoration and rejuvenation that has occurred at the University, and was an incredible celebration of mutual respect and commitment to shared governance. While this accomplishment is acknowledged and celebrated, it is also acknowledged that continued success requires ongoing commitment and diligence, which is reflected in the University's Joint Statement on Shared Governance.

#### **Strategic Planning. (CFRs 3.7, 4.5, 5.6, 4.7)**

Unanimously approved by the Academic Senate without abstention on October 31, 2017, and approved by President Junn on November 28, 2017, the University adopted its new strategic plan, [California State University, Stanislaus Strategic Plan 2017-2025](#). It is the result of an extensive institutional self-study, conducted by the 26-member University Strategic Planning Council established Fall 2016, which included a SWOT analysis, and comprehensively engaged the campus community in providing input to the new plan through more than 40 consultation sessions. The new 8-year plan is in the first year of implementation, with a plan currently being developed for regular monitoring and annual reporting of progress that involves stakeholders across and within all the university's divisions.

The new 8-year plan was developed as a vision that is responsive to the contemporary needs and priorities of the University. The previous plan was established in 2007, and little monitoring and reporting relative to progress on the plan had occurred since its establishment. The University's relative lack of attention to and utilization of the plan was noted by the Special Visit team in 2014, and was documented in the Commission's March 6, 2015 letter. Specifically, the Commission recommended that the University either update its 2007 plan, or create a new one. Moreover, the Commission recommended that the updated or new plan emerge from a candid assessment and systematic analysis of the University's environmental realities.

Prior to President Junn’s appointment and the establishment of the University Strategic Planning Council, several efforts were put forth between 2014 and 2016 that provided a smooth transition and strong bridge between the University’s 2007 plan and its new one. On June 24, 2014, [President Sheley established the Committee to Implement and Prioritize the Strategic Plan \(CIPSP\)](#), which was charged with recommending priorities within the 2007 plan to be pursued over a 2-year period, with measurement parameters and action plans. Carrying out its charge, [CIPSP provided recommendations on November 12, 2015](#), and in response, [President Sheley approved a 2-year plan entitled Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Action Items, 2016-2018](#). Its purpose was to provide a bridge between the 2007 plan and the new one, and to further a culture of planning and assessment of progress in attainment of strategic goals. On February 15, 2016, Provost Strong distributed a memo to parties responsible for [reporting progress on the 2-year plan](#). The reports were submitted September 1, 2016, and are archived in Campus Labs (the University’s electronic management system for its institutional-level reporting). From those reports, Provost Strong developed an executive summary of the progress on the strategic plan, and submitted it on December 31, 2016 to incoming Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Kimberly Greer. The USPC used the Fall 2016 reports to inform the development of the new strategic plan, and the University is now set on its new course, with a new implementation plan developed for its 8-year plan.

#### **Scholarship and Creative Activity. (CFRs 2.8, 2.9, 3.2, 3.7)**

When examining progress on the issue of leadership and governance in the Fall 2011 Special Visit, the Special Visit team identified faculty retention, promotion, and tenure (RPT) policy as an historic point of tension – one the Commission recommended addressing. In the [2012 Commission letter](#), it was recommended that the faculty “...engage with administration to address the challenge of establishing RPT policies that are institution-wide and include rigorous requirements that reflect good practice in higher education.” Based on one of the [recommendations](#) from the Trust Restoration Planning Committee (which were approved as a Sense of the Senate on May 10, 2011), an ad-hoc RPT Survey Group was established Fall 2011, consisting of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Faculty Affairs and Human Resources, the Speaker of the Faculty, the University Retention, Promotion, and Tenure Committee (URPTC) Chair, and three additional faculty representatives. The ad-hoc group was charged with gathering information about the perceptions people have about the RPT policy and procedures, so that the information could be used to examine RPT policies and procedures to determine what steps could be taken to reduce conflict around this issue. The RPT Survey Group distributed its survey May 2012, and [presented its report with findings and recommendations](#) to the campus community June 9, 2014, followed by a [presentation and discussion in Academic Senate](#) on September 23, 2014. Three major recommendations emerged from the RPT Survey Group’s work:

Recommendation 1: Acknowledge that the University has a highly functional RPT Policy and Procedures. Understand that the conflicts that have developed around Retention, Promotion, and Tenure are (largely) symptoms of a broader organizational issue surrounding trust between faculty and administration. Continue efforts, similar to those outlined in 9/AS/11, to build trust around issues of shared governance, the primacy of faculty in issues related to the curriculum, and the leadership roles of administration in pursuing the mission of the institution.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that all parties involved in the RPT process are utilizing the established review criteria. This can be encouraged by continuing and expanding outreach and training efforts targeting the various groups involved in the process. These outreach efforts should ensure that all parties are informed of the candidate's rights, the review criteria, and the established timelines. All parties should also be informed that all review levels are receiving the same training and information.

Recommendation 3: Continue efforts to ensure that all tenured and tenure-track faculty, as discipline experts, have a good understanding of the complexity of developing elaborations and the role elaborations play in the RPT process. Share elaborations within and across Colleges and call upon all departments to regularly discuss and examine their elaborations with attention to both the unique aspects of their discipline and to the means by which other departments communicate their priorities and expectations. Utilize the Faculty Development Center to engage faculty in critical dialogue regarding strategies for thinking about and preparing elaborations.

The Academic Senate approved its [Endorsement of RPT Survey Report Recommendations](#) on February 16, 2015. President Sheley subsequently approved the endorsement on March 2, 2015.

This issue was a focus of the Fall 2014 Special Visit, and the observations of the 2014 Special Visit team resulted in the 2015 Commission letter recommendation to “continue to develop clear department expectations for research, scholarship, and creative activity that reflect disciplinary practices, are aligned with the university’s institutional purposes and educational objectives, and provide clear guidance for promotion and tenure.” The Commission further suggested that “more work needs to be done in developing retention, promotion, and tenure standards that are fair and transparent, and that encourage faculty to aspire to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative activity, and service.”

Since the endorsement of the recommendations of the RPT Survey Group by the Academic Senate and President Sheley in Spring 2015, the University has been working diligently to follow-up on those recommendations. With respect to Recommendation 1, tensions around the RPT issue have dramatically decreased, as communication and trust between faculty and administration have dramatically increased with the substantial progress in shared governance accomplished within the University.

With respect to Recommendation 2, increased efforts in the training of all stakeholders in the process has occurred. [Workshop sessions](#) for faculty moving through the tenure and promotion process are offered every semester, and URPTC has met with the new senior administration several times to ensure clarity in roles and responsibilities as they relate to the [University's RPT policy](#) and use of [Department RPT criteria/elaborations](#), and to discuss ways in which the various stakeholders can continue to improve in its shared responsibility for a successful process.

In response to Recommendation 3, and to inform discussions among stakeholders, the Office of Faculty Affairs conducted an analysis of the 34 departmental elaborations in 2017 (see Appendix). Key areas of the analysis included the following: how recently elaborations were revised and updated; whether criteria related to research, scholarship, and creative activity (RSCA) are quantified; whether differential requirements by rank exist; and whether teaching materials are used to evaluate teaching effectiveness. The analysis was shared with the URPTC and was presented at a Provost's monthly meeting with the Deans, Chairs, and Program

Directors in Spring 2017. Departments were encouraged to consider revision to ensure clarity and appropriateness of RSCA standards, and the English Department shared their example of a meaningful and successful revision process as part of the presentation. Since then, the AVP for Faculty Affairs and the URPTC have begun meeting with departments to discuss questions and issues related to their RPT elaborations. To inform those discussions, and in response to Recommendation 3, Faculty Affairs posts all departmental RPT elaborations on its [website](#), making them available across the University. Reviews of RPT elaborations, along with conversations with departments, will continue on an ongoing basis.

# Departmental RPT Elaborations

*Presented at Deans, Chairs, and Directors meeting, 17 March 2017*

# Why elaborations?

## **PRINCIPLES, CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR RETENTION, PROMOTION AND TENURE REVIEW**

Adopted January 18, 1978  
Amended October 16, 1981  
Amended October 14, 1982  
Amended December 16, 1983  
Amended October 14, 1985  
Amended October 30, 1986  
Amended October 21, 1987  
Amended March 4, 1993  
Amended April 6, 1994  
Amended March 23, 1999  
January 12, 2004  
April 17, 2009  
May 28, 2009

### **I. PRINCIPLES**

Faculty status and related matters are primarily a faculty responsibility; this area includes appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal. The primary responsibility of the faculty for such matters is based on the fact that its judgment is central to general educational policy. Furthermore, scholars in a particular field or activity have the chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues; in such competence it is implicit that responsibility exist for both adverse and favorable judgments. Likewise, there is the more general competence of experienced faculty personnel committees having a broader charge. Determinations in these matters should first be by faculty action through established procedures, reviewed by the chief academic officers with the concurrence of the board. The governing board and president should, on questions of faculty status, as in other matters where the faculty has primary responsibility, concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail. (From AAUP Guidelines.)

### **II. REVIEW CRITERIA**

The following four criteria apply to the faculty as a whole, and all criteria must be considered in the review process. Academic departments\* must formulate written elaborations of the four criteria (A, B, C, D) listed below. All elaborations and amendments to them must be approved by the URPTC prior to their first use in a review process. Once approved, departmental elaborations remain in effect for all subsequent reviews until amended or replaced by the Department. Any such changes must be approved by the URPTC. Each RPT file must contain copy of the current as well as any applicable prior elaborations. A faculty member has the right to be evaluated according to elaborations in effect when he or she was hired or to which the faculty member subsequently has agreed.

# Why elaborations?

- Review criteria: teaching proficiency, scholarship, professional preparation, participation in university affairs
- “Academic departments must formulate written elaborations of the four criteria...”
- Personnel standards, detailed criteria

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**President**  
Mary Ellen Petrisko

March 6, 2015

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Dear President Sheley,

At its meeting February 18-20, 2015, the Commission considered the report of the Special Visit team that conducted an Onsite Review of CSU Stanislaus (CSUS) on October 1-3, 2014. Commission members also reviewed the Special Visit report submitted by CSUS prior to the visit, and the institution's December 9, 2014 response to the visiting team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you, Provost James Strong, Vice President Dennis Shimek, and Interim Associate Vice President / ALO Marjorie Jaasma. Your comments were helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations.

The Special Visit was scheduled to evaluate CSUS's progress on four issues identified in the Commission's March 7, 2012 action letter. Specifically, CSUS was asked to address:

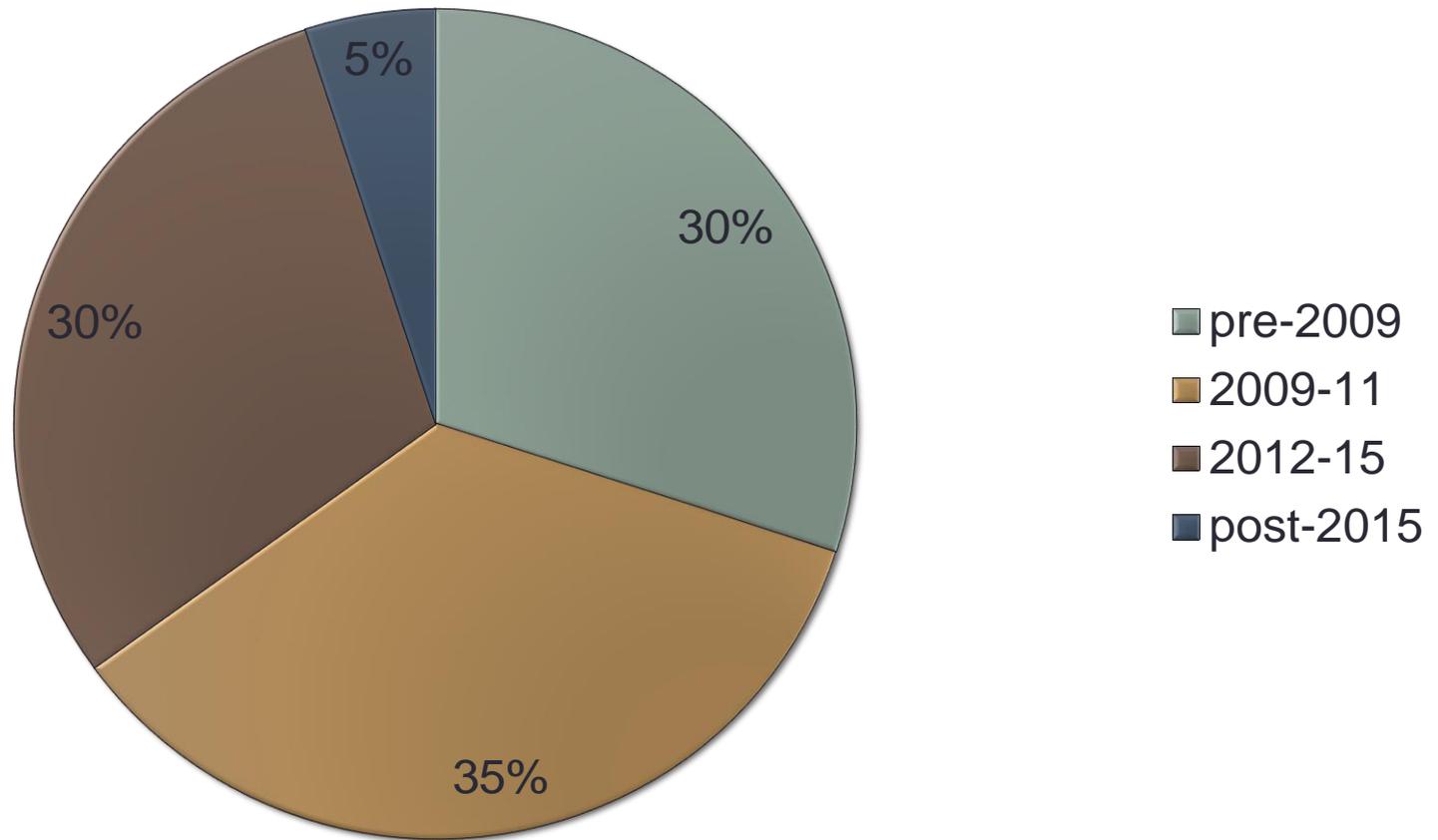
- 1) Shared governance
- 2) Campus climate
- 3) Progress on shared roles in strategic planning, and
- 4) Formulation of retention, promotion, and tenure policies.

The team found that there has been a substantial improvement in the campus climate and trust, and that shared governance is operating consistently at the level expected from a public university. The team also found substantial faculty involvement in strategic planning discussions, though as noted below, the team recommended greater attention to developing a new or updated strategic plan. Finally, the team found that real progress is being made with respect to retention, promotion, and tenure, but that CSUS would benefit from a continued diligent effort to develop greater consistency in these processes.

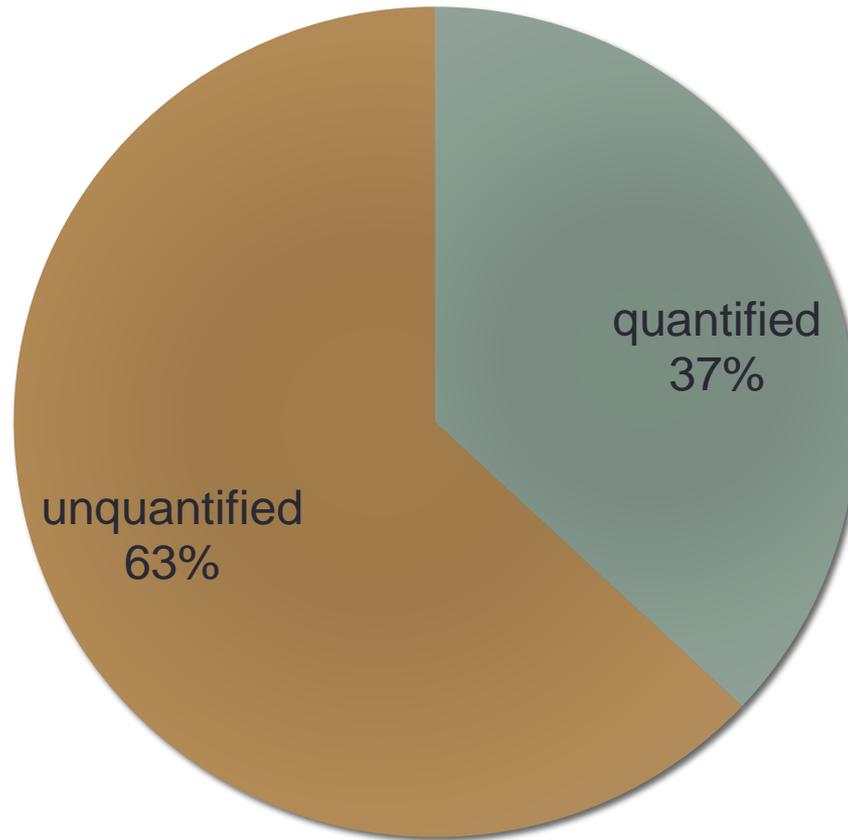
The team commended CSUS for 1) improving shared governance and trust; 2) modeling collaborative processes and adhering to agreed-upon shared governance processes; and 3) the University's commitment to student success, specifically increasing the participation, retention, and graduation rates of students in its service region.

**Scholarship and Creative Activity.** As stated in the team report, faculty need to “continue to develop clear department expectations for research, scholarship, and creative activity that reflect disciplinary practices, are aligned with the university’s institutional purposes and educational objectives, and provide clear guidance for promotion and tenure.” More work needs to be done in developing retention, promotion, and tenure standards that are fair and transparent, and that encourage faculty to aspire to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative activity, and service. [CFR 2.8, 2.9, 3.2, and 3.7]

# Last revision?

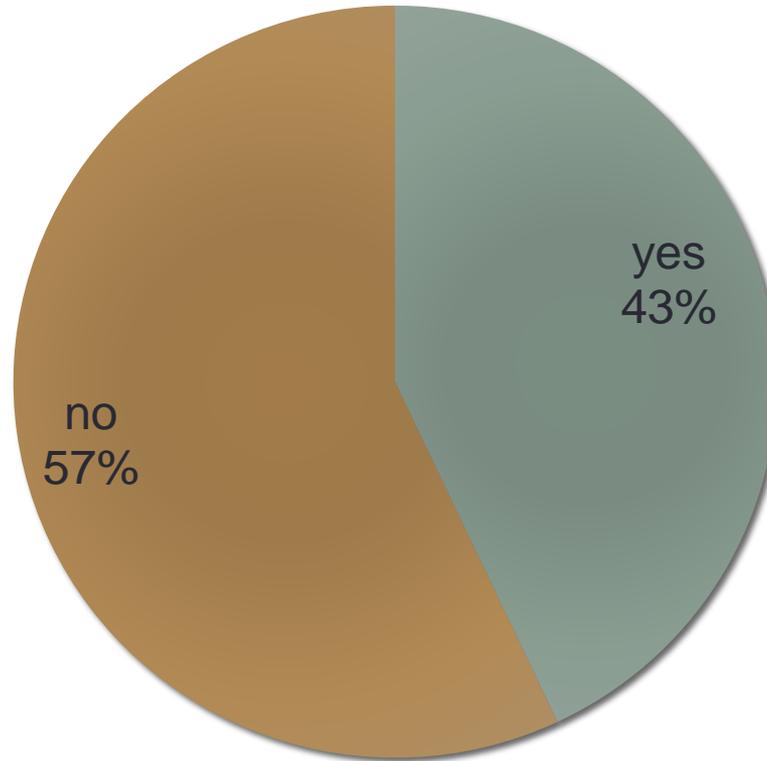


# RSCA quantified?

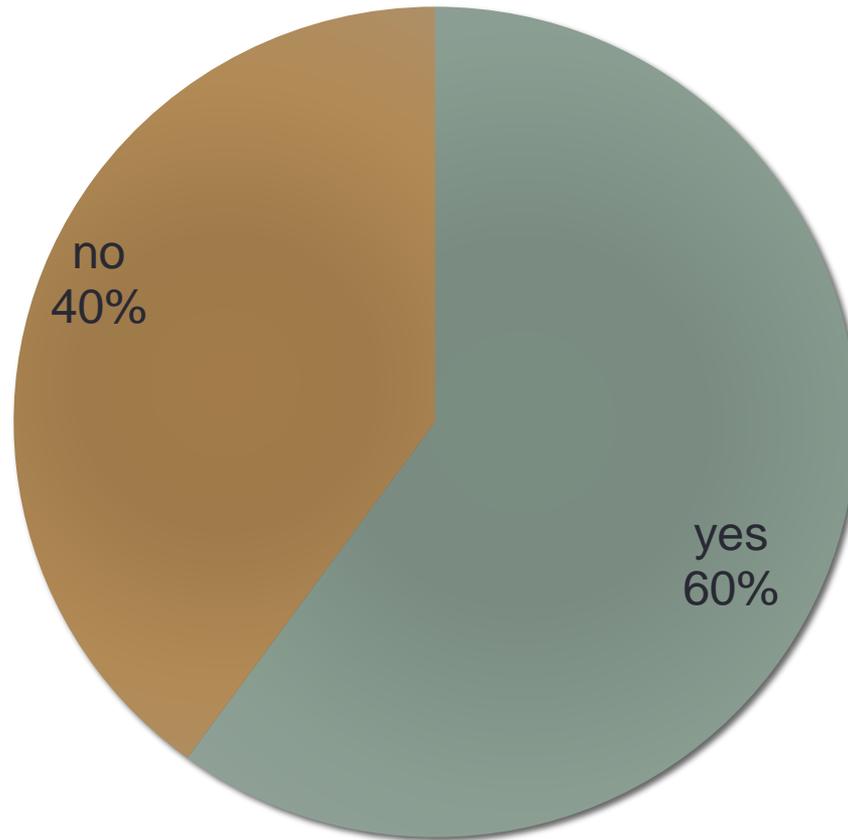


# Differential requirements?

**Assistant to Associate, Associate to Professor**



# Teaching materials as evidence?



# Recommendations

- Discuss RPT elaborations with your department
- Consider revision
- Clarity and appropriateness of RSCA standards
- Document the process of review or revision

Questions?