

October

8 October 2008

Faculty Council meeting

Kasbeer Hall, WTC

Members present: Harvey Boller, Heather Cannon, Dom Castagnetti, Tony Castro, Linda Heath, Nick Lash, Howard Laten, MariJo Letizia, Gerard McDonald, Hugh Miller, Linda Paskiewicz, David Posner, Gordon Ramsey, Hannah Rockwell, Hank Rose, Bill Schmidt, Peter Schraeder, David Schweickart, Allen Shoenberger, Noah Sobe, Sandra Urban.

Meeting called to order at 3:15.

1. Invocation cancelled.

2. Approval of September minutes: 16/0/5.

3. Chair's report (Gerard McDonald): Executive Council meeting on 1 October with Provost Wiseman was mostly about the sabbatical proposal(s).

We (still) need a chair for the Awards Committee.

Nick Lash: one dean being evaluated this year (IPS). Peter Schraeder mentioned a question that arose at FAUPC: timeline for dean evaluations? Nick: SOP 3rd year (of 6-year term, or 5 for that matter).

Another topic at the EC meeting: GM has been talking to Paul Whelton about coming to FC to talk about SSOM salary issues. His schedule is a problem; therefore, EC will try to meet with him, John Lee, and other interested SSOM FC members.

4. Old business: proposal to amend the procedure to amend the constitution or bylaws of FC. Once again, we don't have enough people present to vote on this. So continue to next meeting.

5. Discussion of draft leave policy proposal. David Schweickart gave a history of the proposal. He circulated the unanimously-FAUPC-approved proposal to all; then met with Tim O'Connell and Chris Wiseman, who offered an alternative proposal (first seen at this meeting). Chris W. thought it should go before EC and whole FC. DS now has reservations about the counter-proposal, and wrote them out, asking for a response. Tim O'C. responded only briefly, saying the whole FC should be involved. This morning Chris gave a partial response. DS's summary of differences: in the FAUPC version, all faculty will be assigned sabbatical class; everyone needs a proposal; the competitive leave system remains in place. Provost's version more complicated; the rationale is that it needs to be something that can be pitched successfully to Fr. Garanzini. She wants to target faculty that have not had leaves in more than 7 years. So, there are 2 parts: 1) [status quo], except that leaves are no longer competitive; i. e. the proposals won't be ranked, but everyone meeting minimum criteria will get put into pool, and then criterion will be how long it's been since the person last had a leave. 2) targeting group that haven't had leaves. See proposal for details. Now cost is not the worry, rather the number of PT replacements required.

Linda Heath added: 1) going to the administration's class to develop one's proposal is optional; 2) a sabbatical can be followed by applying for regular (group 1) leave.

[Here, DS read his letter of response to the Provost.]

Provost's most recent response (morning of 8 October): we're out of money. GM said that the administration claims that tenured faculty teach an average of less than 2 courses/semester. They arrive at this by dividing total FT-faculty sections by total FT faculty, without taking into account administrative course reductions, etc. GM said that we need to challenge the administration and find out where they're getting this from, especially because Fr. Garanzini apparently believes this.

Motion from DS: [see attached], seconded by Hugh Miller. Discussion followed. Peter Schraeder pointed out the difficulty of the deadline issue. Noah Sobe wondered what would happen (financially) if lots of people apply and are all guaranteed funding, per above? David Posner pointed out that item B of DS's motion was incorrect; DS agreed and said to delete it. Tony Castro asked about pay structure at peer institutions; DS responded that it was usually 1 year at 1/2 pay, or 1 semester at full pay. DS pointed out that the number of people that get funded is entirely up to the administration under Chris's proposal.

HM said: 1) the old system didn't work, because the process is way too onerous; this is not changed under the new proposal. 2) The possibility of blacklisting exists, and it does in fact happen. 3) There is often no connection between the quality of the application and the degree of support from dept. chairs. 4) The committee itself often displays poor judgment, as evidenced when outside funding is awarded even when a proposal is turned down internally. 5) Some deans view faculty as lazy, and therefore resist sabbatical policy as such. This occurs despite the deans' responsibility to support faculty research leaves. This denigration of faculty is what the senior administration hears. The system at present does not work, and part 1 applications still will be subject to this. Part 2, still problematic: the "voluntary" proposal preparation process is onerous and patronizing. Dept. chairs and committees will still potentially stand in the way, even for part 2 people. So Provost's proposal doesn't fix (or even address) the flaws of current system. DS: appeal procedure does exist; problems are real; but we should try to get something in place. As FAUPC asks, how do we phase this in? TC said that there's still something missing here; the proposal does not address specifics. What is the timeline, for example? What is the turnaround? DS: admin talking as though it could be in place this spring, but now they're starting to panic about the University budget. Nick Lash asked how the problems raised by HM might be fixed. HM said one step would be to standardize the form of proposal. The point is that one should not have to do the research in order to get funded to do the research. The committee reviewing proposals should consist of people who actually know something about the field(s) of the proposal(s). GM said that the Provost will at the next FC meeting, but the administration wants to get this moving. She said to EC that it is uncertain that Fr. G. will approve.

NS proposed that we should endorse the Provost's proposal, so that she can go forward. But we should add that there should be a careful implementation plan, so that it isn't ad hoc and can't be undermined by budgetary claims. NS agreed with Tim O'C that the numbers (of leaves awarded) don't matter. Hannah Rockwell suggested that, strategically, we accept proposal on condition that it be reviewed and refined? Dom

Castagnetti said: 1) there is no accountability (or even feedback) in the Provost's proposal, but there should be. 2) money-wise, the administration won't commit to funding n proposals if they don't think they can always fund n proposals. NL: can we say "fund 1/8 assuming funding is possible"? GM said we should perhaps table it for now; DS said we should also inform the Provost of our concerns, and asking (again): if our peer schools can do it, why not us?

Allen Shoenberger moved to table the motion; HM seconded. 21/0/1; motion tabled. Noah proposes to endorse the general contours of the Provost's plan with the expectation there will be further discussion about implementation. Passed 22/0/0.

6. Peter Schraeder on Faculty Handbook: the committee has met several times, and will meet four more times before end of semester. What are the concerns? NL asked for a summary of what's important and what is less so. PS enumerated the main points people have raised: discipline, grievance process, faculty appeals, faculty titles (e. g. librarians), roles of FC and FAUPC, Shared Governance. GM pointed out some things that disappeared from earlier drafts: things that disappeared: Dean evaluations, the role of Academic Council. AS noted the disappearance of the section on fitness for duty. TC noted that the descriptions of basic faculty ranks are no longer present. Many similar things are missing.

Hank Rose said that the most serious changes are in Fr. G's ch. 7, discipline. 1) His version doesn't allow faculty members to present case & defend themselves. 2) (p. 33) librarians are defined as at-will employees, and may therefore be terminated at any time for any reason. 3) all FT NTT faculty (p. 33) can be non-renewed at any time for any reason (even if they have multi-year contracts). 4) grievances (p. 34): Paul Jay's draft had a committee made up of members of FC (i. e. elected, not appointed by the administration). Fr. G. version has members appointed by the Provost. In the event of a grievance, this allows the Provost to appoint the members of the committee which will review her decision. The appeals committee is appointed by the President, but currently recommended by FC; is this the case in Fr. G. version? Yes, but its purview in Fr. G. version is very narrow. HM pointed out that these policies and procedures do not conform to AAUP best practices.

HM on ch. 2 (p. 9 Fr. G, p. 11 PJ): wording changed: the Dean's council, in spring 2006, discussed term limits for chairs, and supported the idea; this is not reflected in either draft. It should be added. Linda H. said that schools and colleges should do this in-house.

GM said that the fitness for duty issue is important. We've conflated two categories: 1) person teaching on drugs/alcohol; or 2) chronic mental/physical problems. What we have is appropriate for 1), but not 2). I. e. if 2), they have the right to kidnap you as if you were 1)? This was in PJ version, and should be put back.

TC asked about faculty appeals. Answer: p. 11, Fr. G. version: conditions under which appeals can be filed are very limited: 1) unjust termination; 2) discrimination; 3) academic freedom. HR remarked that in the PJ draft, grievance and appeal are the same thing; but they are separated in Fr. G.'s draft, per the old version; why is that? There is no legal reason, but the administration apparently has a strategic reason. What is that reason>

Another comment was made about the re-introduction of problematic language

regarding librarians, namely designating them as NTT, as well as the absence of information on severance policies and procedures. Heather Cannon pointed out that being an at-will employee meant that one has no academic freedom.

meeting adjourned 5:04 p. m.