11-15-2007

Minutes, Arts & Sciences Faculty Meeting, Thursday, Nov. 15, 2007

Arts & Sciences Faculty

Approved Minutes
Arts and Sciences Faculty Meeting
Thursday, November 15, 2007

Attendees A&S Faculty Meeting November 15, 2007

Barry Allen, Mark Anderson, Gabriel Barreneche, Pedro Bernal, Bill Boles, Rick Bommelje, Dexter Boniface, Sharon Carnahan, Julie Carrington, Roger Casey, Jennifer Cavenaugh, David Charles, Doug Child, Ed Cohen, Gloria Cook, Denise Cummings, Mario D'Amato, Creston David, Don Davison, Joan Davison, Kimberly Dennis, Rosana Diaz-Zambrana, Lewis Duncan, James Eck, Hoyt Edge, Marc Fetscherin, Rick Foglesong, Elise Friedland, Laurel Goj, Elton Graugnard, Yudit Greenberg, Eileen Gregory, Mike Gunter, Dana Hargrove, Fiona Harper, Paul Harris, Karen Hater, Scott Hewit, Alicia Homrich, Gordie Howell, Richard James, Peg Jarnigan, Jim Johnson, Jill Jones, Laurie Joyner, Steve Klemann, Philip Kozel, Harry Kypraios, Susan Lackman, Tom Lairson, Patricia Lancaster, Ed LeRoy, Barry Levis, Susan Libby, Lee Lines, Mike Lippman, Shannon Mariotti, Dorothy Mays, Margaret McLaren, Matilde Mesavage, Jonathan Miller, Bob Moore, Thom Moore, Ryan Musgrave, Steve Nelson, Rachel Newcomb, Marvin Newman, Kathryn Norsworthy, Socky O'Sullivan, Thomas Ouellette, Rhonda Ovist, Twila Papay, Bob Reinauer, Scott Rubarth, Emily Russell, Marc Sardy, Judy Schmalstig, Eric Schutz, Marie Shafe, John Sinclair, Jim Small, Eric Smaw, Bob Smither, Steven St John, Darren Stoub, Kathryn Sutherland, Bill Svitavsky, Rick Vitray, Anca Voicu, Debra Wellman, Gary Williams, Yusheng Yao, Eric Zivot, Sharon Agee, Sharon Carrier

I. Call to Order – Davison called the meeting to order at 12:40 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the October 23 Faculty meeting were approved as distributed.

III. Old Business—none

IV. New Business

A. Resolution to study a merit system – Vitray presented the following resolution to the faculty: The Executive Committee proposed that it create a task force to study the pros and cons of merit systems in schools similar to Rollins and suggest possible alternatives and report its results to the faculty in January. Davison said that it was probably the most significant issue to face the faculty in recent memory. He also has been stopped by a large number of faculty about the issue. He has found a vast array of cumulative memories about this issue and requested some time to present the background of this issue to the faculty. The Budget and Planning Committee has been meeting throughout this fall. The committee also includes Vitray from the faculty. Vitray, Davison, and Joyner have pushed for a significant increase in compensation for the faculty. Comparison groups were examined. These comparisons showed that Rollins' salaries are well below national averages at all ranks. They also used CUPA data as well as our comparison group of institutions. By mid-October the committee had prepared budget assumptions to be presented to the board at its fall meeting. A major proposal was the re-evaluation of the spending rate on the endowment. The proposal also included a 5.75% increase in tuition and adjustments to the discount rate. The compensation pool would increase by 4%. A second pot of $470,000 would be designated for market adjustments for the faculty. Budget assumptions were in balance and were not dependent on increasing the spending rate of endowment. Duncan reported back to Budget and Planning about the trustees meeting. Board expressed concerned about the Spellings report that called for increased accountability in higher education. They also referred to the national discussion about spending rates on non-profit endowments. Schools and colleges have been exempt from the requirements of other non-profits, but trustees were concerned that higher education be accessibly to middle class. There is pressure to increase the spending rate to make education more affordable for middle class families. The Board expressed concerned about the sustainability of current tuition increases. They were receptive to increasing the spending rate and also receptive to market adjustments to faculty salaries but based on market, merit, and measure which Davison admitted that he did not fully understand. The trustees did not indicate how this was done. The board wants a better business model for running the college. The board also wants multiple-year budget models in February.

Newman was troubled by the notion of the trustees that we need to come up with a merit system to obtain salary increases that faculty have deserved for many years. He recalled the number of times that faculty agreed not take cost of living adjustments when the administration expressed concern about the financial stability of the college. For instance the faculty was told to worry about online teaching and two-year colleges becoming four-year colleges and the faculty agreed not to take a salary raise that year to keep costs down. Now that Rollins is number one, could it occur to trustees that we got that way because of the strengths of the faculty? The board should bring faculty salaries up to the level where we should be and then introduce a merit system of bonuses for extraordinary performance. The trustees need to be brought up to date. The faculty should not have the issue thrown back to them to solve. When he finished Newman received a sustained round of applause.

Lauer said that politically Newman had the correct response: that the board needs to do something first as usually happens in these circumstances. She asked what the word "measure" meant. Davison added a clarification that the normal cost of living raises would continue, but the second pot would be the additional.   Duncan stated that he is not committed to raising salaries to the median of aspirant college. Median must be considered as half the faculty will be above and half below. He wants a fair system to be implemented by the faculty. Under our current system of equal pay increases merit is connected to years of service which institutionalizes inequities. Rollins cannot hire faculty in some of our most important disciplines such as International Business and Economics. The trustees are not satisfied with that situation. Measure compares Rollins to a list of peer and aspirant colleges to determine the median salary but not all faculty are at that median. He does not just want to compare women faculty members with fifteen-years experience with those with twenty. He wants to have the faculty design and implement the system.

O'Sullivan liked what Newman said. He did not see the comments as hostile to the trustees but a means of educating them. He expressed concern about the pending spending rate of the endowment because it had been lowered from 5 to 4.5 % under the Bornstein administration. Bornstein had expressed concerns about being able to maintain increases in compensation. The spending rate has now dropped last year to 3%. He thought it unwise for the faculty to engage in civil wars over small amounts of money in compensation increases. If tripled, the spending rate would be using 1% of the endowment and would create an attractive amount for salary increases but that would not be possible under the current structure. When O'Sullivan engaged in SACS visitations, he noted that faculty there spent a tremendous amount of time navigating very complex assessment systems. He felt that a merit system is now "out of the barn."   We should investigate broadly, however, but also compare A&S salaries to the lowest paid Crummer faculty member. Ovist, in response to Duncan's observations, argued that her investigation of salaries had compared women with 20 years of experience with others with 20 years of comparable experience.

Duncan stated that the spending rate was now 3.5% and also that much of endowment is restricted. Schmalstig agreed with Ovist that we need to bring faculty salaries to the median of peer institutions, but not all individuals would be at the median. Jones thought this process misses a step and did not think that the merit horse is out of the barn. Faculty should receive a fair compensation first and these funds should not be put into bonuses. We first need to achieve the median in order to bring the faculty up to a decent standard. Boniface said that his initial reaction to the trustees' demands was to feel insulted, but he was worried about what the result would be if the faculty voted down the resolution. He supports the notion of merit and was concerned that the faculty might not get a role in determining the means of allocation or that it might not be allocated at all. McLaren was not opposed to merit, but several issues have to be disentangled first. Market and merit are not the same proposal. If market is taken into consideration in Economics and International Business, it would undermine the equality of culture at this institution.   Noting that she was expressing ideas from Tom Cook, who could

not attend the meeting, a merit system would undermine the community, but she personally did not necessarily think it would be that bad but merit and market should not be tied in the same package. Lairson also thought merit pay has virtue but wondered what the value of a merit system would be. What does the institution gain from the change and what are the costs?
Faculty salaries are not remotely close to our peer group. Salaries are probably $10,000 below those institutions. If that is the case, why are we not dealing with that problem first and looking at merit later. He reckoned that salaries increases have been at or below of the cost of living. There has been a history of poor increasing over a long period of time. How long is it going to take to reach the level of our peer institutions.

Duncan presented data that he said showed that Lairson's figures were incorrect in two out of three cases. There was a $3,000 difference in salaries at Assistant Professor at peer institutions and $7,400 with aspirant institutions; $100 for Associate Professors with peer institutions, $1,400 with aspirants; and $6,000 for Professors at peer institutions and $16, 400 with aspirants. Casey argued that Rollins faces complex issues of market supply and demand. Rollins will have to succumb to market forces because we will not be able to hire into certain departments. We want to be able to supply data to the faculty that actually makes exact comparison of faculty salaries. We do not know what those numbers will look like yet. Trustees are tying to understand our business of higher education, and they want to understand it. Trustees are proud of our work. They are making a good faith effort to do something. They are trying to be fiduciary stewards of the college. Furman has a remarkable system of peer driven merit system. He does not believe that we currently have an equitable system. We need to look at a faculty member's W-2 form. The faculty is paid more for the amount work rather than how good the work is. That model favors older faculty, and he has received numerous complaints from younger faculty. Also we have a merit system through Cornell awards, travel grants, and endowed chairs. So we already have a system in place to recognize merit. Foglesong asked if trustees would only provide funds if a merit system was in place. Duncan stated that the 4% increase is in place, but there would be additional money available that would be used elsewhere if not based on some merit system. Trustees have not made a mandate, but to go back to trustees with a report that the faculty turned down their request for a merit system might convince the trustees not to provide the additional funds. Kypraios said that it was a morale issue and he suggested lumping both pots together this year to bring faculty up to appropriate salary levels and then work on a system of merit. He thought the task force should look not only at other institutions but also into our own situation as well. What is it that we really want to be doing here? Joan Davison suggested that Rollins get rid of all releases and current subsidies and then all faculty could have a 3-2 teaching load. That would allow us to start over but starting at level ground. The merit debate would be negative and disruptive to our spirit of community. The faculty had forgone raises to provide funds for raises to the staff. We also avoided program closure, but in these instances the faculty acted as a community and these programs were not closed. Crummer has never been part of the community; nevertheless their faculty received a bonus when President Bornstein had given A&S faculty one at Christmas for accommodating a large increase in the number of entering undergraduates. The adjustment to salaries needs to be long-term project. Joyner expressed concerned about national trends and where the extra money should go. She was also worried about not being able to hire in certain programs. We could establish a merit system that reflects our values. It does not have to be that complex. We should not leave that money on the table. Jones asked for clarification about what we are voting on and Davison repeated the motion about the Task Force. Norsworthy argued that the entire salary pool should be used for increases to bring Rollins salaries up to comparable levels with our peer institutions and only after Rollins had reached that level should we begin discussions of a merit system.

The question was called and the motion passed.

V. Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Levis
Secretary