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## Minutes, Arts & Sciences Finance and Service Committee Meeting, Thursday, February 9, 2012

Arts & Sciences Finance and Service Committee

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Minutes of the February 9, 2012, Finance and Service Committee.

Attending: Joe Siry, Twila Papay, Cynthia Snyder, Lila Martin, Laurel Goj, Anna Alon, Meredith Hein (proxy for Micki Meyer), Diane Willingham, Bob Moore, Pat Schoknecht (guest)

The meeting began at 12:30

### New Business

The committee will attempt to move quickly on the issue merit pay and in particular prepare a format for the faculty colloquium on February 14. By February 24 or 25, we should know whether or not there will be a pool of funds for merit pay next year.

Reviewing the results from the Zoomerang survey on merit pay, it was observed that the response rate was good, with 92 responding. Pat Schoknecht recommended disregarding the comments since in the field of survey analysis, it is noted that comments come from those most emphatic in their opinions. Those with less emotional investment are less likely to comment.

The question, "Do you support merit in any form?" Resulted in an even split, 42 in favor, 42 opposed, several offering no opinion.

It was suggested that the question was not entirely clear. I.e., there may be some who might support merit pay in some form, but not as it now is implemented among A&S faculty.

It was noted that among the respondents are visitors and lecturers who are not long-term faculty responding. Joe Siry recommended deleting the names of any respondents who had identified themselves before presenting results to the faculty at large, and on this point the committee agreed.

It was suggested that more comments came from those viewing merit pay negatively because these are the ones who feel imposed upon. Those not objecting to the merit pay mandate may have been less motivated to comment.

Discussion of the evaluation of staff ensued. There appears to be some widely believed misinformation, for example, many who are not staff apparently believe that staff received across-the-board raises without merit consideration. This is not true, though, according to Pat Schoknecht, only 7 of 27 staff departments calculated merit raises instead of applying equal, across-the-board raises. It was suggested that in some small departments merit may have been calculated, but the results ended up disbursing equal merit raises to all members of those departments.

Among non-faculty there is a mistaken notion that in 2009-2010 staff did not receive raises but faculty did.

It was suggested that at the opening of the Feb. 14 colloquium a representative of HR might be invited to come and clear up these misconceptions. After discussion it was agreed that a more

efficient approach would be for the F&S Chair to forward the clarifying information from HR in a few very brief remarks at the opening of the Feb. 14 meeting.

Among the staff, in some departments, there are multiple levels of merit compensation, not just two or three. In some departments 360 degree systems ensure that both top-down and bottom-up evaluations are implemented. This is another point about which faculty should be informed.

It was said that despite complaints about merit pay, comments about morale as a consequence of the merit system are subjective and difficult to evaluate.

Transparency is important in any evaluative system.

End game of meeting/?

The Feb. 14 colloquium will give participants an opportunity to voice their opinions. Ultimately, the system recommended by F&S will be based on faculty input, and the colloquium should provide an avenue for such input, supplementary to the survey. The survey results will be made available as reference material for faculty participants before the colloquium. Laurel Goj will organize the results so as to make them more readable.

The meeting will begin with a brief overview, including clarifying comments to dispel misinformation referred to earlier about staff and faculty compensation. Then those points on which the survey indicated a strong consensus exists can be identified and set aside. The focus for the bulk of the colloquium will be those issues for which the survey highlighted no obvious consensus position.

Xx

The main issues requiring further consensus are:

- Should there be two or three categories of merit?
- How will the evaluations be done and who will do the evaluations? Most respondents favored either the dean or department chairs, though with no strong preference between these two. Also not clear was a preference for a 750-word document or some other source of data. What part does the FSAR play?
- The possibility of using an escrow system to enable those not receiving merit to make up for their setback without having to wait for an extended period, particularly in the event that merit not be granted at all in a year following such a setback for any given individual.

Twila Papay suggested that in order to encourage views from both sides of the issue, at the beginning of the discussion one individual from each side, pro and con, be invited to make an opening statement. This, it is hoped, will prevent one position from dominating the discussion to where opposition voices are marginalized or intimidated.

Efforts will be made to ensure that as many voices as possible be heard

It is hoped that the colloquium will clarify some issues and help identify consensus on issues where faculty opinion is not now evident.

There is some hope that the merit pay due to faculty and staff will help offset the increase in charge for insurance that is coming next year. Of course, this offsetting will not apply to those who do not receive merit pay. As of now, the Board of Trustees has not made a decision on how much tuition will be raised next year, nor what percent increase will be available for merit raises.

It would be useful to know how many faculty applied for merit through the recent process offered by Dean Smither, and how many of those received it.

The next F&S meeting (March 13) will be about finalizing the system based on the survey and colloquium input from the faculty. The F&S recommendation should be forwarded to the Executive Committee so that they can present it to the faculty at least one week before the April Faculty meeting, so that it can be voted on then.

The meeting adjourned at 1:55