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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee Meeting, Tuesday, September 18, 2012

Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee

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PSC Minutes: September 18, 2012

Present: : Joan Davison, Carlee Hoffmann; Bob Smither; Julian Chambliss; Gay Biery-Hamilton; Julia Foster; Ted Gournelos; Alexander Boguslawski; Kathryn Patterson Sutherland; Robert Vander Poppen

1. Passed the minutes from our last meeting on September 4, 2012.
2. Conducted old business.

First, we discussed the **Student-Faculty Collaboration Research grants**. We need to find out whether or not Steve Nielson is in charge of the Holt as well as the CPS grants. It was noted that the Holt grants had easier-to-read guidelines, and that perhaps we'd like to see those and also invite Steve to one of our meetings to discuss what they do. We need to find out if the money for these grants for all colleges comes from the same source. We believe that only two Holt students are funded so the source and amount of money may not be a problem. Toward the end of our meeting, we discussed the following, again: 1) the redundancy on the lengthy forms we have now; 2) problems with understanding different disciplines, 3) whether or not we can and should ask to see student transcripts as part of the evaluation process, and 4) having students write about how this research would benefit them.

Second, we discussed the **course evaluations** and whether or not CPS should be separated from A&S. After a good discussion, we tentatively decided that perhaps we might develop a form that separates questions for the **course** from those of **teaching** (with a focus on the instructor) on our A&S student evaluations. Doing so might alleviate a potential gap between CPS and A&S scores, which might result in negative consequences for A&S faculty with promotions, tenure and merit pay.

We also discussed throwing out some problematic questions on these course evaluations, including the ones about whether or not students observe someone else cheating, or whether or not the professor treated any students in a biased manner. The discussion got around to whether or not students were even qualified to evaluate us, and Carol Lauer's study that found a significant discrepancy between faculty and student understandings of the questions was noted.

One other idea was to provide peer evaluation in order to get better feedback on teaching, and someone pointed out that while we had an interesting program that was begun at Rollins in the past, it was not funded, so we couldn't move forward with that plan, at that time.

We decided to report to the faculty at large that we would begin to work on revising our evaluation system, which would include separating student

evaluations of the instructor from that of the course. We will obtain student input about question development, as a part of this process, so that our evaluations will more accurately reflect their perspectives and understandings of the course and professor.

3. New Business:

First, one question that was brought up, was whether or not the **FSAR** should be used as a basis for annual review. The logic here was to cut down on the amount of seemingly repetitious writing non-tenured and visiting faculty have to do by eliminating the annual reviews. The FSAR satisfies SAC's requirements that faculty be evaluated every year. However, some of us thought that it is important for young faculty to develop the practice of writing and a history of thoughtful reflection about their teaching and research plans, so that they can develop better mid-term letters. Thus, with a mind to both points, we asked whether or not a reflection section should be put back on the FSAR.

We also mentioned that several changes might be made to the FSAR, including: 1) Add "General Education" courses to the section asking whether people have taught Honors, RCC, or RP courses. 2) Put "Comments about Teaching" below the "Course Assignments," once again, so that any comments are immediately seen below the courses to better facilitate the evaluation. 3) Add a "Comment" section to Advising/Mentoring, so that faculty can explain their load, or what they do. 4) Add a section that asks faculty if they've applied for external grants, and have not heard whether they've received one, yet. The wording might be "external grants applied for, but not awarded." The reasoning behind this addition is that faculty can spend a lot of time and effort on applying for outside grants, and their effort should be considered. 5) Update the year.

Second, some departments have clear guidelines in their **annual-review process**, while others do not, which make it difficult for FEC to compare individuals across disciplines. Departments must submit their criteria for evaluating candidates for tenure and promotion before they search for new faculty. We opened the question as to whether or not we should develop clearer, more standardized guidelines for annual evaluations.

Third, we passed a bylaw change about faculty appointments (see Appendix). This bylaw change would inhibit administrators from appointing faculty to departments without their agreement. We passed this because we need a formal resolution from PSC to take it back to EC.

Our next meeting is on October 2, 2012, during which we will probably begin to evaluate the proposals of faculty who plan to go on sabbatical in 2013. The proposals will be evaluated like last year, where PSC members evaluated them separately in a first round, and then discussed them, in a second round. We

discussed the idea to invite a CPS faculty member to be a part of this evaluation process.

Appendix

PSC Resolution: Faculty Appointments

Resolved, to change the wording of A&S bylaw Article VIII, Section 1, "The Dean shall not recommend the appointment of anyone of whom a majority of the tenured and tenure-track members of the appointee's department or program disapproves. If a new appointment must be made when a majority of the members of the department or program cannot be consulted, the Dean may recommend no more than a one-year visiting appointment." The new wording of the bylaw will state: "The Dean shall not recommend the appointment of anyone of whom a majority of the tenured and tenure-track members of the appointee's department do not approve."

Rationale: The A&S faculty takes seriously its responsibility to approve new and continuing tenure track and visiting members of its academic departments. Yet although the current intent (as well as other sections of the bylaws which discuss departmental search committees) signals a departmental authority, the administration has overlooked the process at least three times in the past five years with complicating results for the departments and faculty hires (appointees) involved. The change of wording from a "majority ... disapproves" to a "majority...approve" clarifies that an administrator cannot simply appoint a new person to a department and hope the department does not object. Now the administration must seek approval prior to the appointment.

Furthermore, the new language drops reference to appointment to programs. The A&S faculty discussed the question of appointment to programs a few years ago, and the faculty soundly defeated the proposal. Further the A&S bylaws elsewhere specify appointment to a single department.

Finally, the bylaws drop mention of the exception. It is difficult to conceive of a need for such exceptions, particularly given the current availability of email. As stated, when such recent "exceptions" occurred, complications developed for the departments and some hires involved. This resolution reiterates the desirability of following the proscribed procedures for appointments to departments with active departmental searches and approval.