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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee Meeting, Tuesday, September 28, 2010

Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee

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PSC Meeting
Minutes: September 28, 2010

Attendance:

- Members: Claire Strom, Dorothy Mays, Steven St. John, David Charles, Richard James, Emily Russell, Joshua Almond, Carlee Hoffman and Marc Fetscherin
- Dean of Faculty Representative: Dean Deb Wellman
- Guests: (Second half of the meeting) – Paul Harris, Judy Schmalstig, Jill Jones, and Susan Libby

Meeting Convened: 7:31

Announcements:

- Approval of last week's minutes. Emily motioned; Richard seconded. Minutes approved.
- Approval of April 22 minutes. Emily motioned; Josh seconded. Minutes approved
- Sub Committee on Teaching
 - Claire gave update on members who have agreed to serve: Judy Schmalstig, Hoyt Edge, Paul Harris, James Zimmerman, Susan Libby, Dorothy Mays, and Jill Jones. Lee Lines declined citing workload conflicts.
 - These individuals will join us for 2nd half of meeting.

Old Business:

- Tenure and Promotion Timeline.
 - Emily – Did we ever clarify the proposed changes to the guidelines that we recommended for FEC?
 - Claire – Those never went to EC. She will be taking them to the EC next week. She added midcourse and post-tenure dates to the tenure and promotion timeline.
 - Deb expressed concern over Aug 15 date for Dean's office. It used to be May or June 15 but that seemed unfair for both the outside evaluators and the candidates.
 - Josh - What about splitting the difference and setting a July 15 date?
 - Marc - The date is inconsistent and perhaps confusing because the letter from an outside evaluator is part of the total material package. They should all be submitted at once.
 - David - Is it possible that there may be issues raised in the letter from an outside evaluator that a candidate might want to address?
 - Claire – Yes. That issue has come up and that's why it is recommended that the outside evaluator's letter go to the chair of the department a few weeks prior to July 15 date.
 - Deb- I see where Marc is going, though. Why not let the candidate decide – or even better, the chair?
 - Claire- I agree with Marc and Deb: Let's take out the outside evaluator date and let the department or CEC chair decide.

- Emily - Why do we need 2 wks between the candidate notifying the dean's office of their intent and then the dean notifying the department?
- Deb – The Dean's Office needs that amount of time to review the materials and coordinate the schedules [of candidate reviews].
- Richard – Oct 1 might be a tough date to meet. The beginning of the semester is so busy. I think it may be too much to expect all the letters due at once so early.
- Claire – It's currently so complicated for the candidates, as there are multiple dates to keep track of. The idea behind condensing the dates into one is intended to help clarify [the schedule].
- Marc – The deadline could be set for all and then the committee could decide how to adjust the work load accordingly. Have them due all at once. Make it easier and clearer.
- Richard – I still think there is an issue with the Oct 1 date.
- Claire- Can we move it back? The board needs time to review all the materials. I was working backwards from their February meeting date.
- Deb – There's just not enough time.
- Marc – It seems as though we are only talking about adjusting it by two weeks. There's currently only about two weeks of room between the tenure due date and the promotion due date. Is that really all that significant of an adjustment?
- Richard – It seems like the current system balances the load on the FEC and the Dean by staggering the submission dates. It might overwhelm the system if all the materials from all the candidates were due at once.
- Deb- Exactly. There's just too much to do at once. The FEC needs [the Dean's] letters asap but it takes a significant amount of time to review each candidate. A candidate's letter takes about 12 hours to write.
- Josh- We want to be careful about the bureaucracy. The system is intended to facilitate the process. In deference to our colleagues (and ourselves), we want the committee and the Dean to make thoughtful decisions on the candidates being reviewed. If we overwhelm them, we run the risk of diluting the effectiveness of the process, resulting in the candidate's materials getting a rubber stamp of approval or, worse, being unfairly condemned.
- Emily – It would be helpful to have a side-by-side comparison of dates and of what happens during the process to help those of us who are not involved and have no real idea of how it works.
- Deb- I'll prep one for next meeting
- David moved to table the discussion until next meeting. Josh seconded.
Dates tabled

New Business:

- Comm on Teach
 - Paul Harris, Jill Jones, Judy Schmalstig, Susan Libby, Dorothy Mays, James Zimmerman, and Hoyt Edge have agreed to serve on the sub-committee.
 - Paul – What do we want as end product?
 - Claire - A rubric for 360 degree evaluation and a plan for implementation. One thing that came up last year that we likes was doing a full evaluation

every 3 years, but that has problems with the merit pay review schedule [that occurs annually].

- Paul – I presume we are not doing this for merit but, instead, are doing it to improve the quality of our teaching?
- Marc – Yes. It is important to decouple those issues. It's definitely about teaching. Part of it is clarity and part of it is implementation. What we discussed is that many departments do not implement the procedure in the same way to the same degree. So part of it may be that the structure does not exist but also that it is not being used. Erich [Blossey] put together a chart of the possible structure and, as you can see, we already do some of these things.
- Claire – It would also be good to get the institution on a regular rotation. Now we only do when people are going up for midcourse or tenure & promotion.
- Deb – Post tenure review does not require full teach evaluation.
- Paul – It's more of a reflective process and is not formalized.
- Marc – We've got a lot of these things in place already but there are just a few things missing.
- Jill – Was this due to merit pay?
- Josh – It was not due to merit pay but merit pay certainly served as a stressor on the system, demonstrating deficiencies that might have otherwise been overlooked or ignored.
- Susan – It should also be noted that previous PSC committees also recognized the problem and had begun to investigate possible solutions before merit pay was instituted.
- Paul – I felt a bit like Oppenheimer when developing the evaluation system because there were concerns that it could be used against us and that's how it felt the first time it was used out of the gate. I am deeply opposed to merit pay. I don't think it has a place at an institution like Rollins.
- Marc – We're not looking for a different system, just a compliment [to the one we have]. We just take our system and add some things to it, providing clarity and structure.
- Dorothy - Looking at the evaluation of teaching rubric, aren't we going to be in same boat [with teaching as we are with the tenure and merit pay reviews] where one evaluation doesn't necessarily apply to all disciplines?
- Paul – As I understand it, we're not developing a rubric for teach evaluations but rather developing a rubric for the process, correct? If you want the former, then that's too much work in too little time.
- E – Right. We just want the process not necessarily the criteria.
- Judy – Do you want us to develop a system that considers adjuncts? How about Holt school?
- Deb – Absolutely. I'd also like to look at annual evaluations. They seem particularly onerous for junior faculty. Maybe we require a very simple rubric to streamline the process.
- Judy – What about tying evaluation to learning outcomes. Where are we in regards to learning outcomes?
- Susan – A universal process is good but a uniform rubric for all teaching would not be applicable or fair.

- Josh – I think we need to make sure we do not conflate discipline-specific knowledge and pedagogical approaches with the characteristics and expectations that make for effective teaching. It would seem that we can come up with basic, shared qualities that define quality teaching across the college.
- Deb – There was an interesting article in the Chronicle of Higher Education about a school that developed a student evaluation committee. It proved quite successful. You may want to take a look at that.
- Carlee – The feeling among students is that [the current student] evaluation does not accurately reflect how students actually feel.
- Emily- Do students have the feeling that the evaluations they fill out really impact?
- Carlee – No, the general sense is that they don't really matter.
- Paul- Most students don't know the difference. They need to be educated on the process and the significance of the evaluations
- Claire – Ideally that education should not be done by the professor in class but rather should be outside third party.
- Claire – Carol Lauer has done work relevant to this topic and is ready to help. Lee Lines is also willing to offer help to the committee.

Adjourn Meeting: 8:30am