

Rollins College

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Faculty Affairs Committee Minutes

College of Liberal Arts Minutes and Reports

2-4-2020

Minutes, Faculty Affairs Committee Meeting, Tuesday, February 4, 2020

Faculty Affairs Committee

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Faculty Affairs Committee
February 4, 2020
CSS 167
12:30 – 1:45
Approved

Members in Attendance:

Don Davidson, Chairperson 2019-2021
Ben Hudson, 2018 – 2020, Humanities Rep 2018-2020
Ashley Cannaday, At-Large Rep 2019-2021
Don Davidson, At-Large Rep, 2019-2021
Leslie Poole, At-Large Rep, 2019-2021
David Caban, Business Rep, 2019-2021
John Grau, Expressive Arts Rep, 2018-2020
Leigh DeLorenzi, Social Sciences-Applied Rep, 2019-2020
Samuel Sanabria, At-Large Rep, 2019-2021
Absent due to scheduling conflict: Rachelle Yankelevitz, Science Division Rep, 2019-2021
Secretary: Leigh DeLorenzi, Social Sciences-Applied Rep, 2019-2020

Endowed Chairs in Attendance:

Dean Jennifer Cavanaugh – Winifred M. Warden Chair of Theatre Arts and Dance
Margaret A. McLaren – George D. and Harriet W. Cornell Chair of Philosophy
Dexter Boniface – Weddell Chair of the Americas
Lisa Tillmann – William R. Kenan, Jr., Chair
Kathryn Norsworthy – George D. and Harriet W. Cornell Chair of Liberal Arts
Marc Fetscherin -- Gelbman Family Endowed Chair of International Business
Socky O'Sullivan – Kenneth Curry Chair of Literature
Rachel Newcomb -- Diane and Michael Maher Chair of Distinguished Teaching
Tania Warnecke – George D. and Harriet W. Cornell Chair of Entrepreneurship
Bill Boles -- Hugh F. and Jeannette G. McKean Chair
Yudit Greenberg – George D. and Harriet W. Cornell Chair of Religion
Richard Vitray -- Archibald Granville Bush Chair of Mathematics

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of minutes from January 21, 2020 (attached)
 - a. Approved
- III. New Business
 - a. Endowed Chair Policy (Attachments Below)
 - i. Don poses three questions to consider for today's meeting:
 1. What is meant by transparency?
 2. What do the Rollins faculty want in an Endowed Chair policy?
 3. How do we get more clarity on differences of opinions for how to address issues of access and equity (e.g., rotating chairs, how to categorize Cornell Chairs)?

- ii. The following section outlines a summary of the main points communicated in chronological order by Endowed Chairs in attendance.
1. **Margaret McLaren:** Endowed Chairs gathered to formulate primary principles, which highlights the need for clear criteria, fairness, and transparency in the application and selection process for Endowed Chairs. We agree that we need one universal, overarching Endowed Chair policy that applies to all Endowed Chairs. We are in favor of a process that is transparent and that upholds high standards of rigor in the application and selection process for Endowed Chairs.
 2. **Marc Fetscherin:** Faculty need to be educated about the rank of Endowed Chair based on research and established best practices followed by peer and aspirational institutions. The FAC policy drafted last year was inconsistent with the published handbook and bylaws. Specifically, the handbook and bylaw list the rank of Full Professor as necessary for Endowed Chairs eligibility, but the FAC draft policy states that “all tenured faculty are eligible and can apply.” FAC should revise the policy in order to make it consistent with the bylaws, handbook, and the broader community of academia.
 3. **Dexter Boniface:** We need to be cautious that our level of specificity in these criteria do not prevent the institution to recruiting and retaining faculty, especially diverse faculty. Rather than specify the necessary rank as Full, perhaps we should keep it more open and be flexible.
 4. **Socky O'Sullivan:** Sometimes there will be exceptions to awarding an Endowed Chair to someone without rank of Full Professor. However, within the college, Endowed Chairs should demonstrate a clear and consistent pattern of excellence beyond what is expected for Full Professors in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service, and that this is why Endowed Chairs are normally Full Professors.
 5. **Don Davison:** Transparency means, “the rules of the game are known.” Criteria should be known and published, appropriate for the institution, and not necessarily overly rigid. These criteria should be used to govern the process of selection and evaluation of Endowed Chairs. There should also be room for reasoned flexibility.
 6. **Dean Cavanaugh:** Asks colleagues for ideas the level of specificity needed (e.g., should Endowed Chair criteria be as specific as tenure and promotion criteria?)
 7. **Richard Vitray:** Who should decide whether the criteria for retaining an Endowed Chair are being met?
 8. **Bill Boles:** Too much specificity in an overarching policy can create issues across different disciplines. The right amount of specificity will still allow room for a candidate to make a case.

9. **Dean Cavanaugh:** Are there some criteria, across disciplines, that we can agree on? For example, perhaps defining excellence in teaching can be more specific?
10. **Margaret McLaren:** In some ways I think making it through promotion assumes excellence in teaching, but beyond excellent teaching is scholarship. We need to go beyond the expectations of Full Professors in all three areas, in combination with external letters of endorsement. Some peer institutions require between 5 and 8 external letters for an Endowed Chair.
11. **Lisa Tillmann** – When looking at service requirements for Endowed Chairs, we should be careful not to disincentivize or penalize distinguished faculty from participating by requiring a tremendous service responsibility.
12. **Kathryn Norsworthy**– Specificity is needed, but not as specific as the tenure and promotion criteria. They need to show evidence of exceeding the criteria for Full Professor in those three areas, and candidates could make a case with external letters as well.
13. **Socky O'Sullivan:** In some ways this process has been frustrating, because I'm still unclear of what the problem was that needed to be fixed. This whole process started when Rita Bornstein instituted a review of an Endowed Chair that was not fulfilling responsibilities, and she had a very difficult time removing that Chair. I agree that there is a need for transparency, but I've heard ideas that are concerning, such as instituting a vote, which could turn into a popularity competition. Additionally, I'm not sure an external reviewer would be able to comment on all that I'm doing for Rollins outside of my scholarship. I have been excited to receive my notification of renewal every five years until this past Summer, when the notification told me I had 2 years, after which time I may lose it. The tone felt like a threat, that it would be taken away if we didn't live up to it. Endowed Chairs should be an opportunity to provide incentives for the faculty. After reaching Full Professor, there is not always incentive to stay engaged. I would hate to see us change our policy in such a way that would make us an outlier from our peer and aspirational institutions.
14. **Marc Fetscherin:** When we look at the Cornell Distinguished Faculty, the spirit of this was to incentivize faculty. It can be problematic if we were to give someone an Endowed Chair if they haven't reached Full Professor. What would happen if they were rejected at some point during their evaluation for Full Professor? I fear there could be legal issues. The wording should be carefully considered as it relates to eligibility for an Endowed Chair. This should be a fair and objective process where eligible candidates are exceeding their department's criteria, not a policy that could be potentially misused. (e.g., refers to

events that happened during previous administrations where administrators had too much power in related matters.)

15. **Don Davison:** I appreciate the difficulty of applying criteria over various disciplines. Could it be that one option would be to have the departmental criteria become the template for an Endowed Chair, but in order to be considered for an Endowed Chair, a candidate needs to go beyond those criteria?
16. **Lisa Tillmann:** Yes, and we have been discussing recently in FEC how there are vastly different requirements for scholarly articles across disciplines, so we have to be careful not to create something that would inadvertently encourage departments to lower their standards for promotion.
17. **Samuel Sanabria:** Conversely, then, would it be possible to have a collegewide set of criteria that serve as the foundation, and then the Department could come in and add additional/specific criteria so it has a high standard for rigor and also considers the specific discipline?
18. **Bill Boles:** FEC asks Endowed Chairs if they should be evaluated at a much higher standard.
19. **Lisa Tillmann:** Additionally, Endowed Chairs get a course release, so therefore there should be high standards.
20. **Don Davison:** So to summarize, we need a clear criteria, but it is challenging for how to properly operationalize them.
21. **Lisa Tillmann:** I think it was a huge step forward to see language that faculty would be able to nominate and self-nominate in all cases. I feel confident I would not be an Endowed Chair if it wasn't an open application process. Previously, these were unilateral decisions. Being able to put one's own work forward is important. One question I have is why haven't we been given an open application process for major awards?
22. **Tania Warnecke:** She discusses her early career aspirations and what it meant to her personally to receive an Endowed Chair. There should be equity across Endowed Chair positions. I am in favor of creating opportunities for younger faculty, and I believe there are multiple ways for providing opportunities. It becomes difficult when we attempt to tackle multiple issues within one policy. It has been demoralizing for me since getting an Endowed Chair to hear the narrative shift (e.g., possibly losing an Endowed Chair?)
23. **Ben Hudson:** I agree that it would be useful to separate these multiple issues. I also agree that there is a need for transparency in the process. I also feel it is my duty as a member of FAC to be responsive to the straw polls that were conducted in faculty meeting that showed over 70 percent of faculty in favor of these changes.

24. **Kathryn Norsworthy** – (In response to Ben’s previous comment). It would have been helpful to have more education across faculty on the matter, I think the poll was taken before faculty had an opportunity to fully grasp the complexity of the issue. I was at all the meetings leading up to that vote, and even I didn’t know much about it until I did research on my own through lots of conversations with others. In some ways, our process during faculty meetings (e.g., Robert’s Rules) inhibits free discussion. I also believe that the issue of equity and access got mistranslated into “there needs to be a rotation.” I think there are different ways to operationalize equity to open up the process. This is more of a rank than it is an award, and just like other ranks, everybody has access to promotion. One concern I want to mention are the ways in which having a rotating Endowed Chair fuels a culture of faculty competition. It might even be publicly humiliating to have an Endowed Chair removed if they lose their Chair in competition with another faculty member. I think it’s okay to have a rotating chair for the Cornell Distinguished Faculty. There are roughly the same benefits as an Endowed Chair, and it’s open to all ranks, which is a good place to start. I wish that part of this conversation was the need for administration to raise money and properly fund these Endowed Chair positions. When we as a faculty take this on fully, I notice we aren’t balancing it with having administrators do their part. To me, that voice needs to be as loud or louder as this conversation continues.
25. **Socky O’Sullivan**: The way we formulate an issue often determines the outcome. I heard the Provost make a case for rotating Chairs, and I believe this was the result of a misunderstanding. If Rollins moves to a system of having 2-year terms for Endowed Chairs, after which time they lose their Chair, other institutions will assume that the loss of the Endowed Chair was because the candidate was not doing the work. I believe we should be following established best practices. I also don’t think we should require people to apply. I know of several modest colleagues who would not apply themselves, and allowing them to be nominated by their peers allows the President to learn about them.
26. **Dexter Boniface**: I favor a more open-ended understanding of Endowed Chairs, because the Chairs all have a different focus. We should be framing Endowed Chairs as a strategic priority on campus. I am not opposed to rotating Chairs in principle. However, I believe this should occur with the opening of new Endowed Chair positions, where the rotation is announced up front before application. I am in favor of that over revoking a Chair from someone currently serving. I would also like to request that FAC not overly “beaurocratize” the process – please consider Principle 5 (e.g., referring to the “Simplicity” principle). We are all over-evaluated, and I don’t want Endowed Chairs to be another

beaurocratized process where we have to spend a large amount of time proving that we are working hard enough to deserve it.

27. **Marc Fetscherin:** Is it equitable to put time stamp on an Endowed Chair (i.e., make it rotating)? I say no. I have not seen an excellent aspirational institution that adopted a rotating chair. Endowed Chairs are a title and a rank, not just an award. Why not ask administration for assistance? If Rollins wants rotating Endowed Chairs, we should separate the policies from the existing Chairs and create of new ones. Rotating means you rotate through and then you're out. That's not an Endowed Chair, we should be calling it something else.
28. **Margaret McLaren:** The policy created last year invited divisiveness. For example, of course faculty are going to be in favor of voting for something that increases their resources. I believe there should be criteria that are clear, objective, and evenly applied - but the rotating piece made this issue divisive.
29. **Kathryn Norsworthy** – It reminds me of the time when we were told we either vote for our own merit pay, or we would never get a raise again. Of course the majority of faculty voted for it.
30. **Margaret McLaren:** FAC needs to frame the issue properly, and not turn it into an issue of access/equity/need for rotation.

IV. Salary subcommittee to meet with Provost and Director of Institutional Analytics to discuss the Faculty Compensation Policy

- a. There is a race and gender equity committee currently examining faculty compensation. Don requested volunteers for an FAC subcommittee to meet with Provost and Director of Institutional Analytics to discuss this. Samuel Sanabria, David Caban, and Ashley Cannaday volunteer to serve on this subcommittee.

V. Status of CIE White Paper

- a. Based on feedback from Rachelle and Jon, some footnotes need to be fixed. We also need to include a section that discusses the Rollins data on bias in teaching evaluations. After these are addressed, we need to come up with recommendations.

VI. Adjourn