

Faculty Issues Committee Meeting, Oct. 20, 2011

Absent: Kevin Ayers, Teresa O'Bannon, Mary LaLone

All other members were present.

Three guests: FS President Rick Roth, Provost Sam Minner, and CFO Bill Alvarez.

The meeting began at 3:30. Minutes from the Oct. 6 meeting were approved. Dr. Gainer had prepared a schedule for the remainder of the semester, indicating that there are two back-to-back meetings of the full Senate in the next two weeks. Our next meeting as a committee will not be until Nov. 10 unless we determine that a Tuesday meeting is necessary in the interim. She also indicated that she had contacted Joey Sword about attending a meeting but had not yet received a response.

At this time, the Provost and CFO arrived and discussion of the committee's first objective, related to the use of additional faculty funds should they become available, began. The discussion focused initially on the goal of bringing Virginia faculty to the 60th percentile of all faculty salaries and the related goal of what actions should be taken with respect to people who are below the tenth percentile. One question raised was "who" is below the 10th, are all people in that category equally deserving of raises, and what criteria should be used for determining who is deserving. It was then observed that focusing on this group, as egregious as their position is, overlooks everyone else and no one has received a raise in 4 years. Minner and Alvarez reported that SCHEV had determined that to get all universities in VA to the 60th percentile would require 150 million dollars. For RU, this goal would be equal to a tuition increase of 18 percent or 5.8 million dollars. They noted that SCHEV is considering making a recommendation of a 2% increase in VA teaching salaries for each year of the 2012-14 biennium to help with faculty recruitment and retention. They are also considering the possibility of giving approval to the use of university funding for an additional 2% increase in the same period. These decisions will be made next week. (I have the page that was passed around with the SCHEV recommendations on it, should anyone want to see it.) The guest speakers then noted that regardless of SCHEV's recommendation, it was highly unlikely that the legislature will be interested in giving raises to higher education at a time when there are other financial priorities. Minner pointed out that this was a time to challenge and energize the General Assembly to take action on SCHEV recommendations (should they come forth) and that everyone needs to be contacting members of the GA. It was suggested that faculty should have a plan for the use of funds, even if the chances of receiving them are low. Someone asked why should we differentiate among faculty if the amount received is low? Minner noted that this sentiment had been widely expressed by faculty to whom he's spoken. He also suggested that despite the impermanence of bonuses, they should not be discounted as short-term strategies. The final opinion expressed was that if there isn't another downturn, resources will improve after next year. Before ending, Dr. Chase made the suggestion of using the present time as an opportunity for education about these issues – he observed that many faculty across campus do not understand CUPA, percentiles, CHED, etc. (Recorder's note: I may have these acronyms incorrect because I'm guilty of the previous observation. RB)

Following departure of our visitors, Dr. Gainer informed us that she had invited Deborah Templeton to the Nov. 10 meeting as a follow-up to this discussion. We then turned to the motions prepared by the sub-committee charged with addressing objectives 2 and 3. The first motion, regarding a handbook change "to require the development of written criteria" in the evaluation of faculty, was presented in conjunction with the second motion, calling for a change in the reporting period used in preparation of FARs. The second motion generate some discussion of the impact of the change in dates and the question of whether it would affect perceptions of the relationship of a raise (when they are given) to the period under assessment. Other than a brief discussion of the issue of rubrics, there was little discussion of the first motion other than the friendly amendment to change "should" in line three of the

proposed change to “shall.” It was then suggested that the timetable motion should be brought to department chairs for their feedback and considered separately from motion 1. The question was called on motion 1 and it carried with one nay. The motion to submit motion 1 as amended (shall instead of should) to the Faculty Senate passed with seven in favor and one vote of “ambivalence.”

The meeting adjourned at 4:45.

[Recorder's note: Following some subsequent emails, it was moved that the motion should not be submitted until further discussion on the 10th. Email votes are taking place. RB]

The current version of the amended motion is attached:

A motion to amend the Faculty Handbook to require the development of written criteria to be used in the evaluation of faculty in the areas of teaching, professional activity, and service

Submitted by the Faculty Issues Committee

Rationale:

It is the right of faculty to expect and the obligation of chairs of departments, directors of schools, personnel committees, and deans to clearly specify and communicate standards and expectations of performance used in the evaluation of faculty for merit, promotion, and tenure. These standards and expectations should be communicated in a written document in order to minimize the potential for misunderstanding and disagreement.

Current Handbook

1.4.1.2 Faculty Evaluation Categories

(to be deleted)

Each department shall provide written descriptions of any department-specific evaluation criteria to be considered in the evaluation of faculty members in that department. Departments are responsible for communicating in writing to faculty the types of department-specific activities that are considered, how different activities might be weighted in light of department or university goals, and examples of evidence that can be submitted. Whenever changes are made to these, departments are responsible for communicating such changes to faculty. Department-specific criteria for annual faculty evaluations must be consistent with any applicable accreditation requirements.

(to be added)

Evaluations and reappointment decisions should reflect disciplinary standards and norms, as well as University standards. To that end, Department Chairs and Directors of Schools in consultation with department or school personnel committees shall develop written criteria and rubrics to be used in the evaluation of faculty in the areas of teaching, professional activity, and university service. Criteria and rubrics must be submitted annually in January to the appropriate Dean and the Provost for approval. Faculty must be given copies of approved criteria and rubrics in writing at the beginning of each evaluation period.