Faculty Affairs Committee

Minutes

September 11, 2018

Attendees: R. Guell (Ex-Officio), J. Inlow (Secretary), J. Pommier, S. Powers (Ex-Officio), V. Sheets (Chair), E. Strigkas

Absent: N. Goswami, J. Nelson (Vice Chair), J. Weust

1. Agenda adopted
2. Academic Affairs Liaison Report (S. Powers)
3. New Faculty Orientation has had ~45 attendees; they have been enthusiastic and have asked good questions.
4. Mary Ann Carroll, former first dean of the graduate school, passed away on Sept. 6.
5. Faculty Senate Executive Committee Liaison Report (R. Guell)
6. Senate Executive Committee may have two more tasks for FAC:
7. Review the textbook policy in the Handbook and make recommendations for changes—specifically, remove items that no longer make sense.
8. Revise the process for selection of the Temporary Faculty Advocate (TFA) as the current nomination process is not working well. Only one person has been nominated and the TFA must be in place by mid-September, so time is running out. A democratic process of selection, that isn’t rushed, is needed.
9. Senate Executive Committee is dealing with questions related to the FAD and Workflow; Susan Powers will come to a meeting to answer questions before reviews of faculty are due.
10. Chair report (V. Sheets)
11. Charge #2 from Senate was misunderstood and is a higher priority than originally thought. Two parts to the charge:
12. Confirm that departments have revised their Biennial Review procedures to conform to new Handbook BR guidelines (FAC will do this later in the semester).
13. Compose guidelines for departments for merit pay distribution. Must begin on this immediately so that departments can receive it from Senate by late Oct.
14. Report on research concerning models for a “faculty ombudsman,” Charge #4 from Senate (J. Pommier)
15. Highlights from J. Pommier’s web survey of ombudsman positions at other institutions:
16. Websites for most institutions have a list of common questions ombudsmen receive, categories of problems they handle, and extensive links to resources to help faculty.
17. Websites define the role/purpose of the ombudsman.
18. Most ombudsmen are aligned with the office of the provost.
19. Ombudsman is independent, nonpartial, confidential, a nonprofessional counselor; provides referrals to other offices; provides training for dealing with difficult conversations.
20. Apparently, the number of universities with an ombudsman position is growing.
21. Questions and suggestions from the committee:
22. Suggestion to gather best ideas from ~15 institutions and use these to draft our description of an ombudsman.
23. In Fall 2015 S. Powers had prepared a proposal for an ombudsman position using guidelines from an international organization of ombudsmen and international standards of practice. Suggestion to use this information as we draft a proposal.
24. Does the ombudsman have to defend a faculty member? S. Powers responded that the ombudsman is not the mediator in a conflict. Importantly, ombudsman has the background and extensive experience necessary to inform faculty of resources available to them in a conflict situation. Ombudsman is usually a faculty member.
25. Is there a specific model you like? J. Pommier responded that a major role of the ombudsman should be to diffuse issues before they become a major problem; one way to do this is to have a detailed website with an extensive list of links to resources to help faculty; the ombudsman should guide people to appropriate resources.
26. Suggestion to research the process by which ombudsmen are appointed at other institutions, as well as how they are compensated and what their workload is. It may be wise to start with a half-time appointment in order to gauge demand. It may also be best if the ombudsman continues to teach part-time to stay in touch with resources and concerns related to teaching.
27. Suggestion that selection mechanism for ombudsman, as well as how that person interacts with the grievance process, must be described in the Handbook.
28. Suggestion to have both a male ombudsman and female ombudsman. Could consider a recently retired faculty member for the position.
29. Agreed to proceed at next meeting by starting with S. Powers’s 2015 proposal and adding to it.
30. Select nominees to serve on Awards Committees (Caleb Mills, Dreiser, and Distinguished Service Awards), Charge #5 from Senate.
31. FAC must choose 6, 12, and 6 nominees for the Caleb Mills, Dreiser, and Distinguished Service Awards Committees, respectively; each College and the Library must be represented equally.
32. V. Sheets will provide names of faculty who expressed interest (on the recent survey) in serving in this capacity. E. Strigkas will make selections from this list and bring to next meeting.
33. Select nominees for Grievance Committee Pool, Charge #6 from Senate.
34. Grievance Pool has not been established recently and 20 nominees are needed.
35. Discussion of various options for soliciting interest and choosing nominees: nominate faculty who volunteered but were not selected for the Dismissal Committee; send out a Qualtrics survey to solicit nominees; use the former Grievance Pool and find replacements for faculty who are no longer here.
36. Ultimately it was decided that V. Sheets will obtain names of faculty who volunteered but were not selected for the Dismissal Committee, as they are likely to have an interest in the Grievance Pool. Will then determine if more names are needed.
37. Development of guidelines for departments for merit pay distribution, Charge #2 from Senate.
38. Discussion of the contents of the guidelines:
39. Should direct departments to make a policy for merit pay distribution—the policy must be one that recognizes distinctions based on merit.
40. Should not dictate details such as the number of faculty who should receive merit pay.
41. Should provide for a referee (a dean or committee) who may determine that a department has not designated meaningful distinctions, and then require revision of the departmental policy.
42. V. Sheets will draft the guidelines and bring to next meeting.
43. Guidelines must be finished and sent to Senate with sufficient time for Senate approval and dissemination to departments by late Oct.
44. Approval of minutes from 8-28-2018 (4-0-0).
45. Adjourned shortly after 9 AM.