

Faculty Affairs Committee
Academic Senate

Minutes, 1/15/13

Present: Jennifer Sheridan Moss, Chair, Mary Cooney, Kypros Markou, Heather Dillaway, Debra Patterson, Mary Sengstock, James Sondheimer, Ronald Thomas, Anca Vlasopolos, Policy Committee Liaison; Margaret Winters, Administrative Liaison; Delores Dungee-Anderson, Graduate Council Liaison

Absent with Notice: Elizabeth Puscheck, Ewa Golebiowska, AAUP-AFT Liaison; Kate Beson, Student Senate Liaison

Absent: Jennifer Beebe-Dimmer, Beena Sood

Guests: Kelley Skillin (Provost's Office), Linda Roth (SOM)

1. The meeting was called to order at 12:00 PM.
2. Minutes of the meeting from 11/13/12 were approved.
3. Discussion of faculty/staff mentoring

Linda Roth discussed the mentoring program at the School of Medicine. The program is available to both tenure-track and clinical faculty through the department and school. Mentors are chosen from the senior faculty, particularly those who have been on the salary and P&T committees. In addition to mentoring, they speak to candidates for positions and participate in PAD seminars. Mentors devise a faculty development plan with their junior faculty members. There is a mentoring advisory committee in place to deal with any conflicts.

There was a discussion about the potential power conflicts in mentoring relationships. Mentors can be self-serving. Too often the junior person's career is already damaged before they can do anything about it.

Not all departments have departmental factors, so expectations are not clear to junior faculty. This is particularly the case in the SOM.

Because tenure and promotion is a process so fraught with politics at every level, members discussed the need for high-level leadership in mentoring junior faculty. Members questioned why department chairs are not held accountable for the success of their faculty.

Kelley Skillin reported on mentoring efforts from the Provost's office. In 2009, a joint survey from FAC and a mentoring committee found that WSU scored poorly on mentoring, particularly among female faculty. Additionally, 65% of junior faculty

reported that they had considered leaving WSU, stating the geographic location, and the quality of students as their reasons. As a result of the survey, the committee wanted to create a university-wide “buddy system” for junior faculty that did not interfere with existing structures. The program was not funded. Beginning this year, however, the incoming new faculty are being treated as a cohort in hopes of building community among the group.

The committee agreed that we need to see figures on junior faculty retention to judge whether there is indeed a problem with retaining and tenuring newly hired faculty. This information will be culled by Margaret Winters.

Finally, the committee agreed that in order to address the mentoring problem, we need to determine the problem we are trying to solve via mentoring. This will be the subject of our next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Sheridan Moss,
Chair