

FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MINUTES – 4/10/12

The Faculty Affairs Committee met at 10 am on April 10, 2012 in 2339 FAB.

The following members were present: L. Alexander, P. Beavers, N. Datta, J. Fry-McComish, M. Sengstock, J. Sondheimer. Others Present: D. Cinabro, P. Cunningham, R. Duff, K. Feathers, G. Kusch, K. Tonso, K. Skillin, M. Winters. Absent with Notice: B. Asmar, L. Beale, A. Biswas, M. Cooney, E. Puscheck.

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 10 am.

- A. Minutes:** The minutes from the March 21, 2012, meeting were approved as circulated.
- B. Presentation on Complaints of Delays in Approval of Research Projects by the Human Investigation Committee.** (Dr. Philip Cunningham, OVPR; Gayle Kusch, OVPR.).

At the March, 2012, meeting of the Faculty Affairs Committee, a member in the College of Nursing had raised a concern regarding delays in approval of research protocols submitted by both faculty and graduate students. This had resulted in considerable delay in their research. Representatives from the Research Committee (David Cinabro and Karen Feathers) reported hearing similar concerns, and were also present for the discussion.

Dr. Philip Cunningham from the Office for the Vice President for Research (OVPR) had been invited to discuss this issue and made a presentation on the topic. He began by explaining the complicated process of human subject approval, and the extreme demands placed on such research by the federal government. He explained to those present that a few years ago, the University had received a warning letter from the government, calling attention to concerns regarding the University's management of the human investigation process. Had we not handled these concerns adequately, our entire human research investigation operation could have been shut down. That was the most serious problem and required the Research Office's concerted attention. This meant that other business had to be delayed. He also indicated that he had been in this position less than one year and had spent a considerable amount of time on that problem. He also presented data indicating the work load of the HIC program (see Attachment A).

Judith McComish, who had originally raised the question, mentioned several issues which her college had noted with regard to the process: timing, which she attributed to staff delays; customer service issues, which she also attributed to staffing problems; frequent form changes, which often required that applicants redo proposals which had already been completed; some of these changes were simple wording, while others were conceptual.

Some members stated they had heard there had been layoffs in the office, and thought that might have been part of the problem. Dr. Cunningham and his associate, Gayle Kusch, agreed that there had not been major layoffs, but some staff members had been on sick leave. They continued to believe the major problem was related to the warning letter. They also indicated that they had mechanized the process for the future; the new program is designed to direct

applicants only to those questions which pertain specifically to them. Hence social science applicants would not be directed to questions about drug dosages, for example. This would make it easier for all applicants to know which items applied to them and which did not. Members were pleased to learn this was forthcoming; however, they pointed out that this was nearly a year away. There would still be problems in the meantime. Dr. Cunningham agreed this was a problem, but hoped it would resolve the problems. He assured the members that they were trying to deal with the current situation, and invited anyone with a problem to call him directly and he would try to be of assistance.

C. Review of the Format for Distributing Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) Scores. (Dr. Laura Woodward).

At the March FAC meeting, a question had been raised about the new format (RTF) in which the SET scores had been distributed to faculty. Some members were concerned that the previous scores had been in PDF form, which are considered more secure. RTF and document formats can be easily altered, and faculty members were concerned their SET scores could be tampered with. Dr. Laura Woodward from the SET office was invited to attend and discuss the issue.

Dr. Woodward stated she was pleased to have the opportunity to discuss this issue. She would normally discuss these issues with the SET Committee; however, that committee is not operating at present. Margaret Winters indicated that the Provost supports the new SET Committee, which is an investigative committee. It is in the process of organization and she can meet with it soon. In the meantime, FAC could deal with the issue.

Dr. Woodward stated that the former PDF system meant storing evaluations on an old server which was not secure. Working with Computing and Information Technology (C&IT), her staff moved the evaluations to a modern, secure server. Unfortunately, the new server did not have the capability to create PDF documents, and the cost to replace that software was prohibitive. However, Woodward stressed that the PDF format is not secure either, and distributed information on the manner in which PDF documents could be altered (See Attachment B). Woodward has been exploring other options, including an online service to store SET data. However that project is delayed indefinitely while the legal department adds confidentiality and security language recommended by C&IT to the contract. In the meantime, evaluations are stored on the secure C&IT servers, and a graduate student is working to transform the scores into PDF's. Evaluations should be available in PDF format by Fall 2012.

FAC members had suggested that the SET scores could be distributed in a more secure form through Pipeline. Dr. Woodward indicated that SET is currently available to faculty via STARS (<https://stars.wayne.edu>; also see www.stars.wayne.edu), and distributed directions to access evaluations that way (Attachment C). SET results are available in STARS going back as far as Fall 2003 for the Fall and Winter semesters, and soon will include the spring and summer semesters. Woodward has also received confirmation from C&IT that a link to STARS from Pipeline for faculty evaluations should be available by Fall, 2012. When the link is operational, it will be possible to distribute SET scores in a more secure manner through STARS in Pipeline, instead of email. She will bring this suggestion from FAC to her next meeting with the SET committee, for their approval.

Several persons present stressed to her the problem of each faculty member having to submit their SET scores to the departmental salary committee each year. Dr. Woodward stated she is more than willing to provide the summary reports developed for chairs to committees. The reports are secure, and only include the items stipulated by the contract. This would be a more secure system than PDF's, and could be adapted to distribution based upon chair verification of committee members, if the SET Committee approves. Margaret Winters stated she was willing to check on what was required as well.

Dr. Woodward invited anyone with SET problems to call her at 577-4878, or visit the SET web site at: <http://www.set.wayne.edu/> for more information.

D. Report on Faculty Mentoring. (Ryan Duff & Kelley Skillin).

Kelley Skillin has been reviewing the results of the faculty mentoring survey for some time. She now has a Research Assistant, Ryan Duff, a PhD student in the Sociology Department, who is helping to analyze the data. Mr. Duff presented a summary of the data as analyzed thus far. (See Attachment D for PowerPoint.)

Mr. Duff indicated that 518 faculty members had responded to the survey. One question had asked if the respondent was receiving mentoring. More females were receiving mentoring than males (34% vs. 23%). The demand for mentoring was higher among Whites (80%) than other races (2% for Hispanics, to 14% for African-Americans, and 15% for Asians). Those receiving mentoring generally considered it appropriate, with African-Americans rating it highest. However, the effectiveness scores of the mentors were not generally very high. The most important mentoring appeared to be in the area of research. The importance of general career mentoring was not rated very high. Respondents reported that the most important role for a mentor was (in order of importance): research advice; career development advice; collaboration on projects; and advice about managing career and family. The type of mentoring they found most useful, in order of importance, were: tenure workshops; someone to help find a mentor based on interests; assigning mentors in a department; regular, informal faculty receptions on a mentoring topic; mentor workshops. The person believed to be most responsible for mentoring was, in order: the department chair, the individual him/herself, the dean. Respondents thought the most important mentoring involved help in managing the University system.

Several respondents made specific comments, such as: the need for help in writing grant proposals and getting funding; consistent feedback on performance; publication strategies; the need for mentoring to be taken seriously; understanding the tenure process and strategies. There was also a concern that mentors be held responsible. Several members commented on this issue, stating that mentors need to be held responsible for their actions. Some mentors take advantage of their mentees, using them to get information while misleading them about their tenure chances. Dr. Winters noted that it was clear that there should be a mentoring plan and a mentoring program. However, it was important for mentees to be careful: no mentor can replace self-help!

E. Tenure and Promotion Concern for Interdisciplinary Faculty. (Lisa Alexander).

Lisa Alexander had raised a question as to how interdisciplinary faculty members are to be evaluated for promotion and tenure, in light of the fact that evaluations are generally based on disciplinary standards. (That is, certain disciplines tend to focus on books, others, on journal articles.) What standards apply to faculty who are in departments in which both types of disciplines, with both types of standards, are present?

Several members present commented on the issue. Margaret Winters indicated that the Tenure and Promotion committees do not generally depend on a department title or a preconceived definition of a particular discipline, but rather on the statements of the department chair and Promotion and Tenure Committee, as well as on the statement of the individual applicant. All should make clear the kinds of criteria which are appropriate in the type of work the individual candidate does. Since this is the case, it is important for candidates to have advice in developing their statements for the P&T committees. Dr. Winters indicated that candidates should always begin by consulting their chair. They might also consult the associate deans in their colleges for assistance if they wished. Department P&T committees often give feedback as well, as do the College committees. Department chairs and P&T committees should also take care in developing their statements.

The meeting adjourned at 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary C. Sengstock, Chair

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Workload of Human Investigation Committee
- Attachment B: How PDF Files Can Be Altered
- Attachment C: Accessing SET Scores Through STARS
- Attachment D: Faculty Mentoring Survey (PowerPoint File)