

## **Faculty Affairs Committee**

*February 8, 2017*

**Present:** Krista Brumley, Poonam Arya, Andrew Fribley, Katheryn Maguire, Kypros Markou, Linda Beale, Nourhan Hamadi, John Vander Weg, Karin Tarpenning

**Absent with notice:** Daniel Golodner, Leonard Lipovich, Ellen Tisdale, Jinping Xu, Rita Casey

**Absent without notice:** Ashok Kumar, Elizabeth Puscheck, Jeffrey Rebudal

- 1. The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m.**
- 2. The minutes of December 2, 2016 were approved.**

### **3. GEOC/GERC**

Brumley updates that the subcommittees are currently meeting and that a liaison from Academic Senate has been approved by the Provost for each committee. Brumley explains that Lou Romano is requesting liaisons for the diversity and engagement (formally known as capstone) subcommittees; the other subcommittees are covered. Brumley says she would serve on either, but feels she could offer more to the diversity subcommittee. Fribley agrees to serve on the engagement subcommittee. The policy committee confirmed these changes. The engagement subcommittee meeting is Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>. Brumley does not know when the diversity subcommittee meeting will be held.

Markou serves on the quantitative experience subcommittee. Markou expresses concern that the parameters and goals of what the committee is trying to establish are not clear. For example in the Music Department the requirements for a math course differ for students according to their degree program. For students pursuing degrees in Music Education there are particular requirements by State regulations. Those pursuing degrees in Music Business or Music Technology have more challenging requirements for Math. For Performance (vocal or instrumental) the requirements are less challenging. A key question is whether the committee is trying to develop a general Math literacy course that will apply as a minimum requirement across the University or if the committee is attempting something bigger. Information or an explanation about the nature of the Math requirement that was suspended would be helpful and much appreciated.

Maguire suggests that a rubric could be made to evaluate syllabi for whether or not they meet the quantitative experience metrics.

Beale explains signature courses no longer have to be linked so that student scheduling will be less cumbersome. The two one-credit community courses (possibly taught by GTAs or undergraduates, with uncertain coordination) that were initially linked to the signature courses are still somewhat vague but apparently are intended to cover study habits as well as community activities; having an appropriate supervisory structure remains a significant concern. The signature courses are also being revisited in terms of content, with the ongoing concern at Policy that most are building in considerable "orientation to college success" ideas with the result that a

very limited number of current content courses are considered to be, or easily amendable to be, of the type under consideration.

#### **4. Mentoring survey update/faculty success**

Brumley states the mentor survey with recently tenured faculty has been completed and the ad hoc committee (Brumley, David Merolla, and Abe Biswas) have run preliminary analyses. At the next FAC meeting there will be a presentation of the data. We briefly discuss that, depending on the survey results, we may want to conduct a similar survey with untenured faculty and a survey with associate level faculty. We agree to consider next steps after the presentation on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

Maguire states that she attended the town hall meeting by Provost Whitfield on January 31<sup>st</sup>. However, when she arrived there was little discussion on this topic; attendees were discussing about parking on campus, the benefit of faculty being on campus five days a week, and student recruitment and retention. Provost Whitfield then discussed at length the importance of speaking about what Wayne State does well rather than focusing on what is problematic or lacking at the institution.

#### **5. Online courses**

Beale states that the 4N Online committee has yet to meet. JWV says the holdup has been a lack of response by the Union to appoint their members, but Beale notes that she understands the Union names had been provided more than a year ago.

Hamadi asks for clarification on the issues faculty have with online courses since students often are interested in taking them.

Beale explains that it is not whether there should be online courses, as appropriate to the discipline and with adequate controls, but that faculty have serious concerns about the quality and standards of the courses and ownership of the courses, so that faculty and students are protected. Most faculty think that so-called 'hybrid' courses work well, but that 'pure' online courses require considerably more preparation of materials and time (often almost on a 24/7 basis) commitment by instructors. Most of the research suggests that it takes about \$100,000 of time/effort to create a truly outstanding online course: although OTL is doing a good job in offering support to faculty that do teach online, the University is still not investing at that level in courses we offer. There are numerous concerns about pressures on junior faculty to create numerous online courses without consideration of the workload and impact on research and other faculty activities, concerns that there remain no adequate monitoring to ensure that students receiving credit are actually the ones doing the work, no proctoring of exams, and no insistence on teamwork to ensure that courses offered online are really of sufficient quality. While much of that is up to the School and/or Department, ensuring quality courses and instruction can get lost in the shuffle of the numerous activities going on.

Beale sends Brumley an email following February 8<sup>th</sup> meeting that indicates per her conversation with our Union officers in the local AAUP-AFT bargaining unit that members have been appointed to the Online committee. They are:

Veronica Beilat, Libraries  
Pramod Khosla, Nutrition and Food Science  
John Heinrich, Business  
Charlie Parrish, Political Science and AAUP-AFT president

Beale was informed in writing: “the Union’s nominees were appointed over a year ago, and indeed some time ago following that appointment the Union had also held an academic forum on campus featuring those nominees to discuss the various online issues.”

#### **6. SET**

Brumley asks the committee if there is further discussion on the SET scores, recalling from the November meeting minutes that FAC concluded that “the minor adjustments outlined” in the memo from Laura Woodward was the “best we can expect for now.”

We discuss concerns about the continued use of the SET to evaluate faculty, particularly the “beauty contest” questions on the form.

Beale states that there is considerable research showing that SET-type questionnaires of students are primarily popularity opinion polls and that students typically do not have enough perspective during the semester to evaluate how much they have learned.

We discuss doing follow-up studies instead, where a student that takes a class that requires the first class as a prerequisite, and would be asked how well the first class prepared the student for the second class, etc. We discuss the difficulties of doing that, but also different ways of allowing students to voice their views which could be relatively easily accomplished.

Brumley mentions that there was a new study discussed recently in the Chronicle of Higher Education, confirming that women and faculty of color are judged more harshly.

Hamadi explains how students use SET scores to evaluate which professor to take.

We also discuss how mean scores can be skewed, and that the items that students can view via class registration are not the same ones as the “beauty context” items.

#### **7. Student survey (cost and purpose)**

Brumley explains that a survey is conducted every two years to gauge student satisfaction with WSU. The survey is conducted by the Urban Institute at WSU. Her understanding is that the survey should be launched soon, but does not know the current status as someone else replaced her on the survey committee.

#### **8. New business**

Maguire mentions that the Responsibility Center Management initiative has officially launched, with co-leads identified for the seven task forces that will examine issues such as cost allocation, revenue allocation, and communication and change management among others. This will be a three-year process.

Our next meeting is Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. in room 1270 of the Faculty Administration Building.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Krista M. Brumley, Interim Chair