

## Faculty Affairs Committee // Annual Report AY 2018/19

FAC met seven times over the year. In the Fall, it met with new **Associate Provost**, Annmarie Cano (Boris Baltes was scheduled but proved unable to attend) and learned that their new positions in the provost's office were created to provide faculty support outside and beyond what is offered by the Office for Teaching and Learning. Faculty retention was added to Boris Baltes' portfolio. The main charge for Annmarie's office is to support faculty professional and career development and to expand and reinforce faculty recognition. New seminars are organized to support faculty needs. Bullying is an urgent issue, recognized and opened up for discussion in seminars. The committee urged a wider discussion of bullying and non-sexual harassment, both personally and professionally destructive, but not adequately addressed by the existing (and changing) rules in place under Title IX.

In the wake of the Mentoring Survey conducted last year, faculty **mentoring** is prominent on the provost's agenda. The committee discussed the various activities that Annmarie is undertaking to improve existing mentoring programs. Most of these have a special focus on women and (other) minoritized groups. The committee appreciates the increased effort to support faculty in their professional development.

A major issue discussed several times this year, is the introduction of **Academic Analytics**, an interactive platform and repository of scholarly and scientific work that aggregates and ranks productivity data on the level of both individual faculty and with regard to schools, programs, departments, colleges, and the university as a whole. The committee twice invited Darin Ellis, Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness. While the committee concedes that data collection and aggregation are relevant to the academic enterprise, it also has serious concerns about the lack of accessibility: faculty members can access their own page but only administrators at the level of Dean and up can use the tool comparatively. The committee did not get clear answers as to why the university is buying into this system in the first place. The risk for misuse is known and real and can affect individual faculty members who are not even aware of what Deans can do with this tool. There is, additionally, a substantial risk of misinterpretation.

The committee expressed concerns about the use of scarce resources for this expensive surveillance tool, as well as about the increasing corporatization of the university signaled by the introduction and implementation of the platform without transparent and open communication with faculty. The increasing reliance on metrics to evaluate performance furthermore introduces a lack of complexity in evaluative processes. The system is primarily geared to quantifiable data and the STEM fields, while elements of quality, and thus the arts and humanities, are obscured.

The committee devoted ample time to learn about the new budget model **RCM** (Responsibility Center Management) that will be rolled out in the coming academic year. The committee met with Jeff Bolton, Assistant Vice President, Budgets and Planning. While the committee accepts that the goals of transparency and flexibility in budgeting are valid, the delegation of operational authority to schools, divisions, and other units, with each unit receiving its own revenues and income based on tuition dollars, could cause deans to resort to inefficient

measures to prevent students from enrolling in courses in other colleges. The committee further objects to the use of credit hours, without any differentiation, to allocate funds. Another problem the committee discerned is the role of the OVPR in this, since the office only supports STEM-field research. The committee further considers it problematic that the RCM model does not show any room for holding administrative units accountable for their expenditures, for instance, on an increased number of associates.

The Winter semester brought three additional topics to the committee table. First, the committee discussed the preliminary results of the **climate survey** with Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer, Marquita Chamblee, and Associate Dean for Curriculum and Student Affairs in the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts, Loreleigh Keashly. The committee appreciated the opportunity to give feedback on the results and was impressed with the range of insights the survey has generated. Explicit concerns were expressed with respect to the scant information for faculty, staff, and students as to where to go with complaints. The committee is especially worried about the lack of action taken after complaints have been brought to the appropriate offices. Terms, such as “micro-aggression” and “bullying” are not unambiguous, and it would be helpful to develop a kind of A-B-C of inappropriate and unwanted behaviors. Finally, to improve the overall climate in the university, the committee recommends a major educational effort to help people understand how their behaviors affect others.

Representatives of the Student Senate visited the committee to explain and ask support for the use of **Open Educational Resources**, an online, peer-reviewed, high quality resource, as an alternative to the bookstore-initiated First Day program. The latter is a counter-attack on the part of publishers to present possible solutions to the rising costs of textbooks, but in effect lures students into opting-in to something that will most likely cost them more than buying books online. The committee supports the students’ promotion of OER as a cost-saving solution.

The final item on the FAC agenda this year were the recently introduced changes in **UROP** (undergraduate research opportunities program), and its integration into the McNair Scholars Program. The committee invited Senior Associate Provost for Student Success, Monica Brockmeyer, and Brad Roth, Professor of Political Science and Law, and chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, to discuss the issue. After explaining the reason for the changes, Monica Brockmeyer agreed that the process should have involved consultation and communication with the Academic Senate and its committees prior to being implemented. After additionally hearing from Brad Roth about his experience with the UROP program, the committee expressed its grave concern about a change that essentially leaves successful students without opportunities for research abroad and the taking away of funds for deserving students without any substitute being in place. The committee objects to the exclusive focus on students that are most immediately at risk, to the neglect of the middle group and actually successful students. It also is critical of the consequence that schools and colleges will be forced to raise the money that has herewith been taken away from undergraduate research opportunities.

Respectfully submitted,  
renée c. hoogland, Chair