

Academic Senate
Faculty Affairs Committee
Annual Report for the 2012-2013 Academic Year

The Faculty Affairs focused on two issues this year: the student evaluation of teaching (SET) and faculty mentoring.

Student Evaluation of Teaching

The FAC discussed concerns about the SET with Hammid Siddiqui and Laura Woodward from the Office of Testing, Evaluation, and Research Services.

The server that sends out SET e-mail erroneously sent out multiple SET reports to faculty. A message was sent immediately to faculty to erase the reports as their data had not been checked and were sent in error. Committee members also were concerned about the security of the servers that hold the SET data. At the FAC's urging, Dr. Siddiqui sent another e-mail informing faculty that the SET data is stored on different servers than the e-mail system and is secure.

The SET office can provide data sets based on specific criteria to departments or colleges. Wayne State's response rate for SETs is lower than at comparable universities. Some committee members were concerned about the timeliness of SETs and it was suggested that the SETs be administered earlier in the semester. A committee under the direction of Dr. Margaret Winters, Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Personnel, soon will make a recommendation concerning the publication of SET data.

Faculty/Staff Mentoring

For the remainder of the year, the FAC focused on the mentoring of faculty.

Linda Roth, the Executive Director of Faculty Development in the Department of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences, discussed the mentoring program at the School of Medicine. The program is available to both tenure-track and clinical faculty through the department and the school. Senior faculty, particularly those who have served on the salary and tenure and promotion committees, serve as mentors. Mentors devise a faculty development plan with the junior faculty members.

The FAC discussed the potential power conflicts in mentoring relationships. It was noted that all departments do not have departmental factors so expectations are not clear to junior faculty. The Committee members discussed the need for high-level leadership in mentoring junior faculty through the promotion and tenure process.

Kelley Skillin reported on the mentoring efforts in the Provost's Office. A survey developed jointly by the FAC and a mentoring committee in 2009 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 FAC agreed that it needed to see figures on junior faculty retention to judge whether there is indeed a problem with the retention and the tenure process for newly hired faculty. This information will be culled by Margaret Winters.

Some members felt that women remained at the rank of associate professor for a long time. They gave several reasons why this may happen. The Committee discussed data that was provided by the Provost's Office. The FAC discussed issues related to the hiring of faculty and the role of Department Chairs in faculty success. The Committee feels that Chairs are inadequately trained and that they should be reviewed in a meaningful way that considers the success of their faculty.

Dr. Winters said that training of Department Chairs would begin again and that mentoring would be part of the training.