

FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MINUTES – 1/20/12

The Faculty Affairs Committee met at 2 pm on January 20, 2012 in 2070 FAB.

The following members were present: L. Alexander, B. Asmar, A. Biswas, M. Sengstock. Others: L. Beale, E. Golebiowska, K. Skillin, M. Winters. Absent with Notice: P. Beavers, M. Cooney, N. Datta, J. Fry-McComish, M. Fakherddine, J. Potoff, E. Puscheck, J. Sondheimer

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 2 pm. A quorum was not present but arrived during the meeting. The minutes from the November, 2011, meeting were approved as circulated.

A. Introductions: A new member was introduced; Lisa Alexander, from Africana Studies in CLAS, is replacing Renee Hoogland for the Winter, 2012, term. In addition, Margaret Winters will serve as the new Administrative Liaison, replacing Stephen Calkins, who has resigned his position in the Provost's Office and has taken a leave from his faculty position to serve in an administrative post with the Irish government.

B. Report on Faculty Mentoring (Kelley Skillin):
Kelley continued her report on responses to the survey on mentoring, although analysis is still preliminary. A total of about 500 responses were received. Kelley indicated she was having difficulty getting the data analyzed, since she does not have funds to pay someone to do the work. Mary Cay Sengstock indicated she would inquire as to whether a sociology student might be willing to provide some assistance.

Current focus of the analysis has been on the responses of Assistant Professors preparing for tenure applications.

1. Online Resource Center: There is an online resource center which includes articles and videos about mentoring. Some find it useful; it is also cheap to do.
2. Finding mentors: Different departments use different methods; most mentoring focuses on research/scholarship mentoring, not other issues (such as teaching or professional conflicts).
3. Mentoring Task Force: The goal is to set up a program that pairs people across colleges. Some pre-tenure faculty have indicated an interest in more informal events to meet senior faculty outside their departments, to obtain research focused mentoring, as well as other types of mentoring. Lisa Alexander noted this is a real problem. She works on critical race scholarship and would like to meet faculty in the Law School, but this had not been possible for her. Some members felt this should not be a problem; faculty should feel free to simply call someone on the phone; however, some junior faculty may not feel comfortable doing this.

Some other ideas were presented. It was indicated that some faculty dinners had been sponsored by the Provost's office. Linda Beale suggested that using the Academic Senate might be possible, with the Provost's office providing the funds, but the Senate sponsoring "by invitation" informal events matching senior faculty in one department with junior faculty in another. Mass invitation events are probably less inviting. The Law School has done this with some other departments to bring together professors with overlapping interests. Mary Cay noted that the centers and institutes are designed to do this, but there seem to be cycles when it works and others when it does not.

Others noted the importance of mentoring Associate Professors who may be "stuck" in their level. Margaret Winters indicated that a focus on this issue was started in the Language program.

4. Promotion and Tenure Issues: Margaret Winters reported that she will be holding a meeting with Chairs and Directors to focus on P&T requirements and procedures. It was noted that P&T seminars often seem to focus on the sciences and social sciences, with little attention to the humanities. There is also a need to work with Associate Deans who work with P&T committees

C. Report on On-Line Education:

The FAC representative on the task force, Mary Cooney, was unable to attend the meeting. There is little to report as yet, since the Task Force is just getting underway.

In the discussion, Linda Beale referred to FAC's last meeting, at which James Mazoue' reported on WSU's online courses. She noted that we need clarification about the statistics for Wayne's online courses at this point. Mr. Mazoue' provided some statistics, but several things he said didn't seem to agree. For example, he said WSU was "behind" other Michigan schools; yet, at another point, he stated that WSU had double the online courses of most research universities; at still another point he indicated we were well ahead of our peers. These statements are inconsistent. Policy Committee would like the three committees (FAC, SAC, C&IC) to prepare a written report of Academic Senate recommendations that can be taken into consideration on this topic. We should give some thought to these critical issues so that we have our own views and can have some impact on the final product. The Task Force appears to be aimed at advocacy for online education, rather than assessment and evaluation of the proper role it should play at Wayne, and the issues that need to be taken into consideration.

D. Report from Graduate Council:

1. Abe Biswas reported on the controversial issue of the Graduate Council's new criteria for Graduate Faculty membership. This resulted in a lengthy discussion of the issue. The Graduate Council has recommended changing from a requirement of 1 publication in the last 4 years, to 3 publications in the same period, for a person to be in the graduate faculty and chair dissertation committees. This is a significant change, and doesn't allow for the kind of flexibility that seems appropriate. For example, computer scientists often write a

few paragraphs as an abstract that counts as a publication, and may have 10-20 of those in 4 years. On the other hand, some humanities professors may write one book every 5 years. The language in the item approved by the Graduate Council was vague and ambiguous and didn't seem to offer the flexibility that the Graduate Council now claims is there. The Policy Committee did not believe that it should rewrite the policy proposal, but sent it back with the Academic Senate's resolution that it should provide a means of resolution when a departmental faculty member concludes he or she has been inappropriately denied graduate faculty status because the guideline does not take the department's type of research into account. The Academic Senate resolution calls for the Provost to be the decision maker, assuming that the Provost will consult with departments to support variations that make sense for their disciplines.

Linda Beale, the Policy Committee liaison, noted that Policy Committee would have preferred for each department to develop a written standard based on the type of research that is respected in that discipline, and the Graduate Council to put these standards into a comprehensive document, so that the standard was established in the departments where it belongs. But the Graduate Council apparently passed this without even verifying the nature of the standards in each of the different disciplines.

Linda Beale and Ewa Golebiowska both noted that the current Graduate Council proposal, in addition to being poorly written and ambiguous, sets a significantly high hurdle that will require each and every department that has different disciplinary standards to contest the decision. Ordinarily one tries to write standards to encompass all the disciplines, or else one writes a general standard that is broad enough that all of the disciplines can fit within it. When it is written as a single tough and fixed standard, it requires much litigation for every variant. That embitters faculty and wastes everybody's time.

The Graduate Council member defended the Graduate Council's memo as providing flexibility. Several on the FAC objected that it didn't successfully achieve the goal the Council was now claiming for it.

2. Conflict of Issue Disclosure Form:

Abe Biswas also reported on a second issue about which no one on the FAC was aware, nor was Margaret Winters from the Provost's Office. This is the fact that Graduate Council is implementing a new conflict of interest disclosure form for faculty members on graduate student committees. This form would require faculty participants to reveal professional/business or personal relationships which might indicate a possible conflict of interest in the issue; it would also need to be updated if there were changes. Linda Beale agreed to alert Policy Committee that there was some proposal coming along these lines. (A copy of the form was provided by Abe Biswas subsequent to the meeting and is attached along with these minutes.)

3. Student Thesis Ethics Issue:

Mary Cay Sengstock raised the ongoing issue of student rights to publish their theses. The University administration has concluded that a student has the right to publish, even if the student fails to obtain permission from his/her adviser, and fails to acknowledge support from a faculty member's grant or use of the faculty member's ideas. Mary Cay reiterated the importance FAC has attached to this issue and the need for the administration to find some solution. Margaret Winters noted that the University's General Counsel has said there is nothing the university can do about this matter. Former Graduate Dean Wardell had drafted a statement, indicating that effective mentoring would be sufficient, but members of the FAC have consistently taken the position that mentoring is insufficient in the absence of sanctions, should a student choose not to follow the guidelines.

Linda Beale suggested that there might be a way to enhance the student code with an "academic integrity" statement that makes clear that students are expected to acknowledge faculty members when they work in their labs and on their grant to do their doctoral dissertation work. Or perhaps it might even be possible to create a contractual relationship for students who are working under faculty grants, whereby they sign an academic integrity agreement that any publication coming out of the research on the faculty grant will acknowledge the faculty member's assistance and that the grant is the faculty member's, essentially treating students as limited licensees of the faculty member's ideas. In some cases, it might be possible to word the agreement to make clear that the student would be expected to give the faculty member credit for the ideas that the faculty member had provided for the research and under certain circumstances have to have the faculty member's consent before publishing separately rather than in a joint paper. Someone needs to research the intellectual property legal issues connected with this, as well as the potential for that kind of pre-research agreement.

E. SET (Student Evaluation of Teaching):

Mary Cay Sengstock presented a report from Paul Beavers, who was not present. FAC had discussed the idea of having an online evaluation by students. Several concerns were noted, including (among others):

- The possibility that students might get together to sabotage a professor after a particularly difficult class, whereas the paper evaluations would come at a different time and it would be less likely for them to be instantly reactive to the class.
- Many students do not make the effort to do an online evaluation.
- Some students who do not bother to attend class will nonetheless fill out forms.

Margaret Winters noted that a 2N committee would be established on SETs and that she is collecting information. She suggested that FAC members should be involved in that committee.

F. Distribution of Teaching Assistantships by Department (Committee Chair):

Mary Cay Sengstock reported that the Policy Committee had raised an issue regarding reports of an unequal distribution in Teaching Assistantships (TAs) across departments,

allegedly due to long term historical patterns which had become entrenched. Consequently, some departments had a large number of TAs, while others, with similar numbers of faculty members, graduate students, and graduate degrees granted, had much smaller numbers of TAs. FAC has been asked to look into this issue. The Chair feels a conflict of interest in this issue, since her department may be one of the subjects of the investigation. Members suggested it would be appropriate for her to find a student to collect data on the issue from various departments, which could then be presented to the committee. The committee would be responsible for making the recommendations, not the Chair. Mary Cay agreed that this would be a possibility and agreed to search for someone to collect data on the issue. She will report back to the committee.

Prior to adjourning, the Committee voted to confirm all actions taken during the meeting in the absence of a quorum.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary C. Sengstock, Chair

ATTACHMENTS:
Conflict of Interest Form from Graduate School