

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

October 21, 2010

In attendance:

Paul Abegg (PA)
Brad Barry (BB)
Jennifer Ciaccio (JC)
Gary Cooper (GC)
John Goldhardt (JG)
Jerry Harris (sec.) (JH)

Dianne Hirning (DH)
Jie Liu (JL)
Munir Mahmud (MM)
Shane Prine (SP)
Dennis Wignall (DW)

DW: Anyone have comments about minutes from last meeting? (no) Only two things for today: (1) We need to establish responsibilities among committee members – would you do this, would you do that, etc. That way anyone that has issues isn't assigned something they can't do. First of all, since we are allocated the role of doing something when there is an issue with someone's health, retirement – someone needs to respond with flowers, a card with signatures, etc. I'll take self-nominations – anyone? (DH volunteers.) Well, that was easy!

DH: How do I find out about these things?

DW: I had to have a meeting with Donna, and that's how I found out about Glen Blakely – I sent him a few e-mails.

MM: He had cancer, right?

DW: Yes, he's now been through chemo/radiation.

DH: I'll keep in touch with Daphne since she goes to Dean's meetings and have her let me know what she learns whenever there's someone in this situation.

DW: You might also send e-mails to the faculty and adjunct lists.

PA: Maybe just go to the department chairs so you don't get redundant reports from people.

DW: That makes sense. I hate being surprised and learning things in passing!

DH: I'll put together an e-mail list and contact department secretaries to let me know when something happens in their areas.

DW: Good. OK, second: textbook policy.

PA: The concern is that some students buy textbooks and the rate at which teachers change to new editions – we're solicited heavily to adopt updates, and it's expensive for students that can't sell their old edition book back. We have been asked to come up with a policy on this – is it the teacher's decision?

SP: In some fields, things change so rapidly.

DH: For some, for the same class (GE classes, for example), each teacher can be using a different book!

DW: That's a department failure.

DH: The library has an agreement with bookstore that we don't ILL textbooks typically. We do encourage all professors to keep one copy of a textbook on reserve in the library so that students can still access it. When students say they can't afford the book, we tell them about Amazon and other sources.

DW: We need to check into whether or not there is a textbook policy.

JC: I'll volunteer for checking on textbook policies.

DW: My reaction to it thus far is simply that it seems that it's restrictive on faculty, and I'm sensitive to that.

PA: This is an opportunity to address that.

SP: It sounds rather authoritarian.

MM: I agree – when I came here, I didn't know that there was a universal policy for the same class. This is the first institution that I've been to where different sections can't use different books.

DW: Well, multiple sections with different faculty have to have a universal syllabus and textbook. Also, if you teach course A in Fall and another teaches it in the following Spring, the flexibility in textbook choice remains with faculty members, so a text is not necessarily the same from Fall to Spring.

SP: But that gets to the heart of the problem of selling books back.

DW: Yes, but that's partly a timing issue of the bookstore being able to order things ahead of time. I see that as a veiled request for them to know if they have to buy books back or not.

JC: Do students know that the bookstore gives them the least amount of money for their book?

DW: It's a complex issue with a lot of things to think about; we're just brainstorming here.

SP: Regarding lower division classes, I understand the desire to adopt universal things, but it seems like there should be choice and options.

DW: What we're looking at here is outcome – for every syllabus, content course, etc. there are content goals and those are chiseled in stone. But if there are three individual sections of a course with three individual syllabi, that will be looked on poorly by accreditation, so there's impetus to sit down and agree on a universal syllabus, etc. Once in the classroom, though, that's where professors are free to do things differently. I don't know why student government can't get together and form their own bookstore...

MM: They're not allowed to compete with the bookstore.

PA: Next: defining the 0.74/0.5 thing.

DW: Right – in terms of tenure, title, benefits, etc. for people classified as 0.74, 0.5, etc. Getting Donna to say that those are full time people at half level is difficult – she sees them as not full-time. We need language that articulates the roles and responsibilities available to these faculty. They are valued colleagues – they're around with less teaching responsibility, but...

JC: I thought we had these people because we *don't* have to pay them benefits and such...?

PA: They'll be the first ones considered when full-time positions open up.

DW: And can we just appoint them without doing national searches?

JC: I don't think we can.

DW: Well, that need to be explored. We need someone to sit down and think about and come up with policy on this.

GC: I can take this on because I have some contingent faculty.

PA: Post-tenure review, are you (DW) taking that?

DW: Yes.

PA: Sick leave?

DW: That's another thing. If you take it, you either have to cover your class or get your pay docked. By policy, you can have pay docked for that.

PA: That hasn't been the case here, though.

DW: Maybe, but policy says it, even if it's not enforced. Before they start enforcing it, let's get some policy in there.

JC: Would sick time accumulate? If not, you'll have people taking it just because it's there.

DW: Hm. It's interesting. If we're functioning with the traditional hierarchical model where administration sees people as *having* to be there... If you have 5 days/semester, that's 10 days/contractual year. The place to start with this is to see what other schools do.

SP: In terms of time and class-time hours – I teach mostly Tuesdays and Thursdays; if I miss five days, that's using fewer sick hours than with Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedules.

DW: But we're obligated to be here five days/week. As chair, you're expected to be on campus 40 hours/week.

PA: Is there a policy currently?

DW: No. There's a medical leave policy, and family medical leave policy – some faculty have had to use one or both.

DH: I had to use it last year. It was fairly basic – fill out paperwork, get note from Pam about how the doctor's instructions are not clear, take new paperwork to the doctor and have him/her fill it out using the language Pam wants that coincides with whatever the law states so there's no opening for interpretation. For me, as a librarian, which is a hybrid faculty/exempt staff position, we actually accumulate sick time because we're scheduled in the library 40 hours/week, and they used that time before dipping into FMLA. So some money did come out of my pay. My understanding from when Will talked about FMLA was that, for regular faculty, there wouldn't be reduction in pay.

DW: But the onus is on the faculty member to provide documentation of circumstances.

DH: Yes. The questions on the paperwork are pretty specific – the doctor has to be very specific. My situation was intermittent, so it wasn't a set amount of time I'd be gone, but more of a "miss a few days a week" thing. The schedule of when time is taken off has to coincide with what doctor says in the paperwork.

DW: So that's a sporadic absence. The other end of that spectrum is if you're facing a potentially fatal illness for which treatment is debilitating, so you're not on campus at all. So, in terms of sick days that we're looking at, we need to know how many, under what conditions, how will they be recognized, will they be open ended, will they be cumulative, etc. We have to develop language that services faculty needs to have sick days but also administration needs that makes it reasonable and that the sick days don't accumulate.

MM: At academic institutions, there's no need for this because it doesn't cover long time periods – if I'm sick, I just call the secretary and have him/her cover my classes. I don't see need for a policy.

JC: And if you cover classes yourself, by having library assignments, etc., it's not even sick leave.

DW: That's why this is open for discussion.

MM: It would only be an issue if a dock in pay was threatened. We should see what other schools do.

SP: The policy would be there in case someone tries to crack down on the issue later.

PA: Has this been an issue?

DW: Not in the last couple of years that I know of.

BB: I've never seen it happen in my 13 years here. There's some wisdom in being prepared for a potential scenario, but...

DW: This would mostly be an issue if it were being abused by someone, and that would bring down enforcement.

BB: I've seen that, but deans are usually willing to work with a faculty member on a solution.

DW: We may still be in the transitional zone – maybe in 5 years this would be a bigger deal. At the very least, I'd like someone to take on seeing what other schools do.

MM: I can do that.

DW: Great!

PA: The only other thing for today was the revision of the Constitution and By-Laws. The main thing here is whether we're going to keep the current terms for President-Elect, President, and Past-President,

or add to the term limit. There are pros and cons on both sides, but we have to have that set up by the end of next semester.

DW: Or by elections in March. This should be something you (PA) should handle because you'll be serving under the policy.

PA: OK, is there anyone that will work with me on that? (SP volunteers.)

MM: Yesterday, Donna visited us and an issue came up: if we have qualified faculty that lacks a Ph.D. but is otherwise proficient and qualified, and s/he's not tenured, can s/he have some kind of permanency? Donna was quick to mention that how this issue is addressed must come from the Faculty Senate.

DW: Yes. We're in transition from being an Associate's to a Baccalaureate college, a 2-4 year approach. In a 2 year system, someone with an MS can get tenure and rank without a problem. The problem arises in upper division classes – people with only an MS can't teach those. I've heard of instances when a person with extensive experience has taught here, had tenure, but left, and then wants to come back – will experience translate into an appointment at the tenure-track level? My understanding was "yes" predicated on experience. But I also know of faculty that have been here for years that aren't being allowed to teach upper level classes.

BB: We can get around that by labeling the person as a "teacher of record" – it seems to work.

JG: It also depends on accreditation in the faculty's field area for accreditation purposes.

DW: In Communications, many of our Mass Communications area department students require capstone projects to graduate, and in film, etc., those courses are taught by people with only an MS – without a Ph.D., they can't oversee capstone projects. This may be a departmental issue, but it may ripple to other departments. That's where a "teacher of record" can't function. What we need in the description of faculty and responsibilities is a statement of a how many years of experience is degree equivalent. If *faculty* says this, then administration has to follow. Especially in arts, broadcasting, etc., where people that have years and years of experience -- these are fields where people don't seek Ph.D.s, but would be prevented from teaching certain things despite being eminently qualified. This is a decision to be made by qualified colleagues, not accreditation people or administration.

SP: But then accreditation comes along and sees this as an issue – they would dock us.

DW: That's when we yank out the policy and show that's why we did it.

JG: But they can override that.

DW: I'll go to the mat on that if need be – I don't think they'll want to say someone isn't qualified if it's the faculty that say s/he is!

SP: They're thinking in terms of laws and policies.

DW: But Donna has said that if *we* write the law...

MM: So we can give departments the ability to deal with this issue.

DW: So who wants to tackle that?

BB: I'll team up with Robert on this.

DW: Thanks – this is an important issue for us for the next decade. Especially if the faculty member were enrolled in a Ph.D. program.

BB: This is a separate issue from RTP and pay – it's simply a teaching issue.

JC: What about in situations where the person doesn't have Ph.D. because there isn't one in that field?

BB: It's a "terminal degree" issue.

PA: Is this a topic of defining what "terminal degree" means in any area?

DW: (people preparing to leave) We'll conduct a policy vote over e-mail for the policy I sent out earlier. Let's open it for discussion, and vote by Monday by e-mail. Thanks!