MINUTES
Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs
January 10, 2008


Members absent: C. Krause, C. Lytton, S. Ott Rowlands, and C. Stafford

Recorder: S. Karlin

1. Proposed Employee Assistance Program

   - The proposed Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a counseling and referral service available to all faculty, staff, and their dependents who are enrolled in the state's health insurance plan to help them deal with problems that might have an impact on their working and personal lives.

   - As part of the commonwealth’s health benefits program, EAP provides confidential short-term intervention, assessment, and referral services.

     - Self-referral: An employee may obtain EAP services through self-referral. No aspect of the self-referral or treatment is shared with the university.

     - Informal Referral: An informal referral may be made by a supervisor or manager to the employee. This strong recommendation encourages an employee to use all available means to correct his/her performance or workplace behavior. The decision whether or not to use EAP services rests with the employee.

     - Condition-of-Employment Referral: In extreme cases, an EAP referral may be made by a supervisor or manager as a condition of employment. A supervisor considering such a referral will first consult with Human Resources. A condition-of-employment referral must be approved in advance by the associate vice president of human resources (for staff) or by the provost (for faculty). The employee will be informed of specific reason(s) for the condition-of-employment referral. He/she must also be notified that refusing the referral may result in disciplinary action—up to and including dismissal.

     - Fitness-for-Duty/Risk Evaluation: This type of EAP referral may be made when an employee is unable to perform essential job duties; displays behavior that poses a hazard/risk to themselves or others; behaves in a manner that could endanger people or property, or creates serious disruption in the workplace. A supervisor considering a fitness-for-duty/risk evaluation referral will first consult with Human Resources. The referral must be approved in advance by the associate vice president of human resources (for staff) or by the provost (for faculty).

   - Referral to the EAP is neither a substitute for, nor a formal step in, any disciplinary action. EAP participation does not shield an employee from disciplinary action if their unacceptable job performance/personal conduct continues. An employee does not have a "right" to EAP participation before disciplinary action is taken.

   - The proposed EAP policy borrows heavily from policies currently in effect at Cornell University and statewide in North Carolina.

   - Comments received thus far from the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Commission on Faculty Affairs, Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs, and various administrators have been
positive. The Office of Legal Counsel has reviewed the document and is satisfied with the proposed policy.

- The level of prior approval required to make an EAP referral as a condition of employment or a fitness-for-duty/risk evaluation safeguards employees from misuse of the system.

- The EAP process may be very helpful to an employee in terms of documenting a long-term disability and protecting their income.

- In March, the EAP policy will be brought to the Board of Visitors for consideration. If approved, it will be included in the faculty and staff handbooks.

2. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

- Committee members reported that all key groups have been consulted about the proposed resolution for university closure in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Comments received were strongly in favor of the resolution.

- A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution. The resolution passed with commission members’ unanimous support.

- On February 4, F. Keene will present the resolution to University Council for a first reading. Commission members are encouraged to attend the February 4 Council meeting in support of the resolution.

3. HE Restructuring and A/P Faculty Definition

- An update regarding HE restructuring will be provided to the Board of Visitors in March.

- The CAPFA subcommittee (P. Hyer, F. Keene, M. West, K. Oaks, and L. Woodard) continues to work on the A/P faculty redefinition with Human Resources. Two staff employees from the Employee Advisory Committee members will join the CAPFA subcommittee. The subcommittee expects to present a final version of the A/P faculty redefinition to CAPFA in February.

4. Adjunct Pay for A/P Faculty who Teach Credit Courses

- Full-time faculty are not eligible for compensation beyond their regular salary for teaching additional (“overload”) credit courses. See Policy No. 4296.

- Staff are compensated for teaching credit courses. See Policy No. 4071.

- Could Policy No. 4071 be modified to include A/P faculty? If so, what issues should be considered? Can special research faculty be included? How would PARs be affected?

- P. Hyer will seek the advice of Provost’s Council and will report back to CAPFA in February.

5. Review of Procedures for Promotion from Extension Agent to Senior Extension Agent

- L. Gorr and R. Ali met in advance to discuss the situation of extension agents, employed prior to 1991, who do not have a master’s degree and yet wish to apply for senior extension agent status.

- Extension administration strongly feels that the master’s degree is a critical requirement for senior extension agent status.
• It was agreed that this issue properly rests with the Extension administration. They will review the existing process and will address the issue by spring/summer 2008.

6. Other Business

• F. Keene: Commission chairs have been asked to bring to the February 4 University Council meeting a list of topics that are on each commission’s slate. For CAPFA, these issues include:
  • university closure in honor of MLK Day,
  • redefinition of A/P faculty,
  • adjunct pay for A/P faculty who teach credit courses.

• K. Eriksson: What accounts for the growing number of A/P faculty positions compared to tenure-track faculty positions? Committee members suggested that this may be caused by several factors, such as:
  • a growth in the number of extension agent positions (although numbers are still below those experienced in the 1990’s prior to budget reductions);
  • a growth in the number of student affairs positions, which are funded by auxiliary dollars, not E&G dollars;
  • a growth—prompted by the capital campaign—in the number of auxiliary-funded university development positions.

• Further information regarding faculty FTE by funding source is available on the Institutional Research website at www.irpa.vt.edu.

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