Members present: H. Odendaal, P. Hyer, K. Eriksson, E. Lener, S. Easterling, D. Welch, J. Finney (for Chang), and B. Klein

Odendaal called the meeting to order with one agenda item: 1) Topics for the 2007-08 academic year.

Odendaal reviewed the charge of CFA and spoke to the importance of the commission serving as a vehicle for partnerships between faculty and administration. The membership of the Commission is still being finalized. There is one faculty/staff vacancy remaining and the President’s office will identify the student representatives (GSA and SGA).

TOPICS FOR 2007-2008

Prior to the CFA meeting, Odendaal and Hyer met and compiled a list of possible topics for the 2007-2008. The majority are rollover items from the 2006-2007 academic year.

Survey of Pre-Tenure Faculty (COACHE): Last year, pre-tenured faculty members participated in the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey conducted by Harvard University. The purpose of the study is to identify peer diagnostic and comparative data in an effort to assist in the recruitment and retention of faculty. The results are currently being shared with campus constituencies. It was proposed that CFA should also receive a presentation on these data to determine if there were follow-up recommendations that would be appropriate from the commission.

Underrepresented Faculty: The following individuals will be invited to a future CFA meeting to discuss their findings with respect to underrepresented faculty – Tonya Smith Jckson (report from focus group conversations); Elizabeth Creamer (report from Advance survey); and Kevin McDonald (recommendations from Race Task Force).

Removal of Principal Investigators: During the previous year, Ken Eriksson initiated a conversation with respect to establishing a policy addressing the involuntary removal of a principal investigator in cases, for example, where funds were misspent, work was not completed, or the sponsor demanded a change.

Web based research only revealed two institutions (University of Massachusetts and Boise State University) that currently have such policies. This conversation will continue to be explored.

Professors of the Practice: The resolution concerning Professors of the Practice received an unenthusiastic response when presented to the Faculty Senate last year. This reaction was due to various factors (i.e. threat to tenure – departments could force faculty into the POP track; unfair title for individuals who do not possess the academic credentials of a “professor” or who have not gone through the traditional trajectory). However, there are still proponents of this ranking who deem that it would be beneficial
in attracting quality, experienced individuals who may be returning from the field. Easterling shared an advertisement from Lehigh University and explained why some departments (construction, SPIA) could benefit from this ranking. Odendaal asked Easterling to contact possible allies who could educate the Faculty Senate on why this new rank series would be useful to academic departments.

Promotion and Continued Appointment Process for Librarians: The approval process for a continued appointment parallels that of tenure. There are currently 37 individuals with continued appointments (six – extension; two – agriculture departments; two – natural resource departments; twenty five – library; and one – continuing and professional education). Although there are only one to two cases per year, the concern is that, there are not enough faculty members with continued appointment to perform the two-three layer review procedure. Klein asked whether the responsibility should lie solely on the librarians or whether it should be subsumed under the university process for tenure.

A commission member recommended that an invitation be extended to someone who has participated in both layers of the process to attend a CFA meeting.

Faculty Salary Benchmarking: Concern with respect to how faculty salaries could be more competitive were raised. Faculty salaries at VT are not consistent with the 60th percentile of our peer group, the state’s goal. Hyer suggested inviting Dixon Hanna and/or Dr. McNamee to a Senate or CFA meeting to educate the faculty on the peer group process and how the university appropriates money for faculty compensation. While this could be done, Easterling responded that this begs the question of internal funding priorities and a commitment to allocate more internal funding for raises than is appropriated by the state. Whether or not this is an issue that CFA can effect is a question.

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost