Commission on Faculty Affairs
Minutes
February 23, 2007

Members present: B. Sanders, E. Lener, R. Sorenson, S. Ball, K. Eriksson, S. Easterling, S. Anderson for S. Hagen, P. Hyer, and V. Hardcastle

Hardcastle called the meeting to order with five agenda items: 1) Update on annual evaluation resolution, 2) Re-approval of P&T resolution 3) Discussion of part-time tenure track faculty, 4) Discussion of professors of practice resolution, and 5) Discussion of instructor ladder resolution. The agenda and minutes (correction: Sanders did not attend the last meeting) were approved.

UPDATE ON ANNUAL EVALUATION RESOLUTION
Faculty Senate passed the annual evaluation resolution with no corrections.

RE-APPROVAL OF P&T RESOLUTION
Recent conversations resulted in the following substantive changes to the promotion and tenure evaluation resolution:

- P&T committees will consist of four to seven members. The subsequent clause that speaks to letters of recommendation was extracted at the suggestion of the Committee on Faculty Ethics; the policy should not advocate negative recommendations.

- Multiple votes: Easterling explained that although individuals may serve on both the college and university P&T committees, they should only cast one vote. Hardcastle suggested that participation on these committees are different in function and may be necessary for smaller departments with one to three tenured faculty (i.e. geography). Easterling maintained that the policy should not be made to accommodate smaller departments. Hyer explained that the purpose of the change in policy was to resolve the issue of multiple votes; if the resolution is approved as written, the original intent would be lost. According to Hardcastle, although the one-vote clause has been removed, the changes diminish the influence of department heads, reduce the authority of deans, and require departments to publish P&T procedures. After reconsideration, it was agreed that the one-vote clause would be added back into the resolution.

Changes will be made to the document and then resent to CFA members. The resolution will then be forwarded to University Council.

DISCUSSION OF PROFESSORS OF PRACTICE RESOLUTION
The Professors of Practice Resolution was not received well by members of the Faculty Senate. Hardcastle explained that no one was in favor of the resolution and suggested more education and discussion as to why this policy is necessary. Many questioned whether the creation of a Professors of Practice rank is the direction the university should
move towards. Although it is at the discretion of the department/college to use the rank, some faculty members fear that establishing this new rank will change the culture of the institution, cause the elimination of tenure-track positions, and possibly create second class citizenship. Easterling asked if it was necessary to have a multiple tier system versus that of a single rank. Hyer explained that other universities (i.e. Duke) use the multiple ranking system and various departments have requested to use this status. Sorenson suggested that since departments would employ the status on an exceptional basis, using the terms assistant, associate, and full would be appropriate for non-tenured appointments.

Since Faculty Senate did not vote on the proposed resolution at the last meeting, another attempt will be made. Committee members will solicit support from Ed Nelson and ask Rachel Holloway to attend the next meeting.

INSTRUCTOR LADDER RESOLUTION
The “Policies Related to Non-Tenure Track Instructional Appointments” document received no comments or objections during Faculty Senate. The Instructor Ladder Resolution was generally supported. Substantive conversations were as follows:

- A common university format will be used for dossiers. This includes an area for scholarship and publications. Hyer reported that although these elements are included, instructors will not be mandated to fulfill a scholarship or publication requirement. But for those who have contributions in this area, this is an opportunity for them to report.

- Clarification to the non-reappointments section of the policy was made. Before termination, employees must be notified, via writing, during the specified period as indicated in the document.

- The question of whether three ranks are necessary was raised due to the ambiguity of “advanced” and “senior.” Is there a distinction between time and service? Senior instructor and principal instructor were suggested.

- Concerns regarding contractual obligations in times of financial constraints were addressed. However, the policy already explains that in the case of insufficient funds, termination may occur.

- It is at the department/college’s discretion as to whether they choose to use the long term assignments. Restricted appointments can still be used. But only in situations that require temporary positions. Ultimately, the Dean approves all appointments.

The Commission voted unanimously in favor of the resolution. It will be forwarded to Faculty Senate and then to University Council.

DISCUSSION OF P-T TENURE TRACK FACULTY
Although abuse of the policy presented potential concerns for members of CFA, others viewed the position as an additional “tool in the arsenal.” Departments do not have to use the policy and positions would continue to be advertised as full-time. Hardcastle and Ball reiterated the possibility of second class citizenship for spouses who are hired on a part-time basis. Ball maintained that the college or department would have to be transparent from the beginning and explain to prospective employees that their position is a “term appointment” and does not guarantee full-time employment. She also added that the couples should know that there is potential for termination after the second year.

Hyer would make revisions to the policy, making the spousal option of part-time tenure track a temporary appointment. It will be circulated to CFA and then sent to Faculty Senate for a vote. If approved, it will be sent to University Council.

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost