Commission on Faculty Affairs  
Minutes  
November 17, 2006

Members present: Hardcastle, Hyer, Mitchell, Grene, Lener, Eriksson, Ball, Brewster

Guest(s): Hardus Odendaal

Hardcastle called the meeting to order with four agenda items: 1) CFA Resolution on Faculty Grievances, 2) CFA Resolution on P&T Procedures, 3) Reporting Diversity Contributions, and 4) Discussion of Annual Faculty Evaluations.

The current agenda and minutes for the Oct. 27 meeting were approved.

CFA RESOLUTION ON FACULTY GRIEVANCES
Valerie Hardcastle reported on the discussion that took place at the University Council meeting during the first reading of the CFA Resolution on Faculty Grievances. The revised resolution seemed relatively unproblematic, other than a concern from Engineering about the grievability of promotion and tenure issues. The second reading will occur during the December meeting.

CFA RESOLUTION ON P&T PROCEDURES
At the first reading of this resolution at University Council, Susanna Rinehart raised the concern that the Faculty Senate had not seen the final version prior to its introduction to University Council. She requested that the resolution be referred to the Senate for that review before voting. Members of the Council approved the referral back to the Senate.

REPORTING DIVERSITY CONTRIBUTIONS
Pat Hyer presented a draft document prepared by a subcommittee of the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity which provides a framework for reporting Diversity Accomplishments. The categories were developed based on faculty reporting in promotion and tenure dossiers, where this requirement has been in place for two years, and from annual activity reports in the College of Agriculture, which is using an electronic reporting system.

The discussion centered around the following concerns/suggestions:

- The example concerning “learning another language” might be made more general and possibly reference American Sign Language
- The “Mentoring/Advising Colleagues or Other University Employees” section is somewhat problematic. Just talking to a minority faculty member should not constitute a diversity activity. Everyone should take an active role in mentoring junior faculty. The “Mentoring/Advising Colleagues or Other University Employees” section might be combined with “Exceptional individual efforts” instead to underline that what should be reported here goes beyond the usual expectation for mentoring colleagues.
- As of now, it is hard to see a direct connection between salary raises and participation in diversity activities; a point system is not in place. The purpose is to show the level of faculty engagement in these types of initiatives and to encourage greater involvement. Accountability may come with time.

It was suggested that the Deans distribute the document along with the Faculty Activity Report. The document will also be available on the Provost website.
DISCUSSION OF ANNUAL FACULTY EVALUATIONS

Recent grievances and reconciliation cases reveal deficiencies with the current approach to faculty evaluations. In some cases, the evaluations are not being conducted at all; in others, not enough feedback is being given.

Commission members commented:

- Evaluation information needs to be distributed to the faculty member being evaluated.
- Written documentation is critical; the grievance and reconciliation process needs a paper trail.
- Issues with timing: evaluations are conducted late in the school year; when the evaluation takes place should be added to the policy.

Ken Eriksson made visits to William and Mary and to UVa last year to learn more about some of their faculty processes. He explained that William and Mary allows departments to develop individual and different procedures for evaluation, but they have an oversight committee that is responsible for approving those departmental procedures. Faculty evaluation at UVa is also very decentralized, but individual schools/units publish their own policies and procedures, and how they will be meaningfully implemented.

Issues with Pre-Tenure Evaluations

- The evaluation of pre-tenured faculty is not synchronized with the annual evaluation process; there are questions on whether it should be
- A good annual review does not always mean that there will be a positive review for reappointment or for tenure.
- Pre-tenured faculty should meet with department heads. A mandatory evaluation should be included in the policy
- Flexibility should be considered – evaluations should be given during the second and fourth or third and fifth years.
- Questions on whether pre-tenured faculty should have mentors: There is hesitation writing mentoring into the policy due to how this could be interpreted and the various mentoring models that exist.
- Peer Evaluation: Unsure of whether all departments are conducting peer evaluations of teaching for untenured faculty members. It is a university requirement.

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost