Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA)
Minutes
October 12, 2007

Members present: H. Odendaal, P. Hyer, E. Lener, K. Eriksson, J. Finney (for Chang), D. Welch, B. Klein, K. Hunning (for Sorensen), M. Perez-Lopez, D. Kniola, A. Mitchell, S. Easterling,

Guest(s): Wayne Scales, Kevin McDonald

Odendaal called the meeting to order with three agenda items: 1) Principal Investigator Removal Resolution 2) Mandatory EAP for Faculty and 3) Race Task Force Final Report. The minutes were approved.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR REMOVAL RESOLUTION
Odendaal presented a draft of the Principal Investigator Removal policy and resolution. While there is currently a process in place that addresses ethical concerns, the purpose of this policy is to hold individuals accountable for behavior unrelated to research misconduct (i.e. incapacitation, fraudulent activity, removal requested by sponsor).

In addition to a check for syntax and editorial changes, the following feedback was given:

Grievance/Appeals: A lack of clarity in the wording of the document raised questions with respect to whether a grievance could be filed once the removal process was initiated. Eriksson explained that he thought the policy would eliminate the number of grievances. Therefore, the Faculty Review Committee would not serve as the appeals committee.

Easterling explained that if inappropriate application of the procedure had been employed, a grievance could be filed. Hyer said that grievance would not be a possibility if there is already an appeals process built into the policy. She also maintained that if a policy has too many layers for review, the process is flawed.

Non-Faculty/PIs who don’t report to a dean: The policy states that the Dean has the authority to initiate removal; however Finney pointed out that all PIs (i.e. VBI) may not report to a Dean or the Provost. He suggested adding the phrase “senior management.” He also questioned whether there should be a subsection that speaks to non-faculty PIs.

Time: Easterling asked if the deadlines specified in the document (i.e. investigator must respond within ten days of notice from Dean) were realistic due to vacation, etc. Hyer suggested that extension of the deadlines should be mutually agreed upon by the parties involved.

MANDATORY EAP FOR FACULTY
There were no updates.
RACE TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT
Scales explained that the Race Task Force was commissioned by the Provost in the Spring/Summer of 2006 as a result of a case involving a Black faculty member who was denied reappointment. The Provost’s charge to the Task Force was to 1) examine issues of race and racism; 2) identify key issues; and 3) propose recommendations to make lasting change.

The activities of the group spanned over a year period:
- August 24: Task Force members appointed
- September 13: First meeting of Task Force
- January 29: Task Force released preliminary report; showed initial thinking-input solicited from members of the community
- April 2007: Task Force released final report. The final report, which can be found on the Provost’s website, included 20 recommendations. The report also includes: 1) implementation strategies/timeline, 2) proposed implementation teams, and 3) rough resource and budget estimates.

- Six subcommittees were instrumental in identifying these issues: academic programs, administrative infrastructure, alumni and community engagement, faculty, and staff, graduate student, and undergraduate student. The following themes were identified:
  - Assessment and Accountability:
    - Expand existing assessment efforts to include further measures of campus climate, cultural competency, efficiency recruitment, and diversity
    - Provide resources for appropriate development and analysis
    - Monitor assessment initiatives
  - Cultural Competency and Campus Climate
    - Develop incentive based professional development
  - Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration
    - A lot of facilitated activities, but difficulty with coordinating them all
    - Affirm diversity
    - Strengthen engagement with minority alumni (i.e. continue to move in the direction of hosting events that gather Black alumni – Black Alumni Reunion Weekend)
  - Curricular Reform
    - Requirement in the undergraduate core that addresses issues of racial privilege
    - Strengthen current academic programs (i.e. Africana Studies)
    - Create Latino/Latina Studies department
  - Recruitment, Retention, Mentoring, and Advising
    - Increase access to VT by developing a more comprehensive pre-college pipeline approach
    - Enhance undergraduate student advising, financial aids, etc.
  - Resources
- Develop innovative strategies to secure adequate resources to maintain and sustain diversity efforts across the university

Recommendations Specific to Faculty and Staff

1. Active and Innovative Recruiting
   a. Chaired/endowed professorships
   b. Strategic cluster hires and Targets of Opportunity
   c. Specially coordinated recruiting teams
   d. Postdoctoral/ABD programs – “prime a pipeline”
   e. Engagement with minority serving institutions – “prime a pipeline”

2. Accountability and Faculty Incentives
   a. FDI courses based on diversity/multiculturalism
   b. Assess programs on faculty diversity/equity and publicize (accountability)
   c. Effectively and fairly evaluate diversity component of Faculty Activity Reports (FARs)

3. Equity in Faculty Advancement
   a. Be proactive in mentoring and advancement
   b. Promote advancement in teaching and research in diversity
   c. Provide resources to empower college diversity committees
   d. Ensure faculty qualifications to serve on search committees

According to Scales, the Task Force recommendations will be considered by an implementation team. The VP for Multicultural Affairs, Kevin McDonald, co-chairs the implementation group with Dr. McNamee.

Scales opened the floor up for discussion. In response to Odendaal’s question regarding policy issues that should be of immediate concern to members of CFA, Scales spoke to the importance of search committee qualifications: For example, have they received appropriate training? Scales also asked if there was a way that CFA members could create a policy that could “pin down” the diversity component of the Faculty Activity Report. Diversity activities may conjure up different meanings. Accordingly, what constitutes diversity? How should diversity activities be evaluated? Klein commented that CEOD worked on this issue and disseminated guidelines on diversity activities last year.

Scales maintained that these types of activities would fall under “service” in the faculty evaluation process. He also pointed out that with respect to the three responsibilities of faculty, service is not valued as highly as teaching and research.

Eriksson asked if the task force discussed how faculty and P&T committees would be educated on diversity: Are there any training opportunities forthcoming? Scales explained that they recognized that the lack of training is an issue, but they did not have enough time to talk in-depth. He said that the implementation teams would be responsible for executing recommendations. Hyer spoke to some of the search committee education that has already been done or is planned for this year:
At the last Advance conference in January 2007, members of the University of Michigan’s STRIDE group (Committee on Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence) did a presentation to the full conference and then a special workshop on confronting unrecognized biases and assumptions.

Interactive theatre: Susanna Rinehart is preparing an interactive theater piece on the search process for performance at the January 2008 campus conference.

Damon Williams will be a keynote speaker for the ADVANCEVT/Multicultural Affairs conference, and there will be a special workshop on recruiting a diverse pool by another consultant invited by the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Beate Schmittmann met with departments in science and engineering and presented information on recognizing biases in the review of dossiers.

The College of Science is conduction sessions with Kelly Oaks on how to evaluate credentials, and the College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences has also done search committee training.

McDonald reported on the progress of the Implementation Teams. McDonald and Provost McNamee chair this group. The committee has met once; subsequent meetings will occur on a monthly basis. At the next meeting (October 30), members will share their preliminary ranking of the recommendations. The group will also discuss a timeline, and best practices models.

McDonald spoke to the university moving towards “Inclusive Excellence.” This is a model developed by Damon Williams (University of Connecticut), Joseph Berger, and Shederick McClendon. According to McDonald, inclusive excellence is a shift away from thinking about diversity as a matter of demographic composition and brings about transformational change. This concept encourages institutional leaders to examine every phase of the institution – from pedagogy to recruitment. Multicultural Affairs and the Provost’s Office have partnered to bring in Dr. Williams as a consultant. He will meet with various stakeholders on November 9th. He will also serve as the keynote speaker for the ADVANCEVT/Multicultural Affairs conference in January.

The floor was opened for discussion. Eriksson asked McDonald if the group thought of strategies to reach out to a broader audience. McDonald explained that he hopes the smaller groups will reach out to the larger groups to disseminate information. Odendaal asked if there were any policy issues that deserved the immediate attention of CFA. McDonald commented on the incorporation of gender identity into the university’s harassment policy as one policy issue that may warrant attention. Prioritization of the Task Force recommendations was a concern for Scales. McDonald explained that the group recognizes the value of all recommendations, but due to the lack of financial and human resources, all recommendations would not be implemented.

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost