Commission on Faculty Affairs
Minutes
September 22, 2006


Hardcastle called the meeting to order with four agenda items: 1) Discussion of the Faculty Survey on Promotion and Tenure Procedures, 2) Discussion of Balci resolution on Student Evaluation of Teaching, 3) Initial discussion of Professors of Practice designation, and 4) New Business – Engineering Department Heads regarding Grievance and Resolution. The agenda and minutes were approved.

Survey of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty
The new survey was approved for distribution with corrections. The subsequent actions of the committee will be determined once the data is collected.

Student Evaluation of Teaching
Dr. Balci presented the first reading of the Virginia Tech Student Evaluation of Teaching (VTSET) Resolution which calls for the university to adopt a new approach to the Student Perceptions of Instruction (SPOI) system. The current system has been in place for the last 40 years and the proposed VTSET system would employ a faculty-driven, course-specific, bottom up approach. The fundamental changes would result in ownership, continuous improvement, multidimensionality of teaching, and student accountability. The advantages to this system would include: more input from the faculty because the indicators would be course specific, standardized teaching assessment across the university, paperless process, and ongoing feedback (i.e. mid-semester evaluations).

Concerns addressed include:
Anonymity - Students may be less inclined to complete the survey if their PID can be traced. Even if this system reveals the identity of the evaluator, students will find alternative ways to express themselves (i.e. blogs).

Web-based v. Paper - Transition to a web-based system may not yield a high percentage of completed surveys. Incentives were suggested as a possible solution to encouraging student participation. Additionally, students should know the purpose of the survey and why their input is needed.

Promotion and Tenure – How will the results be used for promotion and tenure review? What are the requirements for the dossier? The summary report should be consistent across departments.

Policy change v. Tool – This resolution should be as general as possible (use “system” instead of “web-based”) and address the change in policy, not the tool itself. Upon the approval of this resolution, an implementation plan can be drafted that will deal with the many details.
Pilot – The resolution should speak to a piloting phase. What college(s) or department(s) will test the system? When will all colleges begin to utilize the system?

The resolution will be changed to reflect the concerns of the group. In an effort to receive more student feedback, it was suggested that Dr. Balci present the resolution to the Commission on Student Affairs.

In the interest of time, the resolution discussion and the other agenda items were tabled until the next meeting.

Recorder, Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost