Members present: P. Hyer, E. Lener, K. Eriksson, J. Finney (for Chang), D. Kniola, K. Hunnings (for Sorensen), S. Easterling

Easterling presided over the meeting in the absence of Odendaal. The meeting was called to order with two agenda items: 1) Policy on Principal Investigator (PI) Removal and 2) Feedback from Provost’s COACHE session with Pre-Tenure Faculty focus group. The agenda was approved with one addition, electronic faculty activity reports.

**POLICY ON PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI) REMOVAL**

The revised policy on Principal Investigator Removal was presented to the group. Easterling reported that the intent is to re-present the document to Faculty Senate on the 12th. Easterling solicited feedback and asked if there were any questions or additional modifications. Hyer reminded the group of the original concerns with the document, one of which was questions regarding the inclusion of removal based on ineffectiveness. This item was removed from the policy and an appeals process similar to P&T was added. Another concern with the policy overall was whether it is appropriate for the university to intervene in these matters. Eriksson explained that faculty need to be aware that the grant contract is between the agency and institution, not the individual. As such, it is necessary to have this policy as a safeguard.

The group discussed syntax errors and made additional revisions. The policy was unanimously approved with the necessary corrections.

**FEEDBACK FROM PROVOST’S SESSIONS WITH PRE-TENURE FACULTY**

Hyer briefed the group on actions taken with respect to COACHE findings. The results have been shared with various campus constituencies (i.e. P&T committees). She explained that based on the findings, we are not doing as well as our benchmarks: Illinois, Iowa, Michigan State, North Carolina State, and Ohio State. Faculty tended to rate clarity and reasonability of the tenure process lower. We did better in the area of work-life policies. The Provost hosted a focus group with pre-tenure faculty in October to get their interpretation of some of the findings.

A larger session with pre-tenure faculty was held in conjunction with the January AdvanceVT conference. The participants were divided into four to five work groups. Their conversations were centered on ways to improve the pre-tenure experience. Hyer reported that many of the group’s suggestions were feasible, but some of the suggestions would cost more money than others. Mentoring was one issue discussed. In some departments, it is not happening at all or if it is taking place, it is fraught with difficulties. But, there were some participants who did in fact speak to positive mentoring relationships. Another discussion point, which is also an item on the COACHE survey, was the negotiation of teaching loads as a part of the start-up package. Hyer explained that some faculty members are presented the reduced teaching load as an option. IDST is
working on a departmental policy, but there is no university-wide policy. The AdvanceVT Executive Committee discussed the possibility of setting an expectation of a reduced teaching load for all pre-tenure faculty in a recent meeting. Eriksson commented that new faculty in his department automatically received a semester off during the first or second year, but the third year is optimal. Easterling stated that leave during the first semester should not be an option; the individual is still getting oriented and may need the structure. Eriksson stated that when the reduction occurs should not be a strict policy. Hyer added that it has to be aligned with the department’s teaching schedule.

Hyer asked the group whether CFA should, at a minimum, create expectations regarding reducing the teaching load for pre-tenure faculty. Hunnings asked whether there were some departments that did not offer a reduction at all. Hyer explained that it is her impression that there are some that are not offered or do not receive it. Hyer added that the benefit of offering the reduction shows that the university is supportive of pre-tenure faculty. It also takes the burden off the individual candidate with respect to negotiating. This issue will be brought up in the next Faculty Senate. Eriksson also requested a presentation of the COACHE findings for Senate. Easterling suggested that proposed language on reduced teaching loads be presented to the Department Heads Council for their feedback.

Eriksson questioned whether the group should consider working on a mentoring policy since there are inconsistencies across the board. Hyer expressed concern with a policy, but acknowledged the need to set expectations. Finney explained that he is hoping to gain a better understanding of the mentoring practices throughout the university from pre-tenure evaluations. Like Hyer, he also questioned whether the group should mandate mentoring in the formal sense, since senior faculty are already feeling so stretched.

Hyer stated that she continues to welcome feedback on how constructive measures can be taken to address issues raised by pre-tenure faculty. She also encouraged members to share information within their respective areas.

ELECTRONIC FACULTY ACTIVITY REPORTS
Hyer discussed actions taken to identify an electronic reporting instrument for faculty activities. She explained the desire to have a system that can summarize faculty accomplishments that can in turn be used for marketing purposes or when communicating to the State or other agencies. Some departments have written their own software for faculty, but these do not scale and are not enterprise level. A small group has been investigating available software on the market and seeing demos from vendors. They have identified Digital Measures as a possible option. Their clients include MIT and Arizona, among many other research universities. The system includes the following features:

- Colleges and departments can design their own reporting formats – customizable at university, college, and department level
- Faculty can create websites
- Can draw from current databases, such as the teaching load database or BANNER HR, and the grants and contracts database that is being revised now
• Capability of producing reports in any number of formats: CV, NSF, NIH, accreditation, and so on

Before a decision is made on this particular system, Hyer explained that she would like a broader audience (deans, assistant deans, and faculty) to participate in a demo. If the group decides to go with the product, policy decisions will also have to be discussed: would faculty enter all information into the system, the past 10 years, or just current information? Finney commented that seasoned faculty may have more difficulties buying-into this system than younger faculty. Easterling commented on issues of confidentiality with respect to who would have access to the information.

Kniola asked if graduate students would be able to use the resource as well. He explained that it would be beneficial for students to be able to track their activities throughout their graduate experience. Finney added that graduate departments may be interested in accessing this type of information. Hyer said that the cost for the system is based on number of users, per college. The original intent was for the system to be used for instructional and A/P faculty. However, she would look into graduate student use.

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost