

Florida Tech Faculty Senate

December 6, 2016

Minutes

Senators Present: W. Arrasmith (DES), M. Baarmand (PSS), P. Bernhard (Sch. of Computing), J. Brenner (Chem. Eng./Biomed. Eng.), K. Burke (SAC), A. Cudmore (COB), H. Edwards (SAC), M. Fenn (BME), C. Harvey (CoPLA), A. Huser (Lib), S. Jensen (COB), U. Jones (Aero), S. Kozaitis (Lib), B. Lail (ECE), T. Marcinkowski (DEIS), L. Perdigao (SAC), C. Polson (Bio), P. Ray (DMES), R. Rusovici (MAE), D. Sandall (COB), M. Silaghi (Sch. of Computing), N. Suksawang (CIVIL), G. Tenali (Math), R. van Woesik (Bio), R. Wehmschulte (Chem), B. Wheeler (Aero), K. Winkelmann (Chem), F. Yumiceva (PSS)

Other Attendees: Tristan Fieldler (Bio), Gordon Patterson (SAC), Nasri Nesnas (Chem), Chao Wang (Lib)

Call to Order

President Sandall called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of November's meeting; a motion was made by Sen. Marcinkowski, seconded by Sen. Baarmand, and approved unanimously by vote of voice.

President's Report

President Sandall reported from the Admissions Office that 85 completed applications are awaiting review since September. He reminded units to keep up with the admissions process. The budget is still under review.

Committee Reports

There was no **Academic Policies Committee** report.

Senator Brenner, **Scholarship Committee** chair, reported that scholarship will go to the School of Computing. Sen. Brenner also reported—before the arrival of Sen. Rusovici, chair of the **Administrative Policies Committee**—that the Survey of Administrators will begin next year and run through Spring Break.

There was no **Wellness Committee** report.

There was no **Faculty Excellence Committee** report.

Senator Arrasmith, **Technology, Resources, and Infrastructure Committee** chair, reported that the Faculty Senate webpage is up and running. A voting instrument is available for unofficial polling, but should not be used for formal votes. The Multi-Track Faculty Proposal will be posted on the webpage.

New Business

The Multi-Track Faculty Proposal — First Reading

President Sandall delivered a PowerPoint presentation of the Multi-Track Faculty Proposal. The primary goal was to clarify the content of the proposal so senators would be prepared to share it with each academic unit.

[[*The presentation slides were distributed to all senators via email and are available for a faculty to download on the Faculty Senate Webpage. The Minutes include additional questions and comments raised in discussion, beyond what is clearly stated in the proposal and presentation slides. At the request of Executive Committee, the relevant points raised during the discussion are summarized below without name identification.]]

Questions and responses:

Q. What qualifies good teaching for the teaching track?

R: Evaluation rubrics are to be determined by each unit and are intentionally left out of the proposal. There are also guidelines for teaching in the Faculty Handbook.

Q. Why is the rolling renewal option not available in the teaching track?

R: It was in the original proposal, but was struck out by the deans and administration.

Q. Why does the teaching track specify pedagogy research? Why not allow teaching faculty to conduct research in their discipline along with the higher teaching load?

R: All faculty regarded as professors, as opposed to instructors, should be involved in research. The scholarship component of the teaching track would involve faculty directly in developing and assessing teaching best practices for the University. The teaching track needs to be more than just teaching courses and serving on committees.

Q. Do contracts and letters of appointment carry the same legal weight?

R: Contracts are renewed each year, even if there is a multi-year appointment. Multi-year appointment is also a legal agreement, even if the weight is different than a contract. There are examples of universities paying out multi-year appointments after termination. An annual contract could specify the status of the university's commitment to the multi-year appointment, giving both the same contractual weight.

Q. If not conducting research in discipline, shouldn't teaching track faculty be kept from advising graduate students?

R: The University already has a procedure in place to vet faculty for advising and serving on graduate thesis committees. This process does not need to be aligned with a particular track or changed with the proposal.

Q. What if funding agent for research track brings 100% of salary, but does not cover fringe and F&A costs?

R: The proposal provides guidelines for the minimum requirements, leaving some flexibility to figure out the final number. If the administration sees benefit in bringing in a research professor, they will do it.

Q. What does the Faculty Senate vote on the proposal mean? What percentage of the vote is needed?

R: There are some basic guidelines in the By-Laws, but may not be a precedent for this type of vote. The senate will determine and make clear when and how voting will take place, and what tally is needed to pass the measure.

Q. How many times can the faculty vote on this proposal before it is dead?

R: The proposal will probably be dropped if not approved after two voting attempts. It is unrealistic to believe that the proposal will receive a vote of approval by March and be implemented in the Fall of 2017. Dr. McCay originally wanted the new system in place for the 2017-2018 school year, but now understands that more time is needed.

Q. What would implementation mean for faculty going up for promotion in the current system?

R: Faculty going up for promotion will use the old criteria until the new plan is in full implementation.

Q. What is the goal of this document? Are we pursuing this proposal to help the administration or to help what faculty really need?

R: Agreements between faculty and deans are not always respected by the promotion committee. This plan provides structure and transparency as well as diverse paths to promotion that account for the variability in teaching and research conducted by faculty at the University. The extended status of the rolling renewal contract provides established faculty status much closer to a traditional tenure system.

Additional comments:

C. The proposal language must clearly distinguish contract from appointment. Contracts and appointments are synchronized as currently stated, meaning that established faculty would be reviewed every year instead of every 4 or 5 years.

C. Teaching grants should be listed in the proposal.

C. Any increase in expectations should be matched by increase in support. The two should be in balance. Some colleges use formative, rather than summative, assessment of teaching with rubrics for classroom observations. These evaluations reflect back to the faculty what is good teaching practice.

C. Faculty need time to discuss the evaluation criteria within each unit before the plan can be implemented.

C. Before discussing all of the hypotheticals, we should play out a simulation to see which tracks faculty will choose.

C. Some units specifically label teaching, research, and service criteria and benchmarks for promotion. There is confusion and concern because some units do not have clear criteria in place at this time.

C. We can choose to vote on endorsing the multi-track faculty concept now and then, after units have the opportunity to draft new guidelines, vote on the implementation at a later date.

C. A comparative analysis is needed for this proposal, including a summary that compares existing and proposed practices, lists the benefits and limitations of each system, and makes comparisons across and within various units.

C. The current system is very flexible, but the proposed system introduces some hard boundaries.

C. There is a lot of distrust between faculty and deans. Faculty members are concerned they will not have the choice that is promised or that they will be unfairly evaluated for promotion. Deans are concerned they will lose the authority to manage faculty to meet the needs of the unit.

C. The faculty should decide if they really want these changes rather than how to get the proposal through.

C. Without the rolling renewal contracts across the board, this proposal does not change much in the current system. Concerns over unfair treatment by the promotion committee can be solved without instituting a multi-track faculty system.

Adjournment

President Sandall adjourned the formal meeting at 5:10 p.m. Informal discussion continued in the room after adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin R. Burke, Secretary