

**College of Arts and Sciences**  
**Dean's Council of Department Chairs**  
Wednesday, May 4, 2011  
Kelley Center Presentation Room

**Present:**

Steve Bayne, Chair of Philosophy  
Angela Biselli, Chair of Physics  
Cecelia Bucki, Chair of History  
Mary Ann Carolan, Chair of Modern Languages & Literatures  
Matt Coleman, Chair of Mathematics & Computer Science  
David Crawford, Chair of Sociology & Anthropology  
Nancy Dallavalle, Chair of Religious Studies  
Mark LeClair, Chair of Economics  
John McCarthy, Chair of Psychology  
Marcie Patton, Chair of Politics  
James Simon, Chair of English  
Kraig Steffen, Chair of Chemistry & BioChemistry  
Brian Walker, Chair of Biology and Co-Director of LACS  
Maggie Wills, Chair of Communication  
Joan Weiss, Associate Dean of College of Arts and Sciences

**Regrets:**

Brian Torff, Chair of Visual and Performing Arts

**Approval of Minutes from April 6, 2011**

Dr. Mark LeClair moved to approve minutes of April 6 and Dr. Brian Walker seconded the motion. All were in favor of the minutes. The Dean reminded chairs to read the minutes and share issues and discussion with colleagues.

**General College Business**

• ***Pre-Tenure Faculty Reviews and Letters***

- The Dean commended departments in their effort moving towards a common set of practices relative to Merit Reviews.
- Chair letters and dept processes are improving noticeably.
- The Dean commended Pre-Tenured faculty for following the Dean's instructions through this process.
- Faculty are submitting their CVs with their latest accomplishments highlighted, which facilitates feedback on the trajectory and also allows the Dean and Associate Dean to discuss categorizing activities to their greatest advantage relative to service, teaching, research.
- Annual conversations offer an opportunity to help junior faculty in terms of presenting their work outside of their own department, where the norms of organizing CVs may vary. For example, in the sciences and arts, it is not always clear to the Dean what is peer-reviewed, what is

prestigious, etc. Seeing this on the CV allows her to have a high quality conversation, helping junior faculty present specific accomplishments in their Rank and Tenure review materials.

- Dr. Weiss and the Dean had great conversations with our junior colleagues who are a wonderful reflection of our search and hiring practices.

- While much is improving in terms of calibrating practices across departments, there are still a few areas for continued improvement:

- Engaging deeply enough with department colleagues during the reviews. It is important that everyone is invested in the annual review and formative development of their pre-tenure colleague. It is important for all faculty within the department to offer feedback through a vote or consensus. There will be a large number of Tenure applications next year. Any colleague in their fifth year, who are considering applying for tenure had concerted conversation with the Dean and with their chair, discussing the wisdom of their application.
- Practices surrounding writing and sharing peer-reviews of teaching still vary widely. In some departments, faculty who engage in peer observation offer detailed written feedback to the candidate. In others, feedback is given to the department chair and then the chair summarizes all observations in a letter to the Dean, but the candidate never receives this feedback until the time they receive a copy of the annual review letter. The Dean expressed the importance behind junior faculty receiving formative feedback in writing, inclusive of both negative and positive assessments. When pre-tenured faculty receive feedback, many include at least one of these letters with their annual review packet and comment on how they have tried to address the feedback they've received. As well, this information is very helpful to the Dean and Associate Dean when they write their letters. It allows them to see the depth of faculty/colleague engagement with junior faculty teaching and supplement the data on the student evals.
- While it is the candidates' responsibility to build a teaching portfolio (including seeking feedback from colleagues), it is the chair's responsibility (or the mentor if you have them in the dept) to facilitate this process and ensure tenured colleagues are making an effort to observe and share feedback.
- The chair's letter should include both positive and constructive comments. It is their responsibility to engage in a rigorous review and keep a good paper trail (particularly when the terms of the chair may mean a jr. colleague has more than one chair during the probationary period).
- Letters should engage with the quality and quantity of scholarship/creative activity, quality of teaching and other interactions with students, and quantity and quality of service.
- Letters should include a recommendation about contract renewal that reflects the will of the dept. (whether unanimous, mixed, or conditional).

Dr. Steve Bayne's interpretation of the Dean's instructions relative to junior colleague reviews was to include the original peer-reviews from colleagues within the department. The Dean mentioned that some colleagues are not comfortable with sharing individual feedback; they would prefer the chair to summarize comments as a whole department. The Dean's office engages in very intensive and supportive mentoring of colleagues, so the more information they obtain the better job they can do. We cannot rely solely on student evaluation data. So some detailed observational report is useful. Candidates and chairs should discuss what they prefer to submit.

Dr. Cecelia Bucki mentioned that none of her senior colleagues will share negative feedback with a junior faculty. She asked how transparent they should be through this process, without upsetting the dynamics of the department? The Dean mentioned that every department has its own culture. There are colleagues that are defensive to feedback, while others are welcoming and responsive. Part of developing a healthy organizational dynamic is having feedback structures that work with the culture of the department. It is acceptable for the chair to pull together the comments of the department as a whole, before sharing feedback, as long as both positive and constructive feedback is offered with some detail.

Dr. Mary Ann Carolan mentioned that she wrote a summary of all of the department feedback. She suggested that written communication take place colleague to colleague, copying the chair. The chair could then include all communications in her remarks to the Dean. The Dean affirmed that this was a fine approach, and mentioned that she does not necessarily need to see all of the observation reports, but she would like to have at minimum one (the chair will, additionally, reflect his/her own observation within the chair letter).

The Dean thinks the best plan is for the pre-tenured colleague to include whatever teaching evidence they would like the Dean to see prior to their meeting. Some detail peer-review should supplement the evaluation data. Several candidates shared their IDEA forms with the Dean, engaging in a rich and deep discussion of teaching, student perceptions, etc. She will encourage candidates to share their IDEA data (if not with the Dean, then with the chair, an associate dean, or at least discuss them with the CAE).

- ***Rank and Tenure Process***

- The Dean mentioned that there could be approximately 12 tenure cases and 4 or 5 promotion cases next year.
- The R&T guidelines apply the same for all faculty going up for promotion.
- She encouraged all chairs to be very familiar with the guidelines and the new time line.

Dr. LeClair asked the Dean to clarify what information was needed for the Rank and Tenure May 31st deadline. The Dean commented that the intent to apply, along with a list of external reviewers was required for this deadline. The new requirements state that the Dean's Office will contact the external reviewers to seek their agreement to serve. The process offers a time frame of six weeks between the time applicants submit their intent and list and the Dean's office ascertains the willingness of external reviewers to serve. This allows for the production of dialogs and room for addition or deletion of names. Candidates or chairs should not contact external reviewers. The Dean has the right to add a name, while the applicant has the right to ask that their materials not be sent to a specific reviewer. Associate Dean Joan Weiss will send out the request to serve, along with the CV of the R&T candidate. Once we know how many are willing and available, the Dean will choose three candidates from each applicants list. The Dean's office seeks to work in the best

interest of the candidate and if their list is well chosen, the Dean will most likely not be compelled to seek additional reviewers.

Dr. Carolan asked if the new procedure requires applicants to submit their list of external reviewers to the chairs prior to the Dean's Office. The Dean commented that this is not part of the formal guidelines, but at the end of the third year faculty should begin to dialog with chairs to begin to think about what reviewers they should consider. It is in the candidate's best interest to work with chairs to put together their best case, including selecting reviewers who will be seen as credible. Given the extended time, the Dean will have an opportunity to discuss all of this with the chairs.

Dr. Bucki commented that it seemed that most reviewers demonstrate a primary focus on scholarship. Bucki asked the Dean if she had intentions of being explicit about receiving comments in the areas of teaching and service. The Dean mentioned that she would like people to know what it is to do research and how much research is reasonable in a primarily undergraduate institutional context. She would like at least one reviewer on the list to understand first-hand the context in which we work, because it is in the candidate's best interest. But having a list of friends, allies, and collaborators works very much against the candidate, so it's important to choose impartial reviewers.

Dr. James Simon asked for clarification as to whether the candidate should have contact with people on their list. The Dean said that in the new protocol, the candidates should not reach out to their list of external reviewers; the Dean's Office will take care of this. The process should adhere to national norms. Last year, potential letter writers expressed discomfort about hearing from candidates. As well, the commentary of the reviewer is much more credible with the R&T Committee if there has been no contact. (Of course, throughout the probationary period candidates should be thinking about whether someone who comments on their presentation at a meeting and such might be possible future reviewers).

Dr. Angela Biselli asked if chairs should communicate to candidates that they should begin working on updating their CVs. The Dean already informed all candidates to begin with these updates, explaining that by having an updated CV the potential letter writer can determine at a glance whether they are interested in reviewing the candidate's work. The CV goes out with the request to review, as is normative.

The Dean mentioned that she often has conversations with senior colleagues planning to go up for full-professor. She encouraged them to have conversations with their chair and other senior colleagues as they plan for promotion. Chairs should find opportunities to mentor colleagues as they work toward promotion or to match an associate professor with a full professor mentor in the dept.

- ***Merit Reviews and Formative Feedback in Departments***
  - The new CAS merit application and review system worked well and faculty seemed to find it straightforward and streamlined.

- The Dean received feedback from department chairs on the University Merit Plan. The University Merit Plan is General Faculty business, so if colleagues are seeking change in the plan, they should initiate a conversation with the Academic Council or Faculty Salary Committee.
- Relative to this, the Dean expressed interest in having pre-tenure colleagues automatically qualify for Standard Merit throughout their probationary period, unless they are not recommended for a contract renewal. In previous years some of the deans from the other schools did not support this; their compromise was automatic for the first three years only. With the change of deanship in many of the other schools, the CAS Dean will ask the Academic Council to revisit this situation. The Dean mentioned that the current University Merit Plan states that faculty in their first 3 years should receive Standard Merit; however, it does not clearly state within their first three years of *their clock* not specifically their first three years at Fairfield. This should be clarified through Academic Council.
- As for Additional Merit, when there is any, all faculty would have to apply.
- Dr. Nancy Dallavalle commented that the Religious Studies Department voiced a concern about confidentiality. They were surprised to learn that there was a name attached to the summary of work. The Dean shared that the College Planning Committee addressed this issue, and they felt they would be able to determine who the applicant was; they did not feel going anonymous was necessary. Dr. Bayne mentioned that colleagues in his area expressed the same concern.
- Dr. Biselli asked if the point of having someone in the department was to check to make sure the application makes sense. The Dean mentioned that, interestingly, any “no” votes this year were from the non-departmental reviewer. This may reinforce Biselli’s point that the department understands better what is normative or substantive in the discipline (and dispels some folks’ fears that their dept colleagues might not be objective or might exercise personal biases against their colleagues).
  
- The Dean affirmed all recommendations that came from the committee. People not qualified for Standard Merit were around the range of 10 to 12, mostly because they missed the deadline or chose not to apply. Dr. Crawford mentioned that the final numbers will come out through the faculty salary committee.
- Dr. Carolan shared that some of the junior faculty were confused. The Dean added that this was why she would like to take them out of the mix. They should not be responsible for submitting two reports. She felt that the criteria should be changed to say “through pre-tenure years.” Dr. Crawford affirmed that the salary committee strongly felt that pre-tenured faculty should not be spending their time on these applications. The Dean agreed, adding that pre-tenure review is a rigorous, comprehensive, and vigilant process, while the merit review is not nearly as thorough.
  
- The Dean asked folks to share the ways they offered “formative feedback” after the merit review process, so that departments could learn from each others’ examples:
  - Dr. LeClair said he visited faculty within the Economics Department by going door to door. He talked about their own progress towards their own goals and professionalism.
  - Dr. Carolan had a final meeting of the year, where everyone distributed their Merit reports to their colleagues. If people did not submit Merit they were asked to write 3 paragraphs.

- Dr. Crawford had a one-on-one discussion with colleagues from the Sociology and Anthropology department. He received positive feedback from junior faculty. Discussions took place in pairs (with faculty choosing their own partner) talking about their work and their goals.
  - Dr. Steffen said the Chemistry Department has three pre-tenured faculty and three senior faculty, who cooperate nicely with junior faculty. Senior faculty are talking on an individual basis with Steffen about their goals.
  - Dean—Creating a culture where associate professors identify goals for their work and seek mentoring among senior colleagues from time to time is important. The Dean commented that, interestingly, many full professors are continually active, but many associate professors may have dropped off in one or more of the areas since tenure. Senior colleagues should take interest in assisting them in finding their way to ongoing professional productivity and satisfaction.
  - Dr. Bucki mentioned that the History Department's final meeting for the academic year is next week. She will try the method of sharing Merit reports with colleagues within the department. She also shared that the department engages in very successful summer work. The Dean commended the department for building a collegial environment where teaching improvement is always on the table for open and shared discussion.
  - Dr. Carolan shared that she forwarded the Dean's e-mail highlighting the University Merit plan. The Dean suggested that faculty engage in greater conversations about how to become more visible, engaging in workshops, seeking opportunities needed for research, participating in faculty learning communities and writing groups, and identifying committees relative to faculty service.
  - Dr. Patton shared that faculty in the Politics department expressed opposition towards the pairing method suggested by the Dean. The department agreed that if they were interested in a formative discussion, they would schedule a meeting with the chair. None of the Politics faculty moved forward for feedback.
  - Dr. Dallavalle said she experienced the same feedback. She felt that sharing other departmental approaches with her colleagues may be helpful.
  - The Dean mentioned that all of these practices will be listed in the Dean's Council minutes, so chairs could glean a list of approaches and share with their department colleagues.
- **Annual Reports**
    - This year's annual report (due June 1) will require less work than previous years. The Dean will streamline the guidelines of the report to focus on filling in the blanks, relative to aggregate statistics, by highlighting information such as: 1) How many books published, presentations, articles, etc; 2) The NEASC Rubric; and 3) Student highlights, using the CAS spreadsheet model.

The following questions/comments were addressed relative to the annual reports:

- Dr. Carolan thought that asking colleagues for CVs would be helpful in obtaining the information the Dean would be requesting—number of presentations, publications, journal articles, chapters, books, exhibits, etc. The Dean agreed that faculty should be familiar with each others'

accomplishments, which also facilitates mutual respect and a stronger sense of intellectual community.

- Dr. Biselli mentioned that in the past this information was submitted into Eidos. The Dean welcomed faculty to continue to update their accomplishments in Eidos, if departments and programs use it for its business, and noted that it also can be useful to the College and the University (e.g., in the accreditation process). However, in order to make the College annual report more concise, we will not be downloading information from Eidos for this year's annual report or creating spreadsheets from material that are archived in this database. The Dean will be looking into the expected formal role for Eidos in the upcoming NEASC 5-year review.
- Dr. Marcie Patton commented that if this data is collected then colleagues should not be doing another annual report. The Dean reiterated that colleagues should not be doing another annual report; the June annual report is not a compilation of individual faculty annual reports, but rather the *department's* annual report. Some reiteration of statistics could be reported, but specific faculty information was already placed into individual merit reports (as well as pre-tenure reviews, etc.).
- The Dept Annual report focuses on dept/program/student accomplishments that are not reported elsewhere, as well as aggregate faculty accomplishments.
- Curricular innovations, etc. would be the focus.
- If the Dean has been working with departments to move along particular initiatives progress in those areas should be listed.
- Reports from department chairs on plans for summer work on Assessment, Curricular Revisions, Program Review preparation, etc.
- Truly extraordinary faculty accomplishments and awards indeed should be highlighted. These highlights are shared with the President and the Sr. Vice President of Academic Affairs and used as a cultivation tool to share with donors who are interested in specific programs.

- **Dean Announcements**

- The Tenure Track approved searches for FY '12 were announced—Economics, English, History, Math, Modern Languages, Philosophy, Politics, Psychology and Religious Studies.
- Visiting & Professor of the Practice—Most of the approvals for these positions have been communicated. The Dean is still advocating in some high need or new need areas.
- Dr. Crawford mentioned that a lot of the hiring information seemed to gear towards tenure track hires and the Sociology and Anthropology Department was hiring a one-year visiting assistant professor. The Dean recommended that advertising for visiting positions should be posted, at minimum, on the University webpage, in *The Chronicle* or another on-line source. A position advertisement needs to be attached to the Authorization to Hire. The Authorization to Hire must be completed with all required signatures, before the ad could be placed.
- The Dean commented that she does not want departments to automatically offer a visiting position to an adjunct because the department feels the adjunct is deserving. When these positions are advertised, it protects the University from adjuncts pursuing a law suit, because they were not considered. The advertisement offers the adjunct the opportunity to apply, and indeed strong candidates should, and often are, selected.

- These visiting positions should be competitive, and based on a comprehensive review of qualifications and teaching effectiveness.
  - If a dept gets approval to continue a visiting position, the person in it should not be renewed if colleagues are not satisfied with effectiveness of teaching and appropriate engagement with the department norms. The specific area can be changed, the position should be advertised again, and the person may compete for it.
  - Dr. Bayne asked for clarification on the procedures for placing a hiring ad. Does Human Resources place the ad once the position is approved? The Dean expressed her concern with the inefficiency the College experienced when dealing with Human Resources placing job advertisements last year. Dr. Bayne mentioned that Human Resources are in the process of developing new procedures. We all hope this will work better.
  - Dr. Bucki shared that she experienced a disaster two years ago with Human Resources not placing the position advertisement. The History department will not go through Human Resources. They will go through the department and seek reimbursement. The Dean shared that she previously complained to supervisors in HR to make sure they were aware of the severity the College faces when these errors occur. There was a problem with a Biology search, as well, where Human Resources made their own decision as to when to place their job listing. The staff do not understand the variations and expectations in the disciplines, but the faculty do.
  - Dr. Steffen mentioned that in the past there have been concerns about the legal ramifications relative to listing a position. The Dean mentioned that the ad has to be approved, before it is posted but they could be posted in multiple sources.
  - Dr. John McCarthy mentioned that the department will begin to plan their search in Psychology. He asked for clarification in terms of whether the department could place their job listing on their own, submitting reimbursement for the cost. The Dean clarified by stating that chairs should follow the University protocol. Chairs should communicate clearly with Human Resources throughout the process. Once the advertisement language has been approved, and deadlines for placing the ad, she recommended that chairs be proactive in following up with Human Resources to ensure their deadline is met. While we will attempt to follow HR procedures, we also will not compromise our search success, so we may have to take matters into our own hands.
- **Budgets**
    - Operating and Capital Budgets—The College is hoping to communicate budget approvals by July 1, depending on the receipt of these approvals from the Sr. Academic Vice President's Office. *[NOTE: The Dean did not receive the budgets until the end of July].*
    - Concerns relative to printing and graphic charges were expressed. Departments run short on funds earmarked for various operating needs or travel commitments due to the non-transparent P&G charges deducted from their budgets.
    - Dr. Patton expressed concerns about finance forms being returned due to insufficient information. The Dean explained that with new leadership, it is necessary to include more detail in explanation of finance requests. The new Vice President of Finance is working towards evaluating University budget spending patterns efficiently, and doing so, she seeks understanding of where funds are being exhausted. The Dean mentioned that, previously, the



budgeting at the University was not effectively documented and proper accounting procedures were not necessarily enforced. She asked folks to be more patient with the process and adaptable to the changes implemented. Work with Ms. Jean Daniele on specific questions and concerns.

- **2011 Chairs' Retreat**

- Monday August 29<sup>th</sup> 8:30-4:30 with continental breakfast, lunch, and clambake.
- The Dean asked for the number of chairs interested in the following topics:
  - Legal Issues-potentially with the University Attorney/Personnel Law (3)
  - Assessment (3)
  - Mentoring or other personnel managing (3)
  - Leadership skill development (1)
  - Conflict Management (5)
  - Part-time students and programs as we anticipate the University College transition. (\*)
  - Strategic Planning at department level (0)

The Dean handed out a proposed revision of a Program Review queue, moving some of the departments up on the list. The departments most significantly impacted are Politics, History, and Visual and Performing Arts. These changes are open for discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 to a dinner at Southport Brewery.