ACADEMIC COUNCIL
Minutes
Monday, April 4, 2016 from 3:30 to 5:00 PM
CNS 200

Faculty Members Present: Behre, Bhattacharya, Boquet, Crawford, Downie, Epstein, Hannafin, Klug, Kris, Lane, McDermott, Preli, Rakowitz (General Faculty Secretary), Rusu (Executive Secretary), Steffen, Smith, Strauss (Chair), Weiss, Yarrington
Administrators Present: Babington, Gibson, Hannafin, Kazer, Williams
Student Observer: Megan Benson
Guests: Lynne Porter
Regrets: Berdanier

1. Presidential courtesy

Dean Babington noted that over 11k applications have been received for the incoming freshman class. In addition, students have accepted their offers at a much brisker rate. There has been the same percentage of students without test scores- about 27%.

There are several important faculty accomplishments to note. Prof. Adair was awarded an NEH summer stipend grant, Prof. Farrell was awarded a Franklin Research Grant and Prof. Lacy was awarded a Fulbright scholarship. On 4/5, the Dolan School of Business hosted a “shark tank” program for SOB students. On 4/20, students in the sciences will present their student-faculty research posters and on 4/21 there will be a ground-breaking for the new School of Nursing.

Prof. Rakowitz asked about the timeline for the formation of a committee for the selection of a new CAS dean. Provost Babington noted that we would not be forming a committee at this time. Prof. Lane asked if we should be prepared to form a committee at our next meeting. Provost Babington reiterated that it would not be necessary to form a committee at this time. Prof. Rakowitz expressed concern as to why a committee would not be formed, noting that in the event that an interim dean would be named as the new dean, a committee would still be required. Provost Babington noted, that for reasons she is not at liberty to disclose, it would not be necessary to form a committee. She noted, however, if we needed to form a committee, we would move according to procedure. Provost Babington noted that we should anticipate an announcement later this week which would add clarity to her remarks. Prof. Rakowitz expressed concern at the lack of transparency.

2. Report from the Secretary of the General Faculty

Prof. Rakowitz notes this is a full agenda. We may need to recess prior to completing the full agenda.

3. Report from the Executive Secretary

Minutes from the March 14, 2016 meeting were approved.

4a. Post tenure review subcommittee report.

Prof. Smith noted that the committee met and discussed feedback from faculty. They tried to include, where possible, rationale for language to be considered. Professor Yarrington notes that they carefully reviewed the document with consideration of the word “merit”. There was a
discussion of the reasoning regarding the types of broader and deeper conversations that faculty might have with their Deans at the time of annual evaluation. The document aims to clarify language, and still have a review system which addresses the needs of Associate and Full professors. Prof. Rakowitz asked about the inclusion of the terminology for calendar year instead of an academic year. She asked clarification about the reference to the word “minimum” as it modifies the term “5 years”. Prof. Rakowitz notes that this language is confusing throughout the document. Prof. Smith clarified that the word should be a “maximum” of five years for Full professors and “3 years” for Associate professors. There was also a question about the need to sit down with a Dean instead of a Department Chair. Prof. Smith explained a scenario in which a full professor, with potential subpar teaching may be sitting down with a Chair, who may hold a lower rank. As a result, the conversation may be difficult. This is the rationale for having faculty sit down with the Dean. Prof. Yarrington noted that Chairs are typically most focused on faculty coming up for tenure.

Prof. Boquet noted that in her department there are very few untenured faculty members. Therefore, the annual evaluation is an important time to think about mentoring faculty at the Associate and Full Professor levels. She noted that she is worried about ceding what should be departmental concerns to Deans. In addition, she feels that it is concerning that Department Chairs could feel unable to have difficult conversations with professors who outrank them. Prof. Boquet is concerned about moving these conversations from the faculty level to the administrator level. Professor Yarrington notes that nothing in this document removes the ability of Chairs from being able to have these conversations, this simply adds another level of review.

Prof. Preli notes that she is concerned that there is an underlying message that Professors need to continue to prove they are worthy of tenure, “If we are continually needing to make the case that faculty are doing their jobs in order to get their pay, it sends the message that tenure is no longer tenure”. If a senior faculty member gets to a point where their teaching is no longer sufficient, why would this conversation not already have happened? Prof. Preli asked, “What is the consequence if a faculty member elects not to participate in this process?” In addition, Prof. Preli noted that she objects to the use of the language “all the ways faculty may be deficient” – this clarification should be a side note, not part of a formal document.

Prof. Klug asked about a situation in which a timeline is set between a Dean and a faculty member: What if the timeline is not met? What is the consequence? Prof. Klug noted that in her experience, she was not sure that this would necessarily motivate a change in behavior. She noted that there are already numerous opportunities for a faculty member to seek help with their teaching.

Prof. Downie asked if there was a timeline for the development of these guidelines. In addition, he thanked the committee for their hard work on their document. He noted that this is something that is necessary to address.

Prof. Strauss noted that the language “we agreed to”, is that we needed to have a conversation, not necessarily agree to a plan. Prof. Downie noted that we would not want to rush into any language.

Dean Kazer wanted to point out that there are schools on campus that do not have Department Chairs, so by including references to Department Chairs, some schools will be excluded from the process. She notes that each school may need to come up with an individual process which meets their own needs.
Prof. Behre noted that tenure is not about job security, it is about the ability to maintain intellectual integrity. This document seems to cement the fallacy that this is about job security.

Prof. Epstein argued that tenure is about academic freedom by way of job security. This document is trying to separate out something like tenure from performance assessment. He notes that this is something that may be a job requirement, like graduation. The point of this, is to separate out performance assessment from the process of pay and tenure. Prof. Yarrington asked Prof. Epstein if his comments were in support of the document. Prof. Epstein agreed, he is in support of the document.

Prof. Downie wanted to make sure that the language is clear that this is not a process that can be used to remove jobs from the University. Prof. Downie noted that this is a tool of professional development apart from other processes.

Dean Williams argued that he feels qualified to evaluate teaching in his own academic area. He can assess, “Are faculty going to the conferences in their areas? Are they integrating the latest scholarship?” He noted that this should be a formative assessment.

Prof. Smith noted that this process ties into the mission of the University. This should be a formative assessment aimed at faculty development. In any organization you would hope that faculty would seek out guidance and reflect on their professional development. She noted that it was never thought of as being anything other than opportunity for development.

Prof. Yarrington noted that it was being looked at in a positive light. They looked at the AAUP language and other documents to incorporate best practices to strive for academic excellence. Prof. Klug notes that one of the positive aspects of this process is separating the merit system from professional development. However, both in this document as well as in the journal of record, those two things are still linked.

Prof. Epstein noted that the aim is for a decoupling of these two ideas. This is what this document hopefully achieves.

Prof. Steffen noted that this process is meant to be formative. He asked, “Does this reasonably end the current merit system? If so, does it replace it with something worse?” We need to decide if this will put us in a better position in terms of a formative evaluation and in merit. Under Appendix 12, point 3c., he suggested the removal of the words “a bit” from the sentence. The language should simply use the word “stalled”.

Prof. Boquet asked if the committee discussed the use of something like elected bodies, or faculty bodies rather than relying on the structure of a Dean. Prof. Smith noted that they did discuss other possibilities. The committee decided early in the discussion that that might lead to a substantially more complicated process.

Prof. Crawford noted that generally speaking, he is somewhat ambivalent about the proposal. He notes that although he would engage in the process, there may be others that might not participate. He asked to clarify what might happen in that situation.
Prof. Preli read a section of the preamble to the AAUP policy in contradiction, noting that she does not believe that a formal process needs to be in place. These discussions can occur outside of a formal process. Prof. Preli noted that she would be happy to engage in these conversations, however she does not believe that the direction that this is going happens to be in support of a formative process.

Prof. Lane noted that he believes that Deans should be meeting with their faculty members, as per protocol. It would be better to put as little as possible in writing and take out negative language. He notes that he believes this document should go to faculty for more feedback and consideration.

Concerns were noted about the negative language in the document, noting that it is hard to believe that if someone is not fulfilling their contract that they would not be removed.

Prof. McDermott stated that it should be kept in the realm of development, take out deficiencies and use language of continuing excellence.

Prof. Yarrington says that there is not a process in place for formative evaluation. Prof. Bhattacharya noted that big companies are getting away from this type of performance appraisal process because it not productive. Prof. Weiss noted that this is a “good document” in response to the conversations we had last year. Prof. Strauss asked for the will of the faculty in terms of moving forward with the document.

**Motion (Rakowitz/Epstein): The council recognizes the work of the committee in addressing their charge and suggests that the council send specific feedback on the language to the committee.**

Prof. Rakowitz says that she feels that this is better than the current merit system. She noted that she would like some changes in some of the language. While she is aware that the committee has gone through several rounds of revisions, she noted that this may be the first opportunity that we are looking at specific feedback on language.

Prof. Smith noted that in the event that it is not possible to get all of the feedback quickly, she reviewed the timeline of what needs to happen to have this happen this year. If this is not approved, it may not be ready for the General Faculty to approve at the next faculty meeting.

Prof. Strauss noted that the minutes of these meetings are all public record which demonstrate robust discussion on this issue. Prof. Epstein noted that the language we had agreed to is that there would be a discussion, and it seems that we have met that requirement. Prof. Strauss notes that the charge of the committee is verbatim from the language of the MOU. Prof. Rakowitz noted that the language may need to be updated to go to the FSC, as well as the General Faculty.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Prof. Strauss made note of the time. The Council agreed that should we recess prior to finishing the agenda, we continue moving forward with the agenda on 4/18.

**7a. Approval of CoC ballot for May 4 General Faculty meeting committee elections.**
Prof. Rakowitz notes that she does not have enough names for a ballot, but that she hopes to have this ready for our reconvened meeting.

7b. Proposal for a Minor in Graphic Design

Prof. Epstein asked why students cannot enroll in graphic design until they have completed several other courses. Prof. Porter noted that students would need these courses by way of background. Prof. Epstein asked if we had offered these classes previously. Prof. Porter clarified that this class will be offered in the fall. It was also asked why the proposal has not asked for additional tenure track faculty. Prof. Porter noted that if there was appropriate demand, there would be a request for additional tenure track faculty. However, they will wait and see how the minor goes.

Prof. Lane asked for numbers. How many students are interested? How many students are here versus at other Universities? Prof. Porter noted that students have been asking for this for a long time. Prof. Yarrington noted that about half of the 10 graduates are interested in this.

Prof. Bhattacharya noted that some of the business students may be interested in this, however because of the prerequisite courses, they may not be able to enroll in the minor. Prof. Porter noted that if students are smart about their core, it is only a 4 course minor. Prof. Porter also noted that it was possible that there may be some exceptions initially, in order to allow students to enroll in the minor without the prerequisite courses. Prof. Rakowitz asked about the CAD course, “What would that count for?” Prof. Porter noted that this is a computer program, not related to the graphic design minor.

Motion to approve the minor in graphic design (Steffen/ Downie)

Prof. Downie spoke in favor of the motion, noting that it is a good use of adjuncts to have them teach professionally in their fields. Prof. Epstein spoke in favor of the motion but noted that if the program is successful he hopes there would be the addition of tenure track faculty to foster development. Dean Williams noted that he is in favor of the proposal. Prof. Yarrington stated that she is also in favor of the proposal, noting it is something that students have been requesting for several years.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to recess to 4/18. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Prof. Kris