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College of Arts & Sciences Council Meeting : 2012 : 09 : 28

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CAS Faculty Council

Meeting Minutes for September 28, 2012

Faculty Council Members *present*: Sheramy Bundrick (Chair), Rebecca Johns (Co-Chair), Henry Alegria, Dawn Cecil, Tiffany Chenneville, Jill McCracken, Paul Wang

Faculty Council Members *absent*: Chris Meindl and Melanie Riedinger-Whitmore

Guests: Ella Schmidt (CAS Faculty Senate representative), Mark Durand, and Barnali Dixon

Sheramy Bundrick (Chair) called the meeting to order at 10:00am

We had a quorum to vote.

Dr. Meindl was absent so Dr. Chenneville agreed to take minutes for this meeting.

The Council reviewed and voted to approve minutes from the August 17th meeting.

Dr. Johns reported on the filling of committees. All committees currently are filled to include the Academic Programs Committee and the Scholarship Committee. In the spring, Dr. McHale will replace Dr. Wang, who will be on leave, on the Faculty Council.

Dr. Johns also reported on her attendance at the Department Chairs September 12th meeting. Reportedly, Charlie Justice spoke about the need for more Honors societies and opportunities on campus. The need to highlight faculty research on the campus webpage also was discussed. Jennifer Woroner reminded Chairs of the need to evaluate adjunct faculty before midterm if they want to be re-hired the following semester. Evaluations must include classroom observation and syllabus review. Because evaluations will take place before student teaching evaluations are available, adjunct evaluations can be later modified. There was discussion about the need for a better process regarding the review of human subjects research being submitted to the Institutional Review Board at USF Tampa. Currently, all CAS IRB submissions are being reviewed and approved by psychology faculty, namely Drs. McHale and Pezzo. The need to institute a process whereby department chairs are responsible for this review/approval process was discussed. This will require Department Chairs being entered into the eIRB system. There also reportedly was discussion about the transition to Canvas. Canvas trainings currently are being offered and faculty will have 18 months to completely convert current courses in Blackboard to Canvas. There continues to be a hiring freeze although some exceptions have been made based on individual circumstances within some departments. Faculty are being encouraged to submit study abroad proposals.

Two other issues discussed at the Chairs meeting, which generated considerable discussion by the Faculty Council, included travel funds and fees for room reservations on campus. With regard to travel funds, reportedly, \$5000 has been allocated to 10 new

Junior Faculty (\$500 each). There is \$5000 remaining for travel, but the procedure for its distribution is unclear. In the past, the Faculty Council was responsible for reviewing requests for travel funds but relinquished this responsibility several years ago, allowing for individual departments to review and grant requests based on monies allotted to each department. This year, it does not appear as if funds are being distributed to departments, and there is no clear indication how the Dean is making decisions on the distribution of these funds. Is priority being given to Junior Faculty? Is priority being given to Associate Professors trying to advance to Full Professors over Visiting Professors? Given that limited funds are available, should Visiting Professors be provided with travel funds at all? Is priority given to faculty presenting, as opposed to merely attending, conferences? Dr. Johns agreed to speak with Dean Biafora about this issue to gain clarification and to discuss whether or not the Faculty Council should be involved in this decision making process. Also on the topic of travel funds, faculty are being encouraged to look for distance learning opportunities at the conferences they attend because then distance learning funds, which reportedly have diminished greatly, can be used to support travel.

With regard to room reservations, faculty must pay full fees for use of the University Student Center unless use involves a student organization. Subsequent to the Chairs meeting, a list outlining the fees associated with different locations, was emailed to Department Chairs. There were questions among the Faculty Council about how individual faculty should/could obtain funds to pay these fees, especially in cases where room reservations are related to course activities. Drs. Bundrick and Johns agreed to discuss this issue with Dean Biafora.

The use of undergraduate teaching assistants (TAs), which was brought up during the last Faculty Council meeting on August 17th, was discussed at length today. Dr. Bundrick started the discussion by providing an overview of the history of this issue. Dr. Bundrick also reviewed the Faculty Council Bylaws, which were interpreted as meaning that it is within the Faculty Council's purview to make recommendations to the Dean about the issue of undergraduate TAs. Parenthetically, this interpretation was later questioned. Dr. Bundrick presented three major issues: (1) What are the legal implications (i.e., FERPA) regarding using undergraduate students as TAs?; (2) What is the impact for students?; and (3) What is the impact for faculty with regard to equity relative to awards and tenure and promotion? Another related issue was whether or not we can or should distinguish between paid TAs, unpaid TAs who are enrolled in directed study, and unpaid TAs who are not enrolled in directed study (i.e., volunteers).

To explore the issue of FERPA, Dr. Johns contacted the FERPA Compliance Officer, the U.S. Department of Education, and the USF System General Council. Linda Crossman from the Registrar's office and Vice Chancellor Norine Noonan also were consulted as they are the FERPA officers for USFSP. Individual faculty in various departments also did some investigation on this issue. Results from these inquiries were mixed. Interpretations of FERPA reportedly are gray although FERPA does clearly state that paid or unpaid TAs are considered "official representatives" of the university and, therefore, are covered under FERPA. However, Linda Crossman initially stated, in an email dated 9/13/22, that it is illegal for unpaid TAs to have access to student records and

ethically unsound to use directed study as a means of obtaining a TA. According to Linda Crossman, as employees of USFSP, paid TAs are able to have access to student records, including grades. Linda Crossman later changed her opinion and, in an email dated 9/26/12, said that paid, unpaid, and/or volunteer TAs can have access to individual student records but only paid TAs should have access to gradebook in Blackboard. Parenthetically, it was recommended that Linda Crossman be made fully aware of how Blackboard (or Canvas as we move to that) works before making this decision definitive given that much of student work is accessed via the electronic gradebook on the learning management system (i.e., Blackboard, Canvas). Linda Crossman “discouraged” use of directed study for TAs based on the fact that the TA experience will not be accurately reflected on the student’s transcript. She recommended that departments create a teaching assistant course to address this issue. Parenthetically, Dr. Durand reported that the Psychology Department plans to add a Teaching of Psychology course, already approved in the state system, to their curriculum to address this issue. Dr. Bundrick presented five specific questions to the Faculty Council: (1) Should directed study be used for TAs?; (2) Should, alternatively, individual departments create a teaching assistant course?; (3) Should “volunteers” be permitted to serve as TAs?; (4) Should the Faculty Council recommend guidelines to the Dean for approval of directed study courses?; and (5) Should the Faculty council recommend to the Dean the creation of guidelines for the use of undergraduate TAs? In response to these questions, a thorough discussion ensued. The need for transparency was a recurrent theme in this discussion. After much contemplation about the potential pros and cons of all of these issues, Dr. Johns made a motion that the Chair of the Faculty Council attend the next Department Chairs meeting to present this issue and request that individual departments create policies and procedures related to the use of undergraduate TAs and submit these policies to the Faculty Council for review. Dr. Chenneville seconded this motion, and we unanimously agreed this is the best course of action at this time.

Dr. Bundrick expressed concern that the current Faculty Council bylaws may need to be updated given that many of the bylaws were created before we had individual departments, and there seems to be some discrepancy between the current bylaws and views about the role of the Faculty Council. We decided to table this discussion until the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tiffany Chenneville