Committee on Faculty Affairs

Minutes (prepared by Gary Dickinson)

September 22, 2021

Present: Tim Clydesdale, Linda Dempf, Gary Dickinson, Christopher Fisher, Brenda Ghitulescu, Lakshmi Gurram, John Marshall, Amanda Norvell, Manish Paliwal, Michael Smith

Excused: Carolina Marques-Borges

1. Minutes from Sept. 8, 2021 meeting approved after minor corrections. Norvell motioned, Marshall seconded.
2. CFA agree to meeting virtually this semester because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Meeting logistics will be reassessed in the Spring.
3. Disciplinary Standards Review:
   1. ECE DS Review completed and approved previous academic year.
   2. Sociology & Anthropology – Fisher reached out to the department chair, Lynn Gazley , on status. Gazley said the department will send the DS after it completes a pending promotion. Gazley added that the revised DS will include the comment from CFA memo to the department during the 2020-2021 academic cycle.
   3. BME – Fisher spoke with the department chair, Chris Wagoner, who said BME planned to work on the revisions this semester
4. RPD Service Requirements:
   1. Fisher reviewed the charge and talked with Matt Wund, the previous CFA chair, to get his take on the task. CFA is asked to review the service requirements in light of the different personal, programmatic, disciplinary, and institutional factors that might influence how faculty and librarians serve. Fisher cited African American professors as informal advisors to students of color and frequently attend events, which are not reflected in traditional service expectations. CFA discussed the difficulty of quantifying different forms of service, defining service as a category, and identifying ways to Reward nontraditional service within the framework of the institution and promotion.
   2. Fisher moved the Service charge to CFA’s roster of active charges and said CFA would make a working group for the task.
5. Fisher clarified why item, Modification of Scholarly expectations for Associate Professors, carried over from Spring 2021. Wund informed him that he expected CFA to receive a charge concerning interruptions to Full Professor from Associate Professor because of the COVID 19 pandemic, but Steering did not send it. Fisher said that until Steering sends a formal charge, CFA will not address this matter.
6. SOSA:
   1. Former CFA chair, Matt Wund, visited the meeting to give an overview of the SOSA charge and the open forum on the preliminary recommendation CFA issued for public testimony in spring 2021. Wund reported that there were very strong opinions about the preliminary recommendation, which sought to distribute award more equitably across disciplines and programs by granting awards to everyone who completes a full application and sharply modifies the current lottery system. Wund said the preliminary recommendation emphasized equity and access but balanced that with increased focus on outcomes. Wund said approving every completed application would cut down on the time the SOSA committee devoted to reviewing applications because the main questions would be about the outcomes of faculty and librarians who reapply. Participants in the open forum (and online comments) raised many concerns about the proposed model for SOSA, but these stood out to Wund:
      1. The campus community wanted to see the data that drove the decision.
      2. Some argued the new model was not competitive.
      3. Some questioned whether the new model was an overreaction to the relatively few people who failed to get SOSA awards.
      4. Some thought the new application process was more onerous, especially using the disciplinary standards to determine the value of proposed SOSA project.
   2. In response to Wund’s report, CFA decided to revisit the preliminary recommendation and consider the following modifications:
      1. Work to resolve the conflict in SOSA’s aim, which is to reward active scholars AND motivate faculty seeking to re-engage with their scholarship.
      2. Streamline the application process, so the SOSA committee is not spending too much of their service time deciding how to reduce a person’s teaching and service load.
      3. Schedule much longer testimony for the discussion of the preliminary recommendation and Wund’s report clarifying the data.
7. Fisher noted that CFA would focus on the following at the Oct. 13 meeting:
   1. Review new English and Creative Writing Disciplinary standards
   2. Consider potential working groups for the active SOSA, Assessment (Preliminary recommendation completed), Student feedback, and Service RPD charges.

Adjourned, 2:57 pm.