Faculty Welfare Committee

Meeting Minutes
October 2, 2012
2:00 pm, Jewish Studies Center 3rd floor conference room

Present: Simon Lewis, John Crotts, Margaret Hagood, Celeste Lacroix, Todd McNerney, Hector Qirko, Allison Welch

1. Welcome, news and updates
   a. Staff Advisory Committee – Simon extended an invitation to the Staff Advisory Committee to join us our November 20 meeting, in order to discuss issues of mutual concern.
   b. Workplace survey – A motion will be presented at Faculty Senate proposing that the College participate in the Chronicle of Higher Education’s “Great Colleges to Work For” workplace satisfaction survey.

2. Survey subcommittee
   a. Members of the subcommittee presented a draft workplace environment survey, focusing on job satisfaction, commitment to the institution, and relationship with superiors. A wide-ranging discussion followed.
      i. The subcommittee prioritized using a pre-existing survey instrument so that data can be used comparatively, and to have confidence that the survey has been validated externally. The subcommittee also expressed a desire to proceed with a survey sooner rather than later, such that the committee can act on results during this academic year.
      ii. Concerns were raised about the wording, possible redundancy and possible subjectivity of some questions, as well as the content of some of the questions on satisfaction.
      iii. There appeared to be general agreement on the value of assessing faculty morale in relation to the opportunity to provide feedback about chairs and deans, as well as the ultimate interest in recommending that faculty be given an opportunity to evaluate chairs and deans annually.
   b. Ultimately no consensus was reached. The committee voted not to proceed with the survey in its current form. The survey will be posted to a Google doc to allow the committee to comment and then consider a potentially revised version.

3. Courtesies for departing faculty
   a. Information was shared from three faculty members who had recently left the college, describing some of the difficulties they experienced.
      i. Common themes included lack of communication about the process and loss of access to office and email immediately after the semester, resulting in former students or colleagues having no way to contact them with questions about grades, etc.
   b. David Cohen and Kay Smith have let us know that they are working on issues for retiring faculty. We will try to identify points of overlap and coordinate our efforts.
4. **Online teaching evaluations**  
a. Margaret Hagood followed up with Deanna Caveny-Noecker about the work of the ad hoc committee on online evaluations. Unfortunately the response does not address many of our concerns, including use of incentives and using data from small samples without consideration of statistical validity (e.g., means without standard deviations).  
i. Margaret will collect input from the committee in order to request further clarifications from Deanna and ultimately to develop a motion to present to Faculty Senate.

5. **New business**  
a. A concern was raised about the tendency for faculty professional development opportunities to be presented with very little lead time.  
i. For example, the new Faculty Administrative Fellows program was announced with less than one week until the application deadline. Other examples were brought up in which policies, opportunities or requests for information have been made with no or little lead time.

ii. Regarding the Faculty Administrative Fellows program, those members present were happy to see opportunities being offered to faculty, but were concerned that the short lead time may prevent qualified and interested faculty from applying. In addition, we hope that administration will consider implementing a Faculty Teaching Fellows program, as exists at a variety of other institutions, to promote and support exceptional teaching as well as exceptional service among our faculty.

iii. Both the issue of lead time and a Faculty Teaching Fellowship will be taken up at a future meeting.

*Submitted by: Allison Welch, 10/9/2012*