Faculty Advisory Committee to the President
Meeting minutes, 02/16/2022

Committee members present: Bob Podolsky (chair), Bethany Goodier (recorder), Joseph Wyers, Bob Pitts, Wes Dudgeon, Patricia Dillon, Suanne Ansari, Dan Greenberg, Chris Mothorpe, Vija Vuluva

Also present: President Andrew Hsu, Provost Suzanne Austin

The meeting began at 3:30 p.m. over Zoom.

Bob Podolsky raised that several issues have been in the news and the committee would like to discuss some points of shared governance.

President Hsu’s items first. He described them as follow up items from the last meeting.

- The appointment of Knudt Flor. Wanted to make sure he explained the reasoning for the Senior Vice President title. Given that his position is outward facing and upon the advice of external advisors and their advice was that the formal title mattered and does help with his conversations with potential partners.
- Bob Podolsky clarified that some of the concern came from the proliferation of Vice President titles during the Benson era.
- President Hsu requested some input on the new Dean searches. Bob Pitts thanked the Provost for coming to the department and spending time talking about the search. He expressed some concern about representation on the committee and that the search itself might be rushed. Specifically, they are concerned that faculty may not be as well represented and that the voice of the Board of Governors. The Provost clarified that the committee will represent the school as a whole and members are encouraged to reach out to broader groups. The goal is to create a strong, diverse committee. She acknowledged it is an aggressive timeline, but is hopeful that they can make it work. The plan is to advertise for 6 weeks.
- The School of Health Sciences search is an interim search.
- President Hsu raised the topic of REI and asked for faculty input. Margaret Hagood responded that she is supportive of keeping the name of the program Race, Equity, and Inclusion. She highlighted many important reasons for keeping it this way despite the challenges it might create.
- Provost Austin explained that the current situation is that we have to be thoughtful about the consequences of keeping Race, Equity and Inclusion as the name vs. naming it Core Values. The process for creating the requirement will require approval by CHE. They are concerned that it would not be approved.
- Many members shared their thoughts on the topic. Bob Podolsky and Margaret encouraged us to continue to engage faculty from across campus on the issue.
Committee Items for Discussion

- Continuing concerns about cleanliness. President Hsu explained that when he got here there was a budget deficit and he asked all departments to look for ways to cut their operating costs. He asked facilities to do the same and they indicated that if they dropped the “level” of cleanliness that we could save a lot of money. At the time, we were also experiencing a drop in enrollments and students indicating they would not enroll at a higher tuition rate. While our enrollment numbers increased, some of that was driven by scholarships and not an actual increase in revenue. We have been enrolling at higher numbers and improving revenues. Our projection for next year is healthy so we will be able to go back to the original level.
- Bob Podolsky asked the President about the email which characterized our level of cleanliness as moderate dinginess.
- Beth Goodier added that it is both the language and the faculty frustration that their spaces are regularly not cleaned and departmental resources and faculty resources are being spent on cleaning the space.
- Joseph suggested part of the challenge is that we have to put in multiple requests before you get any response. It’s important that people see a change very quickly.
- Dan Greenberg acknowledged that there was a period of time where work orders were handled quickly, but this has changed.
- Wes Dudgeon suggested that building representatives should be consulted as we are creating those contracts because the buildings have different needs.
- President Hsu acknowledged that we need to have better communication about this topic.

- Bob Podolsky raised the connection of College Reads to the REI conversation. Provost Austin explained that these programs have been discontinued at other institutions despite their popularity because a lot of students don’t read the book. We should revisit whether this format still works. We should make it optional and then collect some data. Relatedly, to hire someone for REI we need to find recurring funds. She suggested taking some of those funds to pay for that position.

(Bob Podolsky took over recording minutes from Beth Goodier.)

- Bob Podolsky raised the issue that the institution of CofC EXPO appeared to involve removal of an opportunity in the fall for the presentation of summer research, citing a message from the SSM Dean’s office.
- Provost Austin said there was no intention to remove opportunity for summer students to present their work, and she will circle back to talk about a fall event where such presentations can take place.

- The committee continued discussion of whether salary increases should involve merit pay vs. COLA adjustments, or some combination of the two.
- The table presented in the agenda, highlighting costs and benefits of the two types of salary increase, was discussed.
• A point was made about lifting the salaries of all employees to bring them closer to those of peer institutions
• Also discussed was the idea of needing a period of evaluation for merit increases, so that it would be necessary to wait three years between merit evaluations so that the same people are not favored each year
• A strategy of reserving a portion for merit was discussed, but if the amounts are too small they would be trivial.
• The discussion ended with reinforcing the importance of transparency and consistency across units in how merit is distributed.

The meeting ended just after 5 pm.