

**Minutes of the Faculty Senate Faculty Affairs Committee
December 8, 2010**

Present: Feng Chen, Sherry Cox, Todd Freeberg, Carla Sommardahl, Steve Thomas, Peling Wang, and Yang Zhong

S. Thomas called the meeting to order at 12:38 PM in room 650 of the Hodges Library.
C. Sommardahl agreed to serve as secretary for the meeting.

Minutes

Minutes from the meetings on September 29, 2010 and October 20, 2010 were reviewed. A motion was made to approve the minutes as presented. The motion received a second and was passed by voice vote.

Old Business

S. Thomas reported that two resolutions had been presented to the Faculty Senate Executive Council on November 8, 2010 and accepted for presentation to the Faculty Senate on November 22, 2010. The first resolution, concerning a change in the *Faculty Handbook* regarding the process of promotion to professor, was presented to Faculty Senate for first reading and will be considered again at the Senate's February meeting. The second resolution, concerning a change in the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* related to documenting engagement in outreach teaching, was withdrawn from consideration at the request of Dr. Nan Gaylord until additional information could be received for the Chancellor's Academic Outreach and Engagement Council.

Action Items

A. Proposed Changes to the *Faculty Handbook* and *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* Regarding Advising and Mentoring.

S. Thomas had combined the two documents received from the campus Task Force on Advising into a single document, revised to reflect the committee discussion to date. As discussion continued, concern was again expressed with the need for clear guidelines for the evaluations of advising and mentoring activities. It was suggested that the summary statement, proposed for inclusion in the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*, be amended to reflect that each unit has the responsibility to document, in its own bylaws, what advising and mentoring activities are expected and how these activities would be evaluated. When this suggestion was met with general acceptance, S. Thomas offered to draft wording for the consideration by the full committee. Pending the acceptance of that statement, a motion was made to approve to the other changes in the combined document for review by S. Gardial and the Task Force on Advising. The motion received a second and was passed by voice vote.

B. Assessment Surveys for Deans and Department Heads

After brief discussion, there was general agreement to reply to S. Gardial that the committee had no recommendations for changes to these surveys.

C. Changes to the Search Process for Deans.

Discussion begun at the October meeting was resumed. The proposal under consideration would amend the third paragraph of section 1.4.1 of the *Faculty Handbook* to read as follows.

Deans are appointed after an internal or external search conducted according to guidelines published by the ~~Office for Diversity Affairs~~ *Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)*. The ~~chancellor or vice president~~ *chief academic officer* selects the chair of the search committee from outside the college and appoints members of the committee from persons nominated by tenured and tenure-track faculty members of the college. A majority of the search committee is composed of tenured *and tenure-track* faculty members of the college, chosen to represent a balance among the academic areas of the college. The committee may include representation from tenure-track faculty members, non-tenure-track faculty members, students, and where appropriate faculty members from outside of the college, as covered by collegiate bylaws. According to university requirements for upper-level searches (department head and above), ~~they~~ *the committee* must include a representative of black or African-American faculty.

It was noted that including, in the fourth sentence, “tenure-track faculty members” among those groups that could be represented in search committees would be redundant. It was suggested that departmental staff members is included in the list. A question was also raised concerning the “university requirements for upper-level searches” mentioned in the last sentence. A search of the OED webpages found only the statement that “Membership of the search committee must be diverse, particularly in terms of gender and race.” (Source: <http://oed.utk.edu/searches/upperlevel.shtml>). A motion was made to revise the last sentence in this paragraph to use this wording. The motion received a second and was passed by voice vote. Taking the other concerns into account, this paragraph would read as follows.

Deans are appointed after an internal or external search conducted according to guidelines published by the ~~Office for Diversity Affairs~~ *Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)*. The ~~chancellor or vice president~~ *chief academic officer* selects the chair of the search committee from outside the college and appoints members of the committee from persons nominated by tenured and tenure-track faculty members of the college. A majority of the search committee is composed of tenured *and tenure-track* faculty members of the college, chosen to represent a balance among the academic areas of the college. The committee may include representation from ~~tenure-track faculty members~~, non-tenure-track faculty members, *departmental staff members*, students, and where appropriate faculty members from outside of the college, as covered by collegiate bylaws. According to university requirements for upper-level searches (department head and above), ~~they must include a representative of black or African-American faculty~~ *membership of the search committee must be diverse, particularly in terms of gender and race.*

A motion was made to approve this wording. The motion received a second and was passed by voice vote.

D. Process for Submitting Resolutions to the Faculty Senate for Change to the *Faculty Handbook* or *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*.

S. Thomas reported that, in recent years, resolutions regarding changes to the *Faculty Handbook* or *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* have usually been presented to the Senate for a “first reading” at one meeting and then considered as an action item at the next meeting. However, there is no requirement that this process be followed. Faculty Senate President Joan Heminway has asked whether this committee would wish to formalize the process, either keeping or eliminating the “first reading” step. A motion was made to eliminate the need for a first reading of resolutions from the Faculty Affairs Committee by the Faculty Senate. The motion received a second. During discussion it was noted that making such a change would not preclude a decision by the Faculty Senate to defer action until a later meeting, if there was a need to do so in an individual case. The motion passed by voice vote. S. Thomas will consider appropriate wording for documenting this action in amendment procedures for the *Faculty Handbook* and *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*.

Review of Pending Issues

S. Thomas led a review of the revised list of pending issues. The list was corrected by changing “NNTF” in issue 4 to “NTTF” (non-tenure-track faculty).

There was general agreement to focus on the following issues on this list: departmental and college bylaws; anti-discrimination statement; role of collegiality in retention, promotion, and tenure reviews; a process for amending dossiers if information cannot be substantiated; and program reorganization / discontinuance.

In connection with an issue to be added to this list, S. Thomas distributed copies of a proposal to revise the policy of the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) concerning academic freedom and responsibility. The proposal seeks to extent that TBR policy to include freedom to speak or write on matters of public concern and on matters involving the academic and administrative functioning of a college or university. We may wish to consider similar changes in our own definition of academic freedom.

Future Meetings

When no common time for future meetings was readily found, it was suggested that “doodle” be used to try to schedule the next meeting for the week of January 10, 2011.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,
C. Sommardahl