

**Minutes of the Faculty Senate Faculty Affairs Committee
Meeting of September 29, 2008**

Present: Joan Heminway (chair); Max Cheng; Steve Thomas; Molly Royse; Roxanne Hovland; Scott Simmons (by invitation); Sara Gardial (by invitation)

The meeting was held in the Faculty Lounge of the College of Law and was called to order when a quorum was reached at approximately 2:15 p.m.

I. Introductions were made.

II. Unfinished Business

a. Approval of the minutes of the August 29, 2008 meeting was requested by J. Heminway and was obtained.

b. S. Simmons reported on compliance issues highlighted as a result of the unit bylaw-posting project. S. Simmons explained how information regarding certain college's and department's bylaws has been entered into a spreadsheet to check for compliance with 25 components spelled out in the Faculty Handbook. Simmons is looking for patterns of noncompliance. So far, he has looked at the College of Agriculture and three units within it. He offered that one of these department bylaws would serve as a good model for other departments on the Ag campus. Results of these reviews will be sent to Joe DePietro, Vice President of The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture.

There are certain anomalies that impact the compliance process. For instance, for the Colleges of Law, Nursing, and University Libraries, the unit is both a department and a college and must therefore conform to both sets of rules.

Not all units have all types of faculty, e.g., "clinical faculty." The bylaws must spell out the criteria for tenure and promotion for all types of faculty.

c. Discussion of the Cumulative Performance Review for inclusion in the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* and *Faculty Handbook* was deferred until after discussion of the annual review.

d. Suggestions regarding the department head reappointment resolution were discussed. The wording "great weight" to describe the desired input of faculty into the deans' reappointment decisions was debated but was decided satisfactory. It was decided that the designations of faculty as "tenure track" and "tenured" should be changed to "full-time voting faculty" or an equivalent. However, when the content relates to promotion and tenure, separating faculty into "tenure track" and "tenured" segments is fine. It is with regard to other issues that the wording needs to be more inclusive.

What constitutes "voting faculty" is determined by the units and should be defined in each department's bylaws. J. Heminway will reword the resolution to reflect these changes and distribute the revised version via email for a final committee approval.

The discussion returned to wording of the degree of faculty input—"great weight." It was agreed to leave it unspecified because deans are required to issue a report in which

the wishes of the faculty must be acknowledged. Units can make the process as open as they want—encouraging email votes, committees, etc. But the *Faculty Handbook* provision should not be that specific other than to suggest that the process can be further defined by the department's bylaws.

III. New Business – Annual and Retention Reviews

Based on her memo regarding proposed revisions to the *Faculty Handbook* and the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*, J. Heminway and S. Gardial explained that the standards for the annual review optimally should be in the *Faculty Handbook* and the related procedures optimally should be in the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*. Two proposals were discussed in some detail: 1.) collapsing the two reviews required for tenure-track faculty into one to be done in the fall based on performance during the preceding academic year, with the first retention review in the fall of the faculty member's second year; and 2.) the meaning of the retention vote is unclear, and its import might depend upon whether the vote is being taken in, e.g., the individual's first year or his/her third or fourth year.

Committee members expressed concern for the protection of junior faculty. For instance, after receiving a series of positive retention and annual reviews, a tenure-track faculty member might be denied tenure. Members of the committee agreed that this can happen when the review process is poor and could be improved when the reviews are condensed into one process instead of two and the objectives of the reviews are clearly stated.

The committee then discussed the related role of collegiality in tenure and promotion decisions (and, as a result, in the annual evaluation process). S. Gardial commented on the role of collegiality and said that it is mentioned in the *Faculty Handbook*. M. Cheng said that matters of collegiality should be incorporated into the annual review. S. Gardial agreed that it is advisable to define what collegiality means for tenure and promotion and in the evaluation process. J. Heminway mentioned that the Appeals Committee had requested that collegiality be defined, based on its recent work on tenure and promotion appeals.

J. Heminway suggested that the review processes may be improved by adding categories on the review forms and indicated that it was contemplated that pre-tenure retention and annual evaluation forms would be consolidated. Whether the various proposed modifications appear in the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* or the *Faculty Handbook* will depend upon the specific items added.

S. Gardial noted that workshops are being planned for department heads on the faculty evaluation process. M. Cheng and R. Hovland said the process needs to be made clear to *all* faculty, since retention reviews, tenure deliberations, and promotion deliberations involve more than just the department head. It was agreed that we'll continue discussing this issue as the revisions progress.

S. Gardial, in response to a question from R. Hovland, said that differential weighting of the three dimensions (teaching, research and service) can be done within the departments but it must fit with the standards across the college and those set forth in department bylaws and policies.

S. Gardial said that the annual review determines whether a faculty member is in the pool for merit raises. However, she also favors decoupling the annual review process from merit pay determinations, since the present review process is not a true merit performance evaluation. S. Gardial indicated that “everyone” agrees that conducting the evaluations in the fall, instead of spring, is a good idea. However, if the evaluation process were to be changed to the fall, no evaluations are done for spring 2009, and merit money becomes available this spring (2009), it’s not clear what would be done. The president has asked the Board of Trustees for a merit pool for spring 2009. It was suggested that the president ask the Trustees to address the issue of how the money would be distributed in light of the change in evaluation timing. S. Gardial said that raises should not be tied to the annual review process because it causes “gaming.” J. Heminway stressed the need to get the input of the other committee members not present at the meeting.

S. Gardial said that it would be good to proceed quickly to get the timing of the reviews changed to fall. After some discussion, she asked that the committee approve a resolution on this issue alone and attempt to get it before the Faculty Senate for the October meeting. J. Heminway explained that this would require that a resolution be drafted and approved within the next 24 hours (or so), since the Executive Committee meets to determine action items for the October Faculty Senate meeting on Monday, October 6th, and materials must go out in advance of the meeting for review and comment. The change would put the annual evaluation process on an academic-year basis, August 1 through July 31, rather than a calendar-year basis.. The next faculty evaluation process would then be conducted in fall 2009, rather than spring 2009.

J. Heminway offered to draft and circulate a proposed resolution on the annual evaluation timing change for review by the committee and proposed approval by email consent process, subject to meeting with S. Gardial on Tuesday, September 30th.

The next meeting of the Faculty Affairs Committee is scheduled for 2:00 pm on October 27th in the College of Law’s Faculty Lounge. Please plan to arrive at the meeting promptly, and please contact J. Heminway if you are unable to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hovland