Minutes
GSU University Senate, Faculty Affairs Committee Meeting
25 April 2013 | 1:00 p.m. | 718 GCB

Members Present

Peggy Albers
Lynda Brown-Wright
David Cheshier
Mourad Dakhli
Harry Dangel
Cheryl Delk-LeGood
Irene Duhaime
Laura Fredrick
MaryAnne Gaunt
Gerald Gay
Maria Gindhart
Skye Hardesty
Peter Lindsay
Peter Lyons
Sarah Pallas
Joe Perry
Dan Weiskopf
Marta White
Russel White

Members Absent

Fred Brooks
Annette Butler
Lisa Casanova
Conrad Ciccotello
Valerie Fennell
Shelby Frost
Mark Geil
Lynda Goodfellow
Hugh Hudson
Linda Nelson
Nancy Kropf
Marian Meyers
Linda Nelson
Risa Palm
Jerry Rackliffe
Wayne Reed
Roy Sobelson
Cherian Thachenkary
Walt Thompson

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM by the committee chair, David Cheshier. Minutes from the March 27, 2013 meeting were approved.

Cheshier was reelected to chair the committee for the 2013-2014 academic year.

The committee discussed what main matters should be undertaken in the year to come, and subcommittee volunteers were solicited for committees that will propose action on the following topics: Improving the processes for staff and faculty input on HR and Benefits issues; Addressing salary issues and wider campus morale; Creating recommendations to create a gender salary remediation mechanism and to identify best practices for reducing so-called “time in sojourn” or “time in rank” for tenured women on the faculty; Revitalizing professional development leaves; Improving the status of temporary and part-time faculty; Developing clearer policies relating to spousal and dual career hiring; Addressing ongoing concerns about the quality of the student evaluation instrument; Reviewing the promotion and tenure policies with a view to recommending further improvements.

Russel White reported to the committee on the information discovered in exploring the parameters of domestic partner coverage elsewhere. His report, which showed that implementation of full partner benefits in other public state university systems has only incurred modest costs, was discussed, and the recommendation made to forward those materials to the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, to FACP, and the Provost. GSU is looking carefully at the unfolding discussions on the University of Georgia campus, which has been exploring the possibility that UGA Foundation funds might provide domestic partner benefits in a way that does not impact state legislated or tuition revenues.

Lynda Brown-Wright delivered an extensive report updating the committee on her work. She updated on the spring 2013 promotion and tenure cycle, in which 72 total cases were reviewed based on College recommendations, five of which were negatively decided. A more significant effort was made to celebrate promotion accomplishments at a University-sponsored gala held at the Biltmore Hotel. The processes for acknowledging faculty achievement were otherwise elaborated, including the new mechanism for appointing Distinguished University Professors, and the ongoing work of appointing Regents Professors and awarding University prizes for extraordinary work. More than 180 faculty participated in faculty development programs organized by Dr. Brown-Wright and colleagues, including programs especially organized to mentor new faculty hires. Chair workshops were run for new chairs. The visiting scholars
program was launched successfully in FY13, with plans to expand it in the future. In the year to come, more work will be done to develop these efforts, to provide more systematic mentoring programs for faculty, to bolster the awards for exceptional achievements, and to further accelerate efforts to hire and retain minority faculty.

Discussion continued on the topic of the promotion and tenure process. On May 8, the newly constituted committee of College P&T chairs is scheduled to meet. They will discuss the unfolding processes mandated by the new university manual. FAC will appoint a subcommittee to work on these and related issues in the coming academic year, and volunteers were solicited for that work.

The committee briefly considered proposed changes in the policy that governs university employee travel to countries on the U.S. Department of State “watch list,” and concern was expressed that the new policy not be too conservatively drawn, given the important research and exchange activity occurring in those nations. The Senate Research Committee has taken the lead on this, working with the Legal Affairs Office.

A discussion occurred on the need to potentially draft new SEI questions that would better sync to alternative modes of instructional delivery, such as online and study abroad courses. A subcommittee agreed to work on this in the coming academic year.

Peter Lyons briefed the committee on the University’s efforts to organize work for the coming mid-term SACS accreditation visit.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and accepted by acclamation at 2:55 PM.