

Minutes

GSU University Senate, Faculty Affairs Committee Meeting
09 April 2014 | 1:00 a.m. | 718 Langdale

Members Present

Lynda Brown-Wright
Lisa Casanova
David Cheshier
Mourad Dakhli
Harry Dangel
Cheryl Delk-LeGood

John Duffield (non)
Shelby Frost
Gerald Gay
Mark Geil
Maria Gindhart
Lynda Goodfellow

Skye Hardesty
Marian Meyers
Wayne Reed
Dan Weiskopf
Russel White

Members Absent

Peggy Albers
Fred Brooks
Annette Butler
Conrad Ciccotello
Irene Duhaime
Valerie Fennell
Laura Fredrick

MaryAnne Gaunt
Hugh Hudson
Linda Nelson
Nancy Kropf
Linda Nelson
Sarah Pallas
Risa Palm

Joe Perry
Jerry Rackliffe
Roy Sobelson
Cherian Thachenkary
Walt Thompson
Marta White

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 AM by the committee chair, David Cheshier.

The committee approved minutes from its February 24, 2014 meeting.

A motion to adopt a unified mechanism for evaluating the performance of senior administrators was discussed and approved. The new policy, which is being conveyed to the Senate executive committee, standardizes the review process and provides a standard timeline which adopts a twice a year review schedule that will enable administrators to be reviewed (in all cases) after three years of work. The new mechanism was unanimously adopted.

Two amendments were adopted to make minor adjustments to the University Promotion and Tenure manual. The first clarifies the procedure to be used in cases of proposed tenure-upon appointment, specifically allowing off-cycle reviews on hire. The second clarifies the manual to make explicit that a candidate moving through promotion and tenure review can appeal the decision of the dean. The motions were unanimously adopted.

The committee approved a motion advocating that certain steps be taken to improve staff and faculty morale. These steps include restoration of wider access to professional development leaves, advocacy for budgeting flexibility that will enable continuing efforts to remedy salary compression outside the normal merit pay legislated mechanism, efforts to provide minimum levels of professional development funding, development of a mechanism to create a more transparent retention raise process, and accelerated implementation of the Distinguished Professor program. Ten voted yes; two opposed.

The committee debated and then voted against adoption of a proposed motion that would address salary compression. The motion proposed the creation of disciplinarily-normed salary floors (based at 75% of mean salary for a discipline and rank in the Oklahoma State dataset) that would enable salary adjustments where needed to that level at time of promotion or successful post-tenure review. It would also create a mechanism that would enable faculty and staff who felt their pay significantly compressed to petition for a review, and in a way that would not

require a hard counter-offer from another institution. It would also implement a program to elaborate more specific staff career steps and pathways, and urge advocacy with the chancellor for a cost-of-living raise mechanism. Should budgets not allow implementation of these steps, the motion called for articulation of a longer plan to achieve its goals. The arguments made in favor of the motion included an emphasis on the seriousness of the compression mechanism. It was argued that the motion would address compression in a reasonable way, by focusing in a given budget cycle only on the cohort having been recommended for promotion – the very faculty the institution would presumably most want to retain. A floor on promotion raises already existing campus-wide, it was further argued that this motion would only raise the floor in cases of most serious concern. The arguments made against expressed concern about the imposition of salary minimums; part of the challenge of such a mechanism is that it risks setting in motion the perverse or unintended consequence of placing other permanent positions at risk (given zero-sum budgeting, the costs would have to be absorbed somewhere, and this might press the institution to hire an even higher percentage of contingent and temporary faculty and staff, or even to require reductions in force). The argument was also made that salary compression can be dealt with in other case-by-case ways (e.g., fundraising and development activity to create more endowed positions). Some on the committee expressed concern that the true costs of the proposal were not known with specificity. The motion was not approved (3 voted yes, 5 no, and 4 abstained). Some discussion followed regarding the possibility that some parts of the motion could be reconsidered at a later time.

A motion to revise the promotion manual for non-tenure track faculty that would enable promotion raises to be allocated to lecturers in the contract cycle immediately following promotion was tabled, as it is undergoing review by the university attorney.

The meeting time having disappeared, discussion on a circulated motion to make three revisions that would improve the student evaluation instrument, which had been earlier approved by the Cultural Diversity committee, was deferred to the April meeting. The motion would specify additional means for evaluating teaching beyond SEI scores and comments, clarifies options that might be used within a unit if the available data seems to document problems in the record, and require that both mean and interpolated median measures be used in assessing instruction.

The committee agreed to take up later discussion of whether the circulated P&T calendar is in close enough sync with the manual requirements (the particular question is whether the schedule of review steps are completed with enough time for a candidate who does not succeed in winning promotion to make alternative employment plans; the calendar in use for 2014-2015 might not notify a candidate of a final negative decision until the end of April 2015).

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and accepted by acclamation at 3:05 PM.