

Minutes of the University Faculty Affairs Committee (UFAC)

April 11, 2018

4:05-5:40 PM, Mercer 131

Present: Cate Brewer, Courtney Clayton, Betsy Lewis, Miriam Liss (chair), Marie McAllister (secretary), Xiaofeng Zhao. **Guests:** Keith Mellinger (Dean, CAS), Rosalyn Cooperman (incoming chair, P&T Committee).

MINUTES

The minutes of February 14, 2018, were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Mentoring

The CAS Dean and the incoming chair of Promotion and Tenure joined us for a discussion of mentoring. The UFAC wants to know whether UMW is mentoring optimally for promotion and tenure. We have also been asked by a faculty member to provide guidance about mentoring by chairs.

Rosalyn Cooperman explained that from the P&T Committee's perspective, it would be helpful to have clearer mentoring guidelines for departments and chairs. By the time P&T sees files, the window for mentoring has closed, and P&T cannot ask for additional information, for instance on whether a faculty member has responded to suggestions from an Annual Performance Reviews or third-year review.

Keith Mellinger sees great variation in how CAS departments mentor and has raised the need for some consistency at a meeting of CAS chairs. He suggests establishing formalized minimal expectations for mentoring, with flexibility to allow for the wide variation in department size. He also noted that he is developing training for new chairs.

After discussing what different departments and colleges do now, the committee divided the issue into two parts: the need for consistent mentoring and the lack of guidelines for third-year review.

a) Mentoring

The committee agreed on the importance of mentoring new faculty and raised some preliminary questions about what would best support their welfare. Should there be standard minimal expectations across the University or should each department to prepare its own mentoring plan? Should new faculty receive formalized mentoring only in the initial year, through the third-year review, until tenure? What belongs in a third-year review file; for instance, should candidates write a rationale? How much feedback do candidates need beyond APRs and the first- and third-year reviews, and how much should they be able to seek out on their own?

Rosalyn notes that research shows that candidates do best with multiple mentors, formal and informal. Departments might thus provide a single mentor as a safety net while creating

opportunities to develop multiple mentor relationships.

b) Third-year review

A quick search during the meeting did not uncover *Handbook* language defining processes for third-year review or for how the results of that review should be communicated. UFAC will research this further. Keith notes that in CAS, some departments currently write a formal letter copied to the candidate while others simply email him that the candidate has been approved for renewal. There appeared to be consensus that candidates should prepare some kind of formal third-year review file and that, after the review, candidates should receive written feedback on how they are doing in each of the three areas evaluated for tenure. There was no discussion at this meeting of first-year review, which would logically also be part of this consideration. Someone noted that we will also have to consider whether third-year review files should be digital.

The committee agreed to return to the subject of mentoring this fall. We intend to recommend a formal mentoring relationship and provide some guidance, perhaps like that in COE Appendix K. We also intend to recommend a more formal third-year review process involving a file and a written letter from the chair covering teaching, professional development, and service.

2. Teaching development and the FAAR

Following up on a discussion of teaching development earlier this term, UFAC asked Rosalyn where FAARs and P&T documents should list professional teaching development, like attendance at Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation workshops. She explained that the P&T committee is flexible about where things go as long as faculty are consistent about where things are listed in each FAAR, and as long as faculty do not double count. She and Ray might consider this question during their review of P&T language in the *Handbook*. UFAC agreed that we need not to take further action.

3. Teaching development

UFAC finalized the process whereby we will communicate decisions made at the last meeting about suggestions for the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation, the need for the CTEI Director to be able to send short individual emails about events, and our suggestions for the Provost about support for faculty teaching development.

4. Timely cancellation of courses due to underenrollment.

Marie sketched out a possible draft motion specifying the amount of notice faculty members should be given when courses are cancelled for underenrollment. Betsy pointed out that such a motion could have unintended ramifications for small programs and departments by leading underenrolled courses to be cancelled even though they might have filled if a decision could have been delayed until nearer to the semester. Cate spoke to the value of resisting blanket decisions like "all courses under 10 will get cancelled." Betsy suggested that a resolution might note that, while we recognize that administrations need to balance budgetary needs with meeting the needs of our students, at a liberal arts institution we sometimes need the flexibility to run low-enrollment courses and thus should not set a size below which courses must be cancelled. Miriam noted that Psychological Science has its 5-student research team counting as a course, so that setting a minimum enrollment for other courses might raise issues of fairness. We agreed to

continue discussion at our next meeting.

5. Departmental autonomy in matters affecting pedagogy

The committee briefly discussed departmental autonomy and the need for transparency in scheduling decisions affecting pedagogy. We have heard that ELC was instructed not to allow full-time faculty to teach 3-hour courses, MLL was instructed not to offer 5:00 pm courses, and SOCG was instructed to have all faculty teach four courses. Members will attempt to verify details as follows: Marie (ELC chair), Miriam (SOAN chair), Cate (THEA chair), and we will continue discussion at our next meeting.

6. Service workload

Remains tabled.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Wellness

Campus Recreation has asked UFAC for suggestions on reaching faculty and staff. Courtney will forward the few we came up with, including awareness that if UFAC is representative, many faculty ignore *EagleEye*. There was brief discussion of a recent book claiming that wellness activities do less to promote worker health than reducing workplace stress caused by overwork, low salaries, micromanagement, and other factors.

2. Election of officers

Marie was elected chair and Betsy was elected secretary, with whoever is elected as sabbatical replacement serving as secretary during fall semester. [*Subsequent note: Craig Vasey was elected.*]

3. CAS annual evaluation process

Keith Mellinger noted that he had recently asked chairs to attend a retreat, with one item on the agenda being the annual evaluation process. That process is strongly based on merit pay evaluation, and Keith thinks UMW might be able to create a better model, especially given the absence of funding for merit pay. He will ask the UFAC to consider this next year.