

Minutes
Commission on Faculty Affairs
September 25, 2020
Meeting Held Electronically 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Present: S. Barrett (Faculty Senate), R. Blythe (Dean), A. Bond (CAPFA), J. Finney (Provost, ex officio), D. Givens (Dean), J. Hawdon (Faculty Senate), B. Hicok (Chair), A. Nelson (Faculty Senate), T. Schenk (Faculty Senate), R. Sebek (Staff Senate), C. Thompson (Graduate Student Assembly), R. Weiss (Faculty Senate)

Vacancy: SGA

Members Absent: M. Abbas (Faculty Senate), D. C. Myers (Faculty Senate), A. Shew (Faculty Senate)

Guests: L. Byrd (OVPRI), L. Miner (OVPRI), D. Musick (VTCSOM), A. Myers (Governance), E. Plummer (Provost)

- 1. Approval of Agenda.** Members of the commission unanimously approved the agenda for the September 25, 2020 meeting.
- 2. Approval of Minutes.** Members of the commission unanimously approved the minutes of the November 11, 2020 meeting.
- 3. Discussion of “The Service Project” and the “Assessing Service” portion of the Faculty Senate report.** The commission discussed the faculty service project. Informing the project is the desire to add transparency and equity in assigning, evaluating, and documenting a variety of faculty service activities. Important to the success of the project is discussion and inclusion of faculty across the university. The project aims to draw attention to the importance of service as dimension of faculty workload fulfilling a university mission alongside teaching and research.

Currently, there are departments who are capturing information on faculty service and can help inform the next steps for the project. Anna LoMascolo at the Women’s Center is engaged in developing sample dashboards for use by departments.

Members of the commission agreed that the project is a priority and that investments of time, effort, and financial support are essential to its success. Commission members discussed that faculty time is an important resource for colleges, departments, and faculty members. Resources need to be identified and spent where there is the promise of impact. Departments and colleges may have ways to support service that include adjustments in workload. Commission members mentioned the various ways in which financial support benefits service functions such as buy-out for faculty members in service leadership roles, for example, the budget that is available to the Faculty Senate.

Acknowledging and honoring service is an important element of advancing university-wide commitment to faculty service. For example, a faculty position equivalent to the Alumni Distinguished Professor could be a way to elevate service. Commission members discussed the care with which this idea would need to be considered. Faculty members are paid to engage in service as part of their employment with the university.

Commission members agreed that developing a flexible system of valuation will benefit faculty in describing the diversity of service in which they engage and should include quantitative and qualitative methods. Questions worth discussing include how is service connected to the PIBB and what is the cost of calculating service? Would it be useful to have committees establish goals and gauge progress towards the goals? Faculty members might document the “story” of their service as a means by which to capture qualitative elements and department, college, and university levels. Commission members discussed the variability in definitions of service and discussed the value of using a multiplier as a way to capture the depth and breadth of different types of service.

Commission members shared examples of ways to capture quantity and quality of service. Examples included: using open questions to guide responses (ie tell me about your service, how did you contribute?), and having chairs and group leaders have a role in evaluating contributions and participation. Commission members suggested using the means by which the contributions of artistic research are evaluated. These contributions are evidenced by the degree to which others in the community are responding to the contribution.

Additional considerations are the manner in which research faculty might be limited in their capacity for service and the need to be cognizant of service that might be “invisible” and has disparate impact on women and minority faculty. The qualitative assessment of service is important for capturing the “soft” service offered (ie mentoring minority students, serving as the department “diversity” representative).

Members of the commission committed to implementing the service project by developing a variety of different and flexible assessment tools for use in departments as a pilot. Anna LoMascolo continues to develop prototypes using, for example, information from the EFARS.

4. Other Business.

5. Adjourn.

Next meeting is October 9, 2020 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.