

Commission on Faculty Affairs
October 10, 2003

Members attending: Richard Ashley, Lay Nam Chang, Sam Easterling, Leon Geyer, William Greenberg, Sam Hicks, Patricia Hyer, Christy Porterfield, Beshr Fadel Sukkariyah. Guests attending: Elaine Scott, Mitzi Vernon

Easterling called the meeting to order with two items on the agenda: (1) P&T Issues Memo response from Provost McNamee, (2) New Business. Motions to adopt the agenda and to approve the minutes from September 26th both passed.

P&T Issues Memo

The CFA continued review of the formal response by the University P&T Committee and Provost McNamee to various modifications recommended by CFA last spring to the promotion and tenure policies in the Handbook.

At the meeting on September 26, 2003 commission members approved the concept that a two-thirds majority vote at the department and college levels be required for a positive recommendation for promotion and/or tenure. Hyer distributed a draft resolution that addressed these points. A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution. The resolution was approved unanimously requiring a two-thirds majority vote would be for a positive recommendation for promotion and/or tenure at all levels of the P&T process.

Approval of the resolution created two points of discussion related to whether the Dean would need to see the division of vote, and whether committees at various levels in the P&T process would need to see the division of vote in order to make informed decisions. Elaine Scott and Mitzi Vernon, who had served on both college and university-level P&T committees, were invited to share thoughts on what implications forwarding the division of vote would have and how that information was used in P&T deliberations.

Although the Faculty Handbook states that the vote is supposed to be passed forward, it is not supposed to be part of the dossier. In recent years, departmental and college votes have not been forwarded to the university level. Vernon argued for transparency throughout the process, at all levels, with the belief that all participants in the process would benefit from access to all available information. Members of the CFA questioned whether having the division of the vote could hurt an individual, especially at the college or university level since members of those committees are less likely to be familiar with the work of an individual in the P&T process and the dynamics of the department.

After much discussion of the pros and cons, a motion was made to include the division of vote as part of the dossier, probably on the cover page, allowing it to go forward at all levels in the P&T process. The motion was approved to modify the draft resolution to include documentation of the division of the vote at all levels. The resolution will be shared with the Faculty Senate for their information before transmitting to University Council for approval.

Point 9 of the Provost's memo addressed representation for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, which has two faculty appointments on the University P&T committee, a straightforward change from the previous allocation of two positions for the College of Arts and Sciences. The CFA will invite members from the college to participate in a discussion about the importance of a second representative, given the reduced size of the college faculty.

Point 11 of the memo addressed alumni evaluations of instruction. The CFA questioned the value of including alumni evaluations *at all* in the dossier and will suggest the removal of that item in future versions of the Promotion and Tenure Guidelines.

All other points addressed in the memo were reviewed without further discussion.

The CFA addressed the revised Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure issued by Provost McNamee on August 1, 2003. Part II, Recommendation Statements, point G states that "the committee expects to see all external letters received; not just selected letters." The CFA indicated that a better practice would be to state that all external letters *from the current year and previous academic year* should be received. The CFA will also suggest point E in Part II be reviewed in relation to individuals whose work is highly interdisciplinary. These changes, if made, would be included in the instructions distributed for next year.

New Business

Ashley brought forward a concern in relation to the authorization form for direct deposits to employee's bank account, such as travel reimbursements. The current authorization form gives the university the power to do both credits *and debits*. Hicks mentioned this concern to Larry Lawrence, Manager of Accounting Services. Lawrence's stated that standard procedure allowed debiting an individual's account only if a salary disbursement correction was needed. If the employee owed money to the university for some reason, the standard operating procedure is to go through accounts receivable and send the employee a notice/bill. In response to this inquiry and the concern that the university might debit an employee's account without notification, Lawrence promised to change the authorization form signed by employees to permit deposits only.

The next CFA meeting will address previously noted changes to teaching policies found in the Faculty Handbook. Members were encouraged to review the handout before the next meeting.

Recorder,
Catherine Martin, Graduate Assistant
Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs
October 24, 2003

Members attending: Richard Ashley, Sam Easterling, Leon Geyer, William Greenberg, Sam Hicks, Patricia Hyer, Sean O'Keefe, Ray Plaza, Robert Tracy, Dennis Welch, Beshr Fadel Sukkariyah. Guests attending: Terry Wildman

Easterling called the meeting to order with one announcement and two items on the agenda. The items on the agenda included: (1) Linda Woodard from Personnel Services with an update on administration of the Optional Retirement Plan, (2) Review Faculty Handbook policies in relation to teaching and learning. Motions to adopt the agenda and to approve the minutes from October 10th both passed.

Announcement:

At the Faculty Senate meeting on October 21st Easterling presented the new P&T Resolution approved by CFA. The Resolution required a two-thirds majority vote at all levels of the P&T process for a positive promotion and tenure recommendation. Senate members expressed a great deal of concern with the suggested resolution. Easterling asked that data related to P&T practices at the department level be gathered. At the November Faculty Senate meeting Easterling will present the data that has been gathered on departmental level P&T practices. Further action related to the resolution will wait until after the November Faculty Senate meeting.

Personnel Services

Linda Woodard and Doug Martin provided follow-up information related to the administration of the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP). Sections §51.1-124 and §51.1-126, Code of Virginia, were amended during the 2003 legislative session. SB849 allows Virginia's higher education institutions to either administer their own optional retirement plans, or use a plan administered by VRS. The Board of Visitors approved establishing administration of the ORP and has formally opted out of the VRS ORP option.

Personnel Services is working to ensure all policies, procedures, and administrative oversights are in place to manage the ORP program. Personnel Services is working with consultants to design appropriate investment options for eligible faculty members. Virginia Tech has gained fiduciary responsibility with the ORP plan approval and is making sure that investment options available coincide with the legal responsibility incurred. They will present information to the Board of Visitors for approval. A committee will be appointed consisting of administrators, faculty, representatives from Personnel Services, and University Legal Counsel to ensure compliance.

The VRS has established its own ORP program that many smaller schools in Virginia have opted to enroll in. Now that VRS will have responsibility for oversight of ORPs for a number of universities, there is some hope that attention will be paid to retirement issues affecting faculty on ORPs not just on VRS.

Faculty Handbook sections regarding teaching and learning:

At the April 11, 2003 meeting, the CFA discussed several modifications to chapter 4 of the Faculty Handbook concerning teaching. Concern over methods used to post grades was an additional area needing review. The CFA resolved that changes should be made to the teaching policies in order to reflect current and accepted professional practice. Terry Wildman, Director of CEUT, was asked to join the CFA meeting to provide insight to the proposed policies in the Faculty Handbook regarding teaching and learning.

Proposed changes to Section 4.5, Grading Systems, included projected grades. The Faculty Handbook currently states that proposed grades should be assigned for graduating seniors before the end of the term. One member felt this could encourage grade inflation; others thought that most faculty gave students very low projected grades to avoid problems at the end. Reporting projected grades is related to distributing diplomas at graduation. Discussion about the long-standing practice of distributing diplomas at graduation ensued. Geyer will draft a resolution recommending that the practice be changed; specific wording will be reviewed at a subsequent meeting. This will allow CFA to raise the issue with other commissions and committees with an interest in this topic.

A change was approved to Section 4.6, Course Grading, adding language about valid and reliable measures of student performance and course content to ensure the technical quality of test questions when assigning grades and reflecting the level of professionalism expected from faculty members.

The statement in Section 4.6.1, Syllabus and Performance Expectations, should be modified to include a reference to accommodations for students with disability and links to appropriate syllabus language as provided on the Dean of Students site and for the Honor System. The CFA felt it was the responsibility of the individual departments to provide model syllabi to new faculty. Additional changes included clarification in reference to scheduling assignments at the end of the semester. Changes were made to protect students from having multiple major assignments or exams scheduled during the last week of the semester.

The CFA will return to these issues at the next meeting.

The next CFA meeting will address previously noted changes to teaching policies found in the Faculty Handbook. Members were encouraged to review the handout before the next meeting.

Recorder,
Catherine Martin, Graduate Assistant
Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs
November 7, 2003

Members attending: George Crofts for Lay Nam Chang, Sam Easterling, Sam Hicks, Patricia Hyer, Sean O'Keefe, Ray Plaza, Gerhardt Schurig, Robert Tracy, Dennis Welch

Easterling called the meeting to order with two items on the agenda. The items on the agenda included: (1) Textbook bundling, (2) Review Faculty Handbook policies in relation to teaching and learning. A motion to adopt the agenda passed. The minutes from October 10th were approved after it was noted no formal motion was made to approve a resolution for changing the practice of handing out diplomas at graduation. Geyer is writing a resolution that will be reviewed and voted on by the CFA in relation to this topic.

Textbook bundling

Larry Hincker, Associate Vice President for University Relations, inquired whether rising costs of textbooks and the increasing practice of bundling non-returnable products such as CDs or workbooks with new texts caused problems for faculty. Jerry Diffell, Manager of the Tech Bookstore, voiced concerns to Hincker regarding the practice of textbook bundling.

Recently production costs in the textbook market have increased considerably. Textbook publishers cannot recoup the cost of production because of the buy back and resale markets. Fewer students are buying new textbooks. Faculty members are often encouraged to bundle items to increase the sales of new textbooks. Students are provided with a discount when required course items are bundled together. However, since the items are generally bundled with new textbooks rather than used textbooks the bundled items cost more. Students who are required to buy bundled items cannot sell back just the textbook because they have been bundled with non-returnable items such as workbooks and CDs. Tech Bookstore voiced concerns over this practice because they rely on used book sales to make a profit.

Easterling will talk to the campus bookstore to see if they are having the same issues related to textbook bundling and a decline in sales due to the cost of new textbooks. If there are problems associated with textbook bundling the CFA suggested making faculty aware of the implications related to the practice of textbook bundling.

Faculty Handbook sections regarding teaching and learning:

The CFA continued their discussion regarding sections in the Faculty Handbook related to teaching and learning starting with Section 4.6.1, Syllabus and Performance Expectations. Changes were made to the policy to protect students from having multiple major assignments or exams scheduled during the last week of the semester. Students need to receive feedback from professors in a timely manner if students will be tested on the material. Appropriate language was also included for performance expectations related to the end-of-year activities. The language helps protect against faculty members

making excessive demands on the students' time to the detriment of performance in other courses.

The policies outlined in Section 4.6.3, Final Examinations, were changed to reflect the different culminating activities used to assess various types of course content. The policy should be flexible enough to allow for different types of assessments. The policy was written to convey the importance of designing a culminating activity to evaluate student performance and that if a final exam was to be conducted that it occur final exam week. References to approval by the department head and dean for alternatives to a final exam were struck as unworkable. The title of Section 4.6.3 will be changed to Final Evaluations.

The CFA discussed whether the reference in Section 4.6.8, Final Grade Reports, to the deadline for turning in grades with 48 hours of the exam was still being adhered to, or whether there was simply a single due date at the end of the exam period for entering all grades on line. Hyer will send a note to Wanda Dean to clarify.

Section 4.10.1, Student Evaluation of Courses and Instructors, was discussed. The wording needed to be changed to reflect professional standards. Faculty will be evaluated in all courses taught, not just one per year following tenure.

Discussion stopped at Section 4.10.1. The CFA will return to these issues at the next meeting.

The CFA meeting scheduled for November 21, 2003 is cancelled. The next meeting will be December 5, 2003. The Commencement Committee will be asked to join the CFA at this meeting to provide their perspective on diplomas at graduation.

Recorder,
Catherine Martin, Graduate Assistant
Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs
December 5, 2003

Members attending: Richard Ashley, Sam Easterling, Sam Greenberg, Patricia Hyer, Sean O'Keefe, Ray Plaza, Dennis Welch; Ed Henneke representative from the Commencement Committee

Easterling called the meeting to order with two items on the agenda. The items on the agenda included: (1) Diplomas at graduation, (2) Review Faculty Handbook policies in relation to teaching and learning. A motion to adopt the agenda passed. The minutes from November 7th were approved.

Diplomas at Graduation

At previous meetings the CFA discussed faculty concern associated with the practice of handing out diplomas at the graduation ceremony. Faculty feel the practice contributes to grade inflation. Preliminary grades are due before the end of the term, forcing faculty members to make early judgments. Faculty feel handing out diplomas also requires them to turn in grades earlier, constraining the type of final exam that can be done in large classes.

Ed Henneke, representative from the Commencement Committee, was invited to the CFA meeting to discuss the potential impact associated with changing the current practice of handing out diplomas at graduation. Wanda Dean was also contacted to attend the meeting. She was unable to attend but responded through email. Dean felt the change in policy may have minimal financial impact on the Registrar's office. Currently, the Registrar's office puts in overtime hours organizing the diplomas prior to the commencement ceremony. The cost associated with mailing the diplomas might be offset by savings in overtime hours.

Henneke explained the Commencement Committee discussed points raised by the CFA. After discussion the Committee unanimously concluded diplomas should be handed out at graduation. Based on feedback they receive, the Committee felt it was a part of the ceremony very much appreciated by students and family. Diplomas provide formal recognition of student accomplishments and provide a level of enthusiasm the Committee hopes is reciprocated as new graduates become alums.

The CFA recognized the immediacy of impact that actual diplomas provide to students and family. Easterling asked whether it would be cost prohibitive to print ALL diplomas instead of screening out those not likely to graduate by virtue of preliminary grades. Henneke thought the university could look into getting rid of preliminary grades if the commission wish to pursue this further. The cost of pulling the percentage of diplomas for students that are not able to graduate should be relatively inconsequential. Not all members of CFA agree that preliminary grades lead to undue pressure on faculty members. Rather they serve a worthwhile purpose and are a real benefit for students that is considerably more important than any inconvenience to faculty.

The CFA also discussed what the implications would be for moving commencement to a week following the end of exams. Members felt this could allow for meaningful culminating activities that are consistent with the academic standards of the university and for special programs to be conducted during that week, reinforcing class cohesiveness. This type of cohesiveness would be of interest to all segments of the university as it develops fundraising potential. Hyer expressed concern about experiences at other universities which have a “senior week” where student drinking behavior can get out of control. There would also be a cost burden of organizing activities for several thousand graduates. The CFA agreed this would require a university study and is beyond the purview of the CFA. Implications on Residential Life and Dining Programs would also need to be included in that study.

The CFA suggested faculty participation would be encouraged at the university wide commencement ceremony if expectations for attendance were expressed to them. Many department heads communicate their expectation to faculty that attendance is required at discipline specific ceremonies and faculty respond, but faculty attendance at the university is poor and declining.

Faculty Handbook sections regarding teaching and learning:

Section 4.10.1, Student Evaluation of Courses and Instructors, was discussed. The wording needed to be changed to reflect professional standards. Faculty should be evaluated in all courses taught, not just one per year following tenure. This is already standard practice in many departments, but not all. The CFA agreed this change should be presented to the Faculty Senate because of the potential burden this expectation could place on departments.

Section 4.10.2, Other Evaluation of Courses and Instructors, will be changed to reflect the value of in-depth evaluation for all faculty members, especially those that are not yet tenured.

4.12.1, Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, was changed to reflect the manner in which the University Writing Program operates in conjunction with the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

4.15.2.4, Academy of Faculty Service, was changed so that membership in the Academy is permanent. The previous time structure was awkward and did not serve the stated purpose of the Academy.

The discussion of policies related to teaching and learning in the Faculty Handbook concluded. Easterling will summarize the changes to be made.

Suggestions for spring semester agenda:

Easterling relayed several items that were suggested for inclusion on the spring CFA agenda. The CFA will invite the Provost to discuss the concept of cluster hiring. Despite

an earlier conversation with the Provost, faculty members are concerned cluster hiring is the only way new hires will be made. Spousal hiring was another issue that will be included on the spring agenda.

The next meeting will be January 23, 2003.

Recorder,

Catherine Martin, Graduate Assistant

Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs
February 6, 2004

Members attending: Richard Ashley, Sheryl Ball (for Lay Nam Chang), Sam Easterling, Bill Greenberg, Patricia Hyer, Ray Plaza, Dennis Welch, Brian Woerner, Christy Porterfield.

Easterling called the meeting to order with one item on the agenda, review of promotion and tenure policies. A motion to adopt the agenda passed. The minutes from January 23rd were approved.

Promotion and Tenure Policy Review

The CFA reviewed Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Policies focusing on four areas: 1) the draft resolution suggesting changes to voting procedures so that a two-thirds majority vote would qualify as a positive recommendation for tenure, 2) whether the division of vote should be recorded and passed forward from the department up to the university level, 3) the dean and department head's role in the P&T process, 4) criteria for promotion and tenure as outlined in Section 2.8.4 of the Faculty Handbook.

The CFA had previously drafted a resolution requiring a two-thirds majority vote for a positive recommendation for promotion and/or tenure at all levels of the P&T process. Easterling summarized feedback from faculty regarding the draft resolution. Faculty supporting the two-thirds majority vote liked the transparency and consistency afforded by the change. Requiring a two-thirds majority vote at all levels in the P&T process would demonstrate a commitment across administrative levels for a candidate under review. Faculty that disliked the change referenced problems with departmental procedures. Small departments found the transparency unsettling.

Based on feedback the CFA decided prescribing uniform voting procedures was difficult when departmental committees were different sizes. The CFA changed the resolution to reflect differences at the department level. A two-thirds majority vote would be required at the college level for a positive recommendation for tenure. Departments will continue voting procedures as they are currently conducted. It was decided that transparency in the process was valuable and that the vote would be recorded at every level.

Hyer will revise the resolution to reflect the changes and will distribute to the CFA for review.

The CFA began discussing the language in Section 2.8.4 of the Faculty Handbook in relation to criteria used by Top 30 institutions for awarding promotion and tenure. The CFA concluded that from the information gathered, Top 30 institutions were not any more prescriptive with their criteria.

The next meeting will be on February 13th in 210 Burruss.

Recorder, Catherine Amelink, Graduate Assistant, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs
February 13, 2004

Members attending: Richard Ashley, Sheryl Ball (for Lay Nam Chang), Sam Easterling, Leon Geyer, Bill Greenberg, Sam Hicks, Sean O'Keefe, Christy Porterfield, Dennis Welch, and Brian Woerner. Guest: Susanna Rinehart

Easterling called the meeting to order with one item on the agenda, review of revised promotion and tenure policies. A motion to adopt the agenda passed.

Promotion and Tenure Policy Review

The CFA reviewed Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Policies focusing on two areas: 1) the wording of the draft resolution suggesting changes to voting procedures so that a two-thirds majority vote would qualify as a positive recommendation for tenure, 2) criteria for promotion and tenure as outlined in Section 2.8.4 of the Faculty Handbook.

The CFA reviewed a revised draft resolution requiring a two-thirds majority vote for a positive recommendation for promotion and/or tenure at the college and university levels of the P&T process. Editorial changes were made in Section 2.8.4.1, Departmental Evaluation, Section 2.8.4.2, College Evaluation, and Section 2.8.4.3, University Evaluation. Changes in wording were made to address confidentiality in the voting process.

An additional resolution was made in relation to representation on the university level promotion and tenure committee. Recent reorganization of the university colleges led to uneven representation of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences on the university committee. The numbers of tenured faculty in each college were examined. The new College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences did not have a larger number of tenure track faculty members than other colleges. The CFA resolved that each college should have one representative on the university P&T Committee. An additional representative would be elected from the Faculty Senate using the same election process as the colleges. This would place nine representatives on the university P&T committee, preventing tied votes from being cast.

A motion was made to approve the resolution with the editorial changes made. Resolution 2003-04A, Commission on Faculty Affairs, Committee Recommendations for Promotion and Tenure, was unanimously approved by the CFA.

The CFA began discussing the language in Section 2.8.4, Evaluation Procedures for Promotion and Tenure, of the Faculty Handbook. Editorial changes were suggested to convey the high standards needed for promotion and tenure. Changes in wording were also made to clarify which portion of the statement referred to the different levels of faculty rank. Easterling will send the revised document out to the CFA for final comment.

The next meeting will be on March 5th in 210 Burruss.

Recorder, Catherine Amelink, Graduate Assistant, Office of the Provost

CFA Minutes
March 5, 2004

Members attending: Sheryl Ball (for Lay Nam Chang), Sam Easterling, Leon Geyer, Bill Greenberg, Sam Hicks, Sean O'Keefe, Ray Plaza, Robert Tracy, and Brian Woerner.
Guest: Susanna Rinehart and Diane Zham

Easterling called the meeting to order with four items on the agenda: 1) Resolution 2003-2004A(Revised), Committee Recommendations for Promotion and/or Tenure, 2) Resolution 2003-04B, Revisions to Chapter 4 of the Faculty Handbook, 3) Resolution 2003-04C, Composition of University-level Promotion and Tenure Committee, 4) Resolution 2003-04D, Revision of Section 2.84 on Criteria for Promotion and Tenure. Motions to adopt the agenda and to approve the minutes from February 13, 2004 both passed.

Resolution 2003-2004A(Revised) Committee Recommendations for Promotion and/or Tenure:

Easterling debriefed members of the CFA on the recent Faculty Senate meeting where Resolution 2003-2004A(Revised), Committee Recommendations for Promotion and/or Tenure, was presented. Concern remains among individuals that some disciplines will be more affected than others by requiring a two-thirds majority vote at the college level for a positive recommendation for tenure. Faculty felt candidates for promotion and/or tenure whose research focused on controversial areas could be judged more harshly by college level committees.

The CFA discussed the concerns brought forward. It is the Dean's role to make sure research being done is valuable and viable. Promotion and tenure guidelines state that it is the quality of the research being done that matters. If a candidate is turned down for promotion and/or tenure based on the nature of what they are studying, that is a violation of the promotion and tenure process. It is the purview of the departments to determine the focus of a faculty member's research. The CFA agreed the two-thirds majority conveyed the message that the promotion and tenure process was serious. A two-thirds majority makes a stronger, more definitive case for candidates recommended for promotion and/or tenure. Requiring the two-thirds majority across colleges ensures consistency and provides transparency into the college level process. Editorial changes were suggested in the resolution statement. A motion was made to pass the resolution with the editorial changes made. The CFA unanimously agreed to pass the resolution.

Resolution 2003-04B Revisions to Chapter 4 of the Faculty Handbook:

The CFA discussed faculty response to Resolution 2003-04B, Revisions to Chapter 4 of the Faculty Handbook. Editorial changes were made to address two concerns related to grading concerns and Reading Day.

Resolution 2003-04C Composition of University-level Promotion and Tenure Committee

Easterling reported that there was no discussion regarding Resolution 2003-04C, Composition of University-level Promotion and Tenure Committee.

Resolution 2003-04D Revision of Section 2.84 on Criteria for Promotion and Tenure:

Easterling reported that several concerns were brought forward from faculty in relation to Resolution 2003-04D, Revision of Section 2.84 on Criteria for Promotion and Tenure. Several faculty felt promotion should not be limited to excellence in research. Feedback from faculty members also questioned whether language stating "Continued eminence" of an individual should be included in criteria for promotion and tenure. Faculty questioned why outreach was used instead of service in the criteria statement.

The CFA discussed the issues brought forward. The CFA did not make the decision to include language that promotion was linked to excellence in research. The CFA revised existing language in the Faculty Handbook to make it clear that is the criteria already expressed in Section 2.8.4. Members of the CFA agreed continued eminence was a legitimate criterion for promotion. Departments need to emphasize the longevity and future contributions of a faculty member up for promotion and/or tenure. Greenberg pointed out that several years ago the word outreach was adopted in place of service under direction from the Provost's Office. The Provost's Office wanted to emphasize service beyond departments to include outreach activities. Dossier guidelines in the Faculty Handbook outline which activities are considered outreach.

The next CFA meeting will be March 19th, 3:00 p.m., in 325 Burruss.

Recorder, Catherine Amelink, Graduate Assistant, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs
March 19, 2004

Members attending: Richard Ashley, Sheryl Ball (for Lay Nam Chang), Sam Easterling, Leon Geyer, Bill Greenberg, Sam Hicks, Pat Hyer, Sean O’Keefe, Ray Plaza, Christy Porterfield, Bob Tracy, Dennis Welch, and Brian Woerner. Guest: Susanna Rinehart, Donna Pitt, Executive Assistant to the Dean, Craig Thatcher, Department Head, Large Animal Clinical Sciences

Easterling called the meeting to order with seven items on the agenda, 1) Clinical Track Faculty Ranks in the College of Veterinary Medicine, 2) Expectations for Graduate Education, 3) Dual Career Accommodation Draft Policy, 4) CFA Resolution 2003-04A, 5) CFA Resolution 2003-04D, 6) University Council attendance policy, 7) Promotion and Tenure policies at Top 30 Institutions. A motion was made and passed to adopt the agenda and approve the minutes of March 5.

Clinical Track Faculty Ranks in the College of Veterinary Medicine

Donna Pitt, Executive Assistant to the Dean, and Craig Thatcher, Department Head of Large Animal Clinical Sciences, presented the resolution titled “Creation of Clinical Track Faculty Ranks in the College of Veterinary Medicine.” CFA members had also received a draft handbook for clinical faculty providing more detail about proposed appointment procedures and employment conditions for clinical faculty in the college.

Creation of a clinical faculty track with multiple ranks is an effort by the College of Veterinary Medicine to respond to retention issues among faculty whose primary responsibility is teaching and working with patients in the veterinary hospital setting. Currently these faculty members hold the non-tenure track rank of “instructor” with no opportunity for career advancement. The lack of possibility for promotion and uncompetitive salaries have made it very difficult to retain talented clinicians who have lucrative opportunities for private practice. Other veterinary medical colleges have adopted a parallel series of titles for their clinical faculty.

Clinical faculty are focused almost exclusively on instruction and service, with little opportunity to conduct or develop a substantive research program. Tenure-track faculty in the college who have some clinical teaching responsibilities have a larger percentage of their time assigned to research. The college expects that only a small number of positions will be designated as clinical faculty. Some CFA members questioned whether these non-tenure track ranks would be used outside of the College of Veterinary Medicine. However, there is a rather specific meaning to “clinical” which might apply to those who do clinical work in psychology, for example, but does not extend to general teaching.

A few minor changes were suggested in wording. A motion was made to approve the resolution with suggested editorial changes. The CFA voted unanimously to approve the resolution.

Expectations for Graduate Education

Sam Easterling reported that the President asked CFA and CGSP review the document “Expectations for Graduate Education,” which was introduced at University Council, to

determine if new policies are needed. If so, a formal resolution should be developed and submitted through the governance system. Members were asked to review the document for discussion at a later meeting

Dual Career Accommodation Policy

Hyer reported that the Dual Career Accommodation Draft Policy is being worked on by the Advance Policy workgroup. A copy of the draft was distributed to CFA members in advance of the meeting. The Provost had asked for a formal policy so that written guidance was available regarding dual career accommodations. The Provost will present an overview of policies at Top 30 institutions at the Board of Visitors meeting on March 29th, to introduce the topic to them before the actual policy comes forward for approval. The policy workgroup will continue working on the draft policy so that it is ready for the fall. The policy is brief and relatively straightforward. Guidelines have also been drafted to cover implementation issues in more detail. Easterling asked the CFA to review the draft for later discussion.

CFA Resolution 2003-04A

Easterling reported CFA Resolution 2003-04A was tabled at University Council and sent back to CFA to consider whether the two-thirds majority vote OR the division of vote should be recommended rather than both. Statements and questions by members of University Council suggested that there was greater support for the division of vote going forward, which would still provide a level of transparency and information useful to subsequent reviews. Members of CFA continued to support the two-thirds vote.

The CFA decided to do two separate resolutions, allowing the Council to vote on each separately. One resolution would address the division of vote and another would address the two-thirds vote. A motion was made and passed unanimously to write a resolution that addressed reporting the division of vote. A second motion was made and passed unanimously to let stand the resolution that addressed the two-thirds vote.

CFA Resolution 2003-04D

Easterling reported the resolution was tabled at University Council and sent back to the CFA to consider revisions. The CFA was asked to review the language referring to evaluation for promotion to full professor in light of the three missions of the university. Some Council members felt that the reference to "Outreach" did not adequately capture "university and professional service," and the relationship between these two needed to be addressed.

Hyer reported that the Commission on Outreach has had extensive discussions recently about how to evaluate Outreach activities and that it would be inappropriate to short circuit whatever they may want to propose in the months to come that might address this larger question of outreach vs. service. The proposed sentence was rewritten so that it repeats language earlier in that section and avoids referencing the three missions by name, hopefully avoiding the problem noted at the Council meeting. A motion was made to approve the resolution with editorial changes made. CFA voted unanimously to approve the resolution.

University Council attendance policy

Easterling reported that the CFA and the Faculty Senate were asked to develop an attendance policy for University Council by President Steger. Student representatives, some administrators and faculty are not attending meetings. The CFA will discuss this further at the next meeting.

Promotion and Tenure Policies at Top 30 Institutions

Amelink reported on material collected related to promotion and tenure policies at Top 30 institutions. The presentation highlighted institutions that separate peer and administrative review in the promotion and tenure process. A number of institutions have policies that specifically state individuals must excuse themselves from committee deliberations if someone from their own department is up for review. The role of the dean and the department head in the promotion and tenure process at other institutions was also discussed. For those institutions with university-level committees, none reported that deans served as members. Automatic membership of department heads on college-level committees was also infrequent.

The next meeting will be on April 2nd.

Recorder, Catherine Amelink, Graduate Assistant, Office of the Provost

Minutes
Commission on Faculty Affairs
April 16, 2004

Members attending: Richard Ashley, Sam Easterling, Leon Geyer, Bill Greenberg, Pat Hyer, Sean O'Keefe, Bob Tracy, Dennis Welch, Brian Woerner. Guests: Bob Broyden, Dwight Shelton, Linda Woodard

Easterling called the meeting to order with four items on the agenda, 1) Draft Statement of Business Standards and Conduct, 2) Update on Draft Policy on Dual Career Accommodation, 3) Promotion and Tenure Committee structure, 4) University Council Attendance Policy. A motion was made and passed to adopt the agenda and approve the minutes of April 2, 2004.

Draft Statement of Business Standards and Conduct

Dwight Shelton, Vice President for Budget and Financial Management, provided background related to the development of the Draft Statement of Business Standards and Conduct. A number of audits revealed that some employees did not fully understand institutional business practices and policies. The Finance and Audit Committee of the Board has been concerned about this and wants assurance that all university employees are informed about university business policies. The Draft Statement of Business Standards and Conduct is an attempt to insure that employees are aware of basic business practices and the policy guidance available on many different topics.

The draft Statement is written in general, overarching language with an attachment identifying specific, related policies and procedures. The Board approved the general approach and Dwight and his staff are seeking input on how to implement it in the least intrusive way possible. The Board feels all salaried employees need to annually certify their understanding of business related policies and procedures. The CFA was asked to provide guidance related to how the yearly certification process should be carried out.

While the administration does not want to establish another bureaucratic process, there is a genuine interest in making sure employees know the rules and regulations they are held accountable for. Two ideas have been discussed for reaching all salaried employees annually. Certification could be linked to existing procedure such as the annual faculty activity reports/evaluation. Certification of compliance could also be done electronically with a submission that is tracked by special software available at the Survey Research Center.

Several members of the CFA expressed concern about the Board's seemingly intrusive involvement in day-to-day oversight of employee activities. They also had concern about some details in the Statement, even while recognizing that, in general, employees should be held accountable for following basic business policies. The CFA felt an annual certification statement needs to be worded in such a way that faculty are being asked to recognize the larger ethical commitment they are making related to informing themselves of and following policies and procedures that affect business practice. The certification statement also needs to make it clear faculty are not being asked to acknowledge something NEW. Faculty are already held liable for the policies outlined in the document. Annual certification provides an extra safeguard for the

institution and reinforces to faculty that they need to stay informed of the business practices of the institution.

The CFA also suggested wording related to charitable solicitations needs to be looked at. Policies that regulate computer and office use for consulting duties needs to be included in a clearly stated manner. The Statement should include protection for employees who inform the administration about practices of other employees who are not compliant with rules and regulations (whistleblowers). More time needs to be spent with new faculty who are not familiar with practices and policies.

Update on Draft Policy on Dual Career Accommodation

Hyer provided an update on the Draft Policy on Dual Career Accommodation. After the last meeting with the Provost, it was determined operational guidelines related to dual career accommodation would be the most useful approach at this point. A member suggested that the document might have less detail. However, department heads felt they needed explicit guidance, so that everyone knew how to address these issues when they had them. The CFA suggested a few editorial changes. Members supported moving ahead with the document. The guidelines will be distributed to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Visitors at their June meeting.

Promotion and Tenure Committee structure

Easterling provided an update on the CFA resolutions that were sent to University Council for review. The policy on a 2/3rds vote for positive recommendation for tenure, CFA Resolution 2003-04A, was voted down. The resolution requiring the vote to go forward was approved. The revisions to chapter 4 of the Faculty Handbook were approved with minor changes and the revisions to the section on criteria for promotion and tenure were approved.

After reviewing the information collected on promotion and tenure processes from other institutions, there seemed to be little compelling interest in making changes to the process at VT. The university level P&T Committee continues to tweak its own operating procedures. The deans will briefly address the faculty on the committee before they begin their deliberations with the provost, then join the group as full members during the second phase. The separate session with the provost and faculty only has been in place for several years and it seems to be a useful way to get more participation from faculty members.

University Council Attendance Policy

At the recent meeting with the President, he clarified that he was not necessarily looking for a formal attendance policy. He would like University Council members to continue thinking about attendance related issues.

Easterling will send out a notice of a final CFA meeting is needed.

Recorder, Catherine Amelink, Graduate Assistant, Office of the Provost