

Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA)
Minutes
August 31, 2007

Members present: H. Odendaal, P. Hyer, K. Eriksson, E. Lener, S. Easterling, D. Welch, J. Finney (for Chang), and B. Klein

Odendaal called the meeting to order with one agenda item: 1) Topics for the 2007-08 academic year.

Odendaal reviewed the charge of CFA and spoke to the importance of the commission serving as a vehicle for partnerships between faculty and administration. The membership of the Commission is still being finalized. There is one faculty/staff vacancy remaining and the President's office will identify the student representatives (GSA and SGA).

TOPICS FOR 2007-2008

Prior to the CFA meeting, Odendaal and Hyer met and compiled a list of possible topics for the 2007-2008. The majority are rollover items from the 2006-2007 academic year.

Survey of Pre-Tenure Faculty (COACHE): Last year, pre-tenured faculty members participated in the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey conducted by Harvard University. The purpose of the study is to identify peer diagnostic and comparative data in an effort to assist in the recruitment and retention of faculty. The results are currently being shared with campus constituencies. It was proposed that CFA should also receive a presentation on these data to determine if there were follow-up recommendations that would be appropriate from the commission.

Underrepresented Faculty: The following individuals will be invited to a future CFA meeting to discuss their findings with respect to underrepresented faculty – Tonya Smith Jackson (report from focus group conversations); Elizabeth Creamer (report from Advance survey); and Kevin McDonald (recommendations from Race Task Force).

Removal of Principal Investigators: During the previous year, Ken Eriksson initiated a conversation with respect to establishing a policy addressing the involuntary removal of a principal investigator in cases, for example, where funds were misspent, work was not completed, or the sponsor demanded a change.

Web based research only revealed two institutions (University of Massachusetts and Boise State University) that currently have such policies. This conversation will continue to be explored.

Professors of the Practice: The resolution concerning Professors of the Practice received an unenthusiastic response when presented to the Faculty Senate last year. This reaction was due to various factors (i.e. threat to tenure – departments could force faculty into the POP track; unfair title for individuals who do not possess the academic credentials of a “professor” or who have not gone through the traditional trajectory). However, there are still proponents of this ranking who deem that it would be beneficial

in attracting quality, experienced individuals who may be returning from the field. Easterling shared an advertisement from Lehigh University and explained why some departments (construction, SPIA) could benefit from this ranking. Odendaal asked Easterling to contact possible allies who could educate the Faculty Senate on why this new rank series would be useful to academic departments.

Promotion and Continued Appointment Process for Librarians: The approval process for a continued appointment parallels that of tenure. There are currently 37 individuals with continued appointments (six –extension; two – agriculture departments; two-natural resource departments; twenty five – library; and one – continuing and professional education). Although there are only one to two cases per year, the concern is that, there are not enough faculty members with continued appointment to perform the two-three layer review procedure. Klein asked whether the responsibility should lie solely on the librarians or whether it should be subsumed under the university process for tenure.

A commission member recommended that an invitation be extended to someone who has participated in both layers of the process to attend a CFA meeting.

Faculty Salary Benchmarking: Concern with respect to how faculty salaries could be more competitive were raised. Faculty salaries at VT are not consistent with the 60th percentile of our peer group, the state's goal. Hyer suggested inviting Dixon Hanna and/or Dr. McNamee to a Senate or CFA meeting to educate the faculty on the peer group process and how the university appropriates money for faculty compensation. While this could be done, Easterling responded that this begs the question of internal funding priorities and a commitment to allocate more internal funding for raises than is appropriated by the state. Whether or not this is an issue that CFA can effect is a question.

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA)
Minutes
September 14, 2007

Members present: H. Odendaal, P. Hyer, E. Lener, K. Eriksson, R. Sorenson, J. Finney (for Chang), D. Welch, S. Hagan, S. Easterling, and B. Klein

Guest(s): Jim Collier

Odendaal called the meeting to order with three agenda items: 1) Survey of Pre-Tenure Faculty 2) Mandatory EAP for Faculty and 3) Future Topics for the 2007-08 academic year. The minutes were approved.

SURVEY OF PRE-TENURE FACULTY (COACHE)

Hyer presented results from the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey. COACHE was created by researchers Trower and Chait (Harvard University) to try to shed some light on “good” places to work and the conditions and policies that drive faculty satisfaction with tenure-track employment. Since its implementation, COACHE has been administered to three cohorts - 54 universities have participated and a large number of smaller institutions. Participation is voluntary, and member institutions are assessed a fee. The difference between this survey and the study conducted by ADVANCEVT is that COACHE focused on pre-tenure/probationary faculty; ADVANCEVT surveyed the entire population of research and tenure-track faculty. Additionally, there are no external benchmark data for the ADVANCEVT survey. COACHE participants are allowed to choose up to five schools of which they can receive comparative data. Overview findings are published nationally (i.e. the Chronicle, Inside Higher Education), giving the survey and these issues a lot of visibility. Institutional data are not revealed unless the university chooses to do so.

The COACHE survey measured five themes (i.e. tenure; nature of the work; policies & practices; climate, culture, & collegiality; and global satisfaction), but for the purpose of this presentation, Hyer focused primarily on promotion and tenure.

Highlights:

Pre-tenure faculty hired before January 2006 were asked to participate. Of the 221, 157 responded (71% response rate). The individuals also had to be employed by VT for a minimum of six months.

Demographics: The majority of the respondents were White (106), which reflects the demography of the faculty. Of the underrepresented populations, there were more Asian (29) than Black (10), Hispanic (10), Native American (1), and multi-race (1) participants – these are weighted responses to reflect their proportions in the pre-tenure population. 28% were non-U.S. citizens.

Selected peer institutions were: Iowa State University, Michigan State University, North Carolina State University, Ohio State University, and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The data showed concerns in three areas: transparency of the tenure process, clarity and reasonableness of tenure standards; and policies and practices related to tenure and work-life. Virginia Tech scored lower than its peers, and lower than other universities, on many items.

Hyer asked the group for their thoughts on how the university might respond to the promotion and tenure issues included in the survey. An overall theme was a desire for more clarity on how the tenure process works and a more concrete explanation on how a probationary faculty can obtain tenure.

Klein, of Veterinary Medicine, suggested that there may be a discrepancy in how the expectations of receiving tenure are perceived by pre-tenure faculty in the clinical and basic sciences. Clinical faculty may be less sure of how much research they are expected to do. Standards for biomedicine may be less ambiguous but still complicated by clinical service performed by some biomedicine faculty.

There may also be a disparity with how the expectations are communicated in the various disciplines. Finney explained that mixed messages may be sent due to a change in standards over the course of the last few years (i.e. Top 30 goal). He suggested making available sample dossiers to show diversity throughout the disciplines.

Odendaal stated that the change in membership of departmental committees adds to the uncertainty since the messages are not always consistent. Collier commented that micromanagement of documentation (i.e. font size) seems to raise anxiety levels as well.

Klein also suggested that the perception of research being significantly more important may have an effect on the quality of teaching.

Hyer commented that one or more of the COACHE institutions instituted an association for pre-tenured faculty charged with the purpose of providing a social/networking outlet as one way to address survey concerns. Odendaal stated that Clemson University has a similar organization. He also explained Faculty Senate planned to host a social event in the near future.

MANDATORY REFERRAL TO EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) FOR FACULTY

Mandatory referrals to the employee assistance program are already possible for university staff, and such referrals for faculty are supported by case law. However, VT does not have a policy stating that such a referral can be made and under what

circumstances. A very early draft resolution was distributed for comment. Initial concerns expressed by CFA members were privacy/confidentiality; wording of the resolution (i.e. mandatory referral needs to be defined); and whether this referral could ultimately be used against the individual. Klein questioned whether this resolution was a knee-jerk reaction to the incident that occurred on 4/16. Finney added that this resolution should be a referral to the employee assistance program and not an open ended referral to any physician of the faculty member's choice.

Eriksson spoke to the lack of consistency – staff can be referred, but faculty cannot. He explained that the mandatory referral is a safeguard/mechanism for individuals who may be a danger to themselves and others. It should not be used to subject faculty to abuse. He argued for a possible team approach to determining if a mandatory referral should be made.

Finney maintained that faculty have the freedom to live with mental health disorders. The resolution should focus more on job performance and the threat that the illness and behavior may have on the workplace.

There is a pending meeting scheduled with legal counsel to discuss this resolution in greater detail.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR 2007-2008 ACADEMIC YEAR

Eriksson briefly introduced three new topics for consideration:

- 1) Promotion of Research Faculty: There are questions as to whether the expectations are understood.
- 2) Post Doc Compensation: Should there be a minimum commitment for individuals serving in a post-doc position? The current contract states that dismissal can occur if there is a depletion of funding.
- 3) Removal of Principal Investigators

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA)
Minutes
October 12, 2007

Members present: H. Odendaal, P. Hyer, E. Lener, K. Eriksson, J. Finney (for Chang), D. Welch, B. Klein, K. Hunnings (for Sorensen), M. Perez-Lopez, D. Kniola, A. Mitchell, S. Easterling,

Guest(s): Wayne Scales, Kevin McDonald

Odendaal called the meeting to order with three agenda items: 1) Principal Investigator Removal Resolution 2) Mandatory EAP for Faculty and 3) Race Task Force Final Report. The minutes were approved.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR REMOVAL RESOLUTION

Odeendaal presented a draft of the Principal Investigator Removal policy and resolution. While there is currently a process in place that addresses ethical concerns, the purpose of this policy is to hold individuals accountable for behavior unrelated to research misconduct (i.e. incapacitation, fraudulent activity, removal requested by sponsor).

In addition to a check for syntax and editorial changes, the following feedback was given:

Grievance/Appeals: A lack of clarity in the wording of the document raised questions with respect to whether a grievance could be filed once the removal process was initiated. Eriksson explained that he thought the policy would eliminate the number of grievances. Therefore, the Faculty Review Committee would not serve as the appeals committee.

Easterling explained that if inappropriate application of the procedure had been employed, a grievance could be filed. Hyer said that grievance would not be a possibility if there is already an appeals process built into the policy. She also maintained that if a policy has too many layers for review, the process is flawed.

Non-Faculty/PIs who don't report to a dean: The policy states that the Dean has the authority to initiate removal; however Finney pointed out that all PIs (i.e. VBI) may not report to a Dean or the Provost. He suggested adding the phrase "senior management." He also questioned whether there should be a subsection that speaks to non-faculty PIs.

Time: Easterling asked if the deadlines specified in the document (i.e. investigator must respond within ten days of notice from Dean) were realistic due to vacation, etc. Hyer suggested that extension of the deadlines should be mutually agreed upon by the parties involved.

MANDATORY EAP FOR FACULTY

There were no updates.

RACE TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT

Scales explained that the Race Task Force was commissioned by the Provost in the Spring/Summer of 2006 as a result of a case involving a Black faculty member who was denied reappointment. The Provost's charge to the Task Force was to 1) examine issues of race and racism; 2) identify key issues; and 3) propose recommendations to make lasting change.

The activities of the group spanned over a year period:

- August 24: Task Force members appointed
- September 13: First meeting of Task Force
- January 29: Task Force released preliminary report; showed initial thinking-input solicited from members of the community
- April 2007: Task Force released final report. The final report, which can be found on the Provost's website, included 20 recommendations. The report also includes: 1) implementation strategies/timeline, 2) proposed implementation teams, and 3) rough resource and budget estimates.

- Six subcommittees were instrumental in identifying these issues: academic programs, administrative infrastructure, alumni and community engagement, faculty, and staff, graduate student, and undergraduate student. The following themes were identified:
 - Assessment and Accountability:
 - Expand existing assessment efforts to include further measures of campus climate, cultural competency, efficiency recruitment, and diversity
 - Provide resources for appropriate development and analysis
 - Monitor assessment initiatives
 - Cultural Competency and Campus Climate
 - Develop incentive based professional development
 - Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration
 - A lot of facilitated activities, but difficulty with coordinating them all
 - Affirm diversity
 - Strengthen engagement with minority alumni (i.e. continue to move in the direction of hosting events that gather Black alumni – Black Alumni Reunion Weekend)
 - Curricular Reform
 - Requirement in the undergraduate core that addresses issues of racial privilege
 - Strengthen current academic programs (i.e. Africana Studies)
 - Create Latino/Latina Studies department
 - Recruitment, Retention, Mentoring, and Advising
 - Increase access to VT by developing a more comprehensive pre-college pipeline approach
 - Enhance undergraduate student advising, financial aids, etc.
 - Resources

- Develop innovative strategies to secure adequate resources to maintain and sustain diversity efforts across the university

Recommendations Specific to Faculty and Staff

1. Active and Innovative Recruiting
 - a. Chaired/endowed professorships
 - b. Strategic cluster hires and Targets of Opportunity
 - c. Specially coordinated recruiting teams
 - d. Postdoctoral/ABD programs – “prime a pipeline”
 - e. Engagement with minority serving institutions – “prime a pipeline”
2. Accountability and Faculty Incentives
 - a. FDI courses based on diversity/multiculturalism
 - b. Assess programs on faculty diversity/equity and publicize (accountability)
 - c. Effectively and fairly evaluate diversity component of Faculty Activity Reports (FARs)
3. Equity in Faculty Advancement
 - a. Be proactive in mentoring and advancement
 - b. Promote advancement in teaching and research in diversity
 - c. Provide resources to empower college diversity committees
 - d. Ensure faculty qualifications to serve on search committees

According to Scales, the Task Force recommendations will be considered by an implementation team. The VP for Multicultural Affairs, Kevin McDonald, co-chairs the implementation group with Dr. McNamee.

Scales opened the floor up for discussion. In response to Odendaal’s question regarding policy issues that should be of immediate concern to members of CFA, Scales spoke to the importance of search committee qualifications: For example, have they received appropriate training? Scales also asked if there was a way that CFA members could create a policy that could “pin down” the diversity component of the Faculty Activity Report. Diversity activities may conjure up different meanings. Accordingly, what constitutes diversity? How should diversity activities be evaluated? Klein commented that CEOD worked on this issue and disseminated guidelines on diversity activities last year.

Scales maintained that these types of activities would fall under “service” in the faculty evaluation process. He also pointed out that with respect to the three responsibilities of faculty, service is not valued as highly as teaching and research.

Eriksson asked if the task force discussed how faculty and P&T committees would be educated on diversity: Are there any training opportunities forthcoming? Scales explained that they recognized that the lack of training is an issue, but they did not have enough time to talk in-depth. He said that the implementation teams would be responsible for executing recommendations. Hyer spoke to some of the search committee education that has already been done or is planned for this year:

- At the last Advance conference in January 2007, members of the University of Michigan's STRIDE group (Committee on Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence) did a presentation to the full conference and then a special workshop on confronting unrecognized biases and assumptions.
- Interactive theatre: Susanna Rinehart is preparing an interactive theater piece on the search process for performance at the January 2008 campus conference.
- Damon Williams will be a keynote speaker for the ADVANCEVT/Multicultural Affairs conference, and there will be a special workshop on recruiting a diverse pool by another consultant invited by the Office of Multicultural Affairs.
- Beate Schmittmann met with departments in science and engineering and presented information on recognizing biases in the review of dossiers
- The College of Science is conducting sessions with Kelly Oaks on how to evaluate credentials, and the College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences has also done search committee training.

McDonald reported on the progress of the Implementation Teams. McDonald and Provost McNamee chair this group. The committee has met once; subsequent meetings will occur on a monthly basis. At the next meeting (October 30), members will share their preliminary ranking of the recommendations. The group will also discuss a timeline, and best practices models.

McDonald spoke to the university moving towards "Inclusive Excellence." This is a model developed by Damon Williams (University of Connecticut), Joseph Berger, and Shederick McClendon. According to McDonald, inclusive excellence is a shift away from thinking about diversity as a matter of demographic composition and brings about transformational change. This concept encourages institutional leaders to examine every phase of the institution – from pedagogy to recruitment. Multicultural Affairs and the Provost's Office have partnered to bring in Dr. Williams as a consultant. He will meet with various stakeholders on November 9th. He will also serve as the keynote speaker for the ADVANCEVT/Multicultural Affairs conference in January.

The floor was opened for discussion. Eriksson asked McDonald if the group thought of strategies to reach out to a broader audience. McDonald explained that he hopes the smaller groups will reach out to the larger groups to disseminate information. Odendaal asked if there were any policy issues that deserved the immediate attention of CFA. McDonald commented on the incorporation of gender identity into the university's harassment policy as one policy issue that may warrant attention. Prioritization of the Task Force recommendations was a concern for Scales. McDonald explained that the group recognizes the value of all recommendations, but due to the lack of financial and human resources, all recommendations would not be implemented.

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA)
Minutes
October 26, 2007

Members present: H. Odendaal, P. Hyer, E. Lener, K. Eriksson, R. Sorenson, J. Finney (for Chang), D. Welch, B. Klein, A. Mitchell, D. Kniola, S. Anong

Guest(s): Elizabeth Creamer & Tonya Saddler (AdvanceVT), Tonya Smith-Jackson

Odendaal called the meeting to order with four agenda items: 1) Mandatory EAP for Faculty 2) Policy on Principal Investigator (PI) Removal, 3) Underrepresented Faculty – AdvanceVT survey results, and 4) Research Faculty Representation in University Governance. New members of the commission were introduced (Sophia Anong and David Kniola). The minutes were approved.

MANDATORY EAP FOR FACULTY

Hyer reported that Jack Finney identified sample mandatory EAP policies online. Tracey Cameron is also conducting web-based research.

POLICY ON PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI) REMOVAL

Odendaal presented a revised draft of the PI Removal Resolution. Questions concerning the proposed appeal process required further discussion. Some members felt that “process” related concerns might still be pursued through the regular grievance process in addition to the proposed ad hoc appeals committee. Hyer expressed concern about having two avenues of appeal.

Concerns regarding the makeup of the appeals committee were discussed. The earlier draft referred to the “standing” committee that was part of the Scholarly Misconduct policy, but the membership of that committee is not clear and may not be appropriate. CFA members felt that the appeal committee should be largely made up of faculty peers. There was also discussion about the need for greater involvement of the research division, given the nature of the decision. A third concern was that many research faculty and PIs do not report within a college structure and assigning the dean as the person to do the formal removal would not work in those cases. The procedure needs to reflect all of these concerns. After considerable discussion, members agreed that the Vice President for Research (not the dean) would do the formal notification of removal, which addresses the need for their close involvement in such an issue. The Provost would then be asked to appoint the ad hoc appeals committee, if needed. Appeals committee members would be one member selected from the Faculty Review Committee membership; one member from membership of the Committee on Faculty Ethics; and one member selected by the Provost. With this faculty membership, access to the grievance process and peer review no longer seems necessary; the ad hoc appeals committee will be the only avenue for redress.

Hyer will revise the resolution. Odendaal will make sure that Bob Walters and his staff have an opportunity to comment, then will share the draft with the Faculty Senate at their

November meeting. Assuming support from the Senate, the resolution can then be formally approved by CFA and forwarded to University Council.

AdvanceVT SURVEY RESULTS FOR UNDERREPRESENTED FACULTY

Due to scheduling conflicts, Dr. Tonya Smith-Jackson will present at the next CFA meeting.

Dr. Creamer and Tonya Saddler presented findings from the 2005 *AdvanceVT* Work-Life Survey. *AdvanceVT* is a five year grant funded through the National Science Foundation (NSF). Its purpose is to increase the number and success of women faculty in the sciences and engineering field. The Work-Life Survey focused on whether factors related to satisfaction correlated with faculty productivity. There were 816 tenured and tenure-track faculty members surveyed. Demographics:

Gender - 599 (male) and 217 (female)

Race/Ethnicity - 703 (White), 59 (Asian), 22 (Black), 16 (Hispanic), 2 (Other)

Differences among the racial/ethnic groups made disaggregation important, even though the numbers of respondents were often very small. Asian faculty members, for example, tended to be more satisfied than whites. While African American and Hispanic faculty members were more concerned about climate issues.

Results:

- Faculty are satisfied with their jobs, but less so with salary.
- Faculty are more satisfied with their departmental climate (immediate environment) than the university as a whole. The survey was administered in 2005 and there were some high profile issues at the time that may have affected perception.

There are more significant differences by race regarding perceptions of the university climate than the departmental climate. Blacks were found to be less satisfied, and these results are consistent with the literature. Among asked how international faculty were categorized. Creamer's response was that international faculty were also participants in the survey.

- Perceptions of department climate were relatively positive. Welch suggested that the perceptions of the university vs. the department could be due to a favorable classroom experience. Creamer explained that the more negative views of the university climate could be due to faculty members being less knowledgeable of what goes on at the university level. Many other studies have found a similar difference, with greater satisfaction with close environments and colleagues than with the larger organization and institutional leaders.

Mitchell asked if there was something that could be done to improve the campus climate. Hyer reflected that between 1998 (the first climate survey) and 2005, the university faced

major challenges around affirmative action and discrimination issues as a result of Board actions, and steady progress was not possible.

Summary and Next Steps

- Findings are consistent with national trends on faculty satisfaction and perceptions of university climate issues
- Progress has been made in communicating faculty expectations in terms of P&T
- Progress has been made in improving racial climate on campus
- Continued and more effective attention to recruitment and retention of women and other underrepresented populations is needed.

In response to Eriksson's question regarding campus climate and how it impacts retention, Creamer commented that she could only answer that question indirectly, and that climate does impact retention if we look also to the exit survey; the results of this study are remarkably consistent with the exit survey study. Kniola asked if there was a difference between genders within the racial groups. Creamer explained that the initial analysis was based on gender and that there are a number of significant differences.

With respect to the next iteration on the survey, Creamer suggested incorporating more open ended questions so that respondents can insert comments. The focus group luncheon also offered more in-depth feedback; Tonya will report on that at the next meeting.

In terms of how the climate survey data have been disseminated and used to effect change, Creamer reported that the data were also analyzed by department and college to show patterns of differences. This information was disseminated to the deans who in turn shared the results with department heads. Hyer also commented on how work/life policies have been developed to address issues raised in the survey findings. Additionally, other leadership initiatives were implemented and the race task force will also address some of the concerns.

This report can be found on the *AdvanceVT* website at: <http://www.advance.vt.edu/>

RESEARCH FACULTY REPRESENTATION IN UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

Odendaal spoke to the lack of representation of research faculty within the university governance structure and questioned whether there should be a position designated on CFA for this group. He proposed the establishment of a research faculty organization. This group would then have representation on the Faculty Senate. There are thirteen research faculty ranks; the majority of the contracts are year-to-year, but some individuals have been with the university for many years. With respect to the establishment of an organization, Hyer cautioned that creating and maintaining a senate-like organization is very time consuming and it is not clear that the research faculty would either want to or be able to invest so much time in meetings and organizational work. A first step in meeting the identified need might be establishing an advisory

committee of research faculty, or a standing committee reporting to one of the commissions.

In terms of putting research faculty members on the Senate and/or on each of the commissions, Welch questioned whether individuals who have no long-term commitment to the university should be involved in the decision-making process. He explained that this situation is similar to students who vote in the city where they attend school. These individuals have no long term investment and allowing them to vote just creates a larger number of uncommitted people who are unaware of the issues. Odendaal stated that the students who represent SGA and GSA are not long term either. He suggested establishing a process that was similar to how the student representatives are selected which is appointment by the respective organization.

With the establishment of VBI and VTTI the number of research faculty has dramatically increased to about 500 – 600. While there are short-term appointees, there is also a stable core group. The formation of an advisory committee would assist in the development of policy. Hyer explained that we need their input because, at present, others are making decisions for them. An advisory committee, which could be a committee within the Commission on Faculty Affairs or the Commission on Research would have the authority to recommend policy change and creation, or at least for policy input. Lener agreed that a smaller approach would be the most appropriate action and Klein suggested the Research Division's involvement in the creation of this committee.

Hyer and Odendaal will meet with members of the Research Division to discuss this recommendation further.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting is November 30, 2007.

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA)
Minutes
November 30, 2007

Members present: H. Odendaal, P. Hyer, E. Lener, K. Eriksson, J. Finney (for Chang), D. Welch, B. Klein, A. Mitchell, D. Kniola, S. Anong, J. Collier, S. Easterling, K. Hunnings

Guest(s): Tonya Smith-Jackson

Odendaal called the meeting to order with three agenda items: 1) Underrepresented Faculty Report from Focus Group Conversations, 2) Mandatory EAP for Faculty, 3) Policy on Promotion and Continued Appointment Process for Librarians and Extension Personal, and 4) Policy on Principal Investigator (PI) Removal. The agenda and minutes were approved.

AdvanceVT - UNDERREPRESENTED FACULTY REPORT FROM FOCUS GROUP CONVERSATIONS

Tonya Smith-Jackson reported on findings derived from two focus groups held with faculty of color during Spring 2007. Twenty-two underrepresented faculty (A/P and Instructional) of Hispanic and African descent participated. Five main themes emerged from the conversations:

1) Impact of AdvanceVT:

- Increased awareness of family & work/life balance policies
- Increased belief that change would happen; gave hope
- Men really started to understand their personal biases
- Some groups still ignored in spite of Advance; “should be called Advancing White Women”
- Language offensive to single and lesbian/gay faculty – i.e. use of the term “spouse”

2) Proposed Solutions to Enhance AdvanceVT

- Expand events to include UR faculty
- Expand focus to address issues specific to UR faculty or other cultures, socioeconomic status, definitions of identity, sexual orientation; issues of class emerged
- Get input on research before it is conducted (i.e. faculty of color were unaware of AdvanceVT during its initial stage)

3) Recruitment Facilitators, Barriers, & Solutions

- Pipeline – ABD programs; funding a graduate student could lead to future faculty
- Utilize the external community
- Benefits/Incentives – educational opportunity to be classified as “faculty”
- Best practices need to be formalized and sustained
- Initial placement of spouses is problematic, needs to be addressed
- Develop a diversity hiring cluster

4) Retention Facilitator, Barriers, & Solutions

What helps retain them here: Family ties, Department Head, educational benefits, feeling valued, mentoring

Barriers & Solutions:

Community; VT needs to focus on making the community more welcoming for UR faculty

Department heads and leaders need to be culturally competent

Flexible merit models are lacking, definition of merit should be more progressive; collective obligations to the community should be considered for P&T

Lack of trained mentors

5) Open Discussion/Remarks

Need to evolve professionally and be capable of discussing race and racism

Many felt left out and ignored by AdvanceVT

Key organizations were not consulted in the beginning; Black and Hispanic caucuses did not know about AdvanceVT

Many were very grateful for the opportunity to provide input from the UR perspective

Recommendations

- Create an inclusive institutional culture
- Accountability
- Policy review to identify inequities in outcomes and benefits
- Create other opportunities to provide input; especially on committees and commissions. A barrier is VTs extreme underrepresentation which leads to over-taxing of UR Faculty.

A question was raised about diversity clusters. Smith-Jackson explained that this is the idea of having a position announcement around a specific topic area or theme. The hope is that it will attract faculty from a wide variety of disciplines. She added that the Race Task Force defined it as research around diversity issues not typically recognized. Hyer added that diversity clusters are not discriminatory because anyone can apply as long as their research is focused in this area.

Easterling asked whether respondents' feelings came from a lack of information about the new policies and benefits. Smith Jackson explained that the participants were basing their answers from personal experience; they feel as if they are not getting the same benefits. The policies should be designed so that they are flexible enough to benefit a broad range of people who have varying definitions of family.

Hyer followed up on an earlier comment about UR faculty feeling as if they did not benefit from AdvanceVT. She explained that the NSF grant focused on the Colleges of Science and Engineering, and these colleges had only a very small number of African American women faculty members. She added that the policies ARE flexible (except for state health insurance) and do allow a broad definition of family.

Odendaal commented on the advantage of having cultural competence workshops for department heads. Smith-Jackson explained that the term cultural competence has been

used in university settings for about 15 years (started at the University of San Diego). She added that people want to be “competent” in everything; this term is more attractive and easier for department heads to buy into. Finney added that there are other ways to expose individuals to the topic even if workshops are not feasible. He also added that interventions are going to come from smaller groups; workshops can focus on what is cultural competence and what are you doing to make your department more open. Hyer explained that there is a greater interest on the part of the department heads and others and that VT has made progress in this area over the past four years. For those who are not interested in attending workshops because they are so entrenched in the old way of doing things, Smith-Jackson explained that we will have to wait until there is turnover in order to make progress.

MANDATORY EAP FOR FACULTY

No update

POLICY ON PROMOTION AND CONTINUED APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR LIBRARIANS AND EXTENSION PERSONAL

Lener and Hyer presented recommendations developed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion and Continued Appointment for librarians and extension agents. Lener explained that the number of individuals that this policy effects is relatively small (36). The promotion and continued appointment process is similar to tenure; however, the focus is more on service. The committee proposed six recommendations:

- 1) Change in the composition of the promotion and continued appointment committee which eliminates representation from outreach faculty.
- 2) One person/one vote: The committee agreed to eliminate the possibility of individuals serving at multiple levels the opportunity to have more than one vote.
- 3) External Peer Reviews: At least two of the reviewers have to be external from the university.
- 4) Pre-Continued Appointment Reviews: The handbook should explicitly state that reviews will occur at the two and four year period.
- 5) The committee proposed that the selection process for committee representatives remain the same.
- 6) The committee recommended that the promotion and continued appointment deliberation process mirror the university promotion and tenure committee’s deliberation process.

Klein asked how the role of librarians and extension agents differ from other professional faculty (i.e. student services). Lener explained that these individuals have similar expectations as tenured professors with respect to publications and service; the process for continued appointment and promotion used to be the same as tenure. But, all institutions do not have this type of process for librarians and extension agents. Hyer explained that historically, the purpose of this process was to assure academic freedom.

Hyer asked for a motion to approve the resolution. The resolution was unanimously approved.

POLICY ON PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI) REMOVAL

Odendaal reported on feedback received from the Senate meeting regarding the PI Removal policy. He explained that the senators felt that there needed to be a more clear definition or reason for removal and that the sponsor needed to be more central to the process (i.e. removal should not happen without the sponsors' approval). Welch agreed and explained that the language should state that the sponsor initiates removal. Others disagreed, given that the institution has an obligation to assure compliance with required policies and procedures and the sponsor may not be aware of infractions or refusal to comply. The fact that contracts are between the sponsor and the university is actually a protection for faculty members. Most sponsors require approval of the PI, hence, proposing a replacement PI would necessarily involve informing and consulting the sponsor.

Another issue discussed was whether performance issues or ineffectiveness warrant the removal of a PI since ineffectiveness may be difficult to define. This phrase was removed.

Welch recommended the addition of a preamble that discusses the relationship between the university and the sponsor; the document could then move on to list infractions that would constitute removal.

Odendaal reported that the document would be revised and then taken back to senate for their review.

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA)
Minutes
February 1, 2008

Members present: P. Hyer, E. Lener, K. Eriksson, J. Finney (for Chang), D. Kniola, K. Hunnings (for Sorensen), S. Easterling

Easterling presided over the meeting in the absence of Odendaal. The meeting was called to order with two agenda items: 1) Policy on Principal Investigator (PI) Removal and 2) Feedback from Provost's COACHE session with Pre-Tenure Faculty focus group. The agenda was approved with one addition, electronic faculty activity reports.

POLICY ON PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI) REMOVAL

The revised policy on Principal Investigator Removal was presented to the group. Easterling reported that the intent is to re-present the document to Faculty Senate on the 12th. Easterling solicited feedback and asked if there were any questions or additional modifications. Hyer reminded the group of the original concerns with the document, one of which was questions regarding the inclusion of removal based on *ineffectiveness*. This item was removed from the policy and an appeals process similar to P&T was added. Another concern with the policy overall was whether it is appropriate for the university to intervene in these matters. Eriksson explained that faculty need to be aware that the grant contract is between the agency and institution, not the individual. As such, it is necessary to have this policy as a safeguard.

The group discussed syntax errors and made additional revisions. The policy was unanimously approved with the necessary corrections.

FEEDBACK FROM PROVOST'S SESSIONS WITH PRE-TENURE FACULTY

Hyer briefed the group on actions taken with respect to COACHE findings. The results have been shared with various campus constituencies (i.e. P&T committees). She explained that based on the findings, we are not doing as well as our benchmarks: Illinois, Iowa, Michigan State, North Carolina State, and Ohio State. Faculty tended to rate clarity and reasonability of the tenure process lower. We did better in the area of work-life policies. The Provost hosted a focus group with pre-tenure faculty in October to get their interpretation of some of the findings.

A larger session with pre-tenure faculty was held in conjunction with the January AdvanceVT conference. The participants were divided into four to five work groups. Their conversations were centered on ways to improve the pre-tenure experience. Hyer reported that many of the group's suggestions were feasible, but some of the suggestions would cost more money than others. Mentoring was one issue discussed. In some departments, it is not happening at all or if it is taking place, it is fraught with difficulties. But, there were some participants who did in fact speak to positive mentoring relationships. Another discussion point, which is also an item on the COACHE survey, was the negotiation of teaching loads as a part of the start-up package. Hyer explained that some faculty members are presented the reduced teaching load as an option. IDST is

working on a departmental policy, but there is no university-wide policy. The AdvanceVT Executive Committee discussed the possibility of setting an expectation of a reduced teaching load for all pre-tenure faculty in a recent meeting. Eriksson commented that new faculty in his department automatically received a semester off during the first or second year, but the third year is optimal. Easterling stated that leave during the first semester should not be an option; the individual is still getting oriented and may need the structure. Eriksson stated that *when* the reduction occurs should not be a strict policy. Hyer added that it has to be aligned with the department's teaching schedule.

Hyer asked the group whether CFA should, at a minimum, create expectations regarding reducing the teaching load for pre-tenure faculty. Hunnings asked whether there were some departments that did not offer a reduction at all. Hyer explained that it is her impression that there are some that are not offered or do not receive it. Hyer added that the benefit of offering the reduction shows that the university is supportive of pre-tenure faculty. It also takes the burden off the individual candidate with respect to negotiating. This issue will be brought up in the next Faculty Senate. Eriksson also requested a presentation of the COACHE findings for Senate. Easterling suggested that proposed language on reduced teaching loads be presented to the Department Heads Council for their feedback.

Eriksson questioned whether the group should consider working on a mentoring policy since there are inconsistencies across the board. Hyer expressed concern with a policy, but acknowledged the need to set expectations. Finney explained that he is hoping to gain a better understanding of the mentoring practices throughout the university from pre-tenure evaluations. Like Hyer, he also questioned whether the group should mandate mentoring in the formal sense, since senior faculty are already feeling so stretched.

Hyer stated that she continues to welcome feedback on how constructive measures can be taken to address issues raised by pre-tenure faculty. She also encouraged members to share information within their respective areas.

ELECTRONIC FACULTY ACTIVITY REPORTS

Hyer discussed actions taken to identify an electronic reporting instrument for faculty activities. She explained the desire to have a system that can summarize faculty accomplishments that can in turn be used for marketing purposes or when communicating to the State or other agencies. Some departments have written their own software for faculty; but these do not scale and are not enterprise level. A small group has been investigating available software on the market and seeing demos from vendors. They have identified Digital Measures as a possible option. Their clients include MIT and Arizona, among many other research universities. The system includes the following features:

- Colleges and departments can design their own reporting formats – customizable at university, college, and department level
- Faculty can create websites
- Can draw from current databases, such as the teaching load database or BANNER HR, and the grants and contracts database that is being revised now

- Capability of producing reports in any number of formats: CV, NSF, NIH, accreditation, and so on

Before a decision is made on this particular system, Hyer explained that she would like a broader audience (deans, assistant deans, and faculty) to participate in a demo. If the group decides to go with the product, policy decisions will also have to be discussed: would faculty enter all information into the system, the past 10 years, or just current information? Finney commented that seasoned faculty may have more difficulties buying-into this system than younger faculty. Easterling commented on issues of confidentiality with respect to who would have access to the information.

Kniola asked if graduate students would be able to use the resource as well. He explained that it would be beneficial for students to be able to track their activities throughout their graduate experience. Finney added that graduate departments may be interested in accessing this type of information. Hyer said that the cost for the system is based on number of users, per college. The original intent was for the system to be used for instructional and A/P faculty. However, she would look into graduate student use.

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA)
Minutes
February 15, 2008

Members present: H. Odendaal, P. Hyer (teleconference), E. Lener, K. Eriksson, J. Finney (for Chang), D. Welch, B. Klein, D. Kniola, S. Anong, S. Easterling, K. Hunnings (for Sorensen)

Odendaal called the meeting to order with three agenda items: 1) Policy on Principal Investigator (PI) Removal, 2) Reduced Teaching Load for Pre-Tenure Faculty, and 3) Restriction on Awarding of Degrees at VT for Assistant Professors. The agenda was approved

POLICY ON PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI) REMOVAL

Carol Roberson, Special Assistant for Research Contract Affairs, proposed several changes/edits to the PI removal policy. Odendaal presented two of these suggestions and solicited feedback from the group. The first suggestion was use of *key personnel* and *lead investigator* instead of *principal investigator*; the second, inclusion of a suspension statement. These proposed suggestions brought into question the role/expectations of the *lead*. Odendaal explained that unless the lead investigator is the person subject to removal, then every action for other project personnel should go through that PI.

The committee agreed that use of the term *key personnel* may be too encompassing for the purposes of this policy. For example a post-doc could have been named in the proposal as *key personnel* but a sponsor is unlikely to know about the ineffectiveness of a post-doc. It should be the responsibility of the PI to do removal of other key personnel.

Roberson's suggestions also included the possibility of an immediate suspension of PI authority, while the current draft made that suggestion at the stage of appeal to the Provost. A discussion ensued about whether temporary suspension could or should require the program manager's consent. Easterling and Finney added that we do not want to include approval or permission from the sponsor, but rather *notification*. Sponsors have the opportunity and responsibility to decide whether to continue the project under new leadership or whether to terminate the funding agreement. Hyer also asked about immediate suspension in instances where there are allegations of misuse of funds. Members felt that other policies might be used to address this issue.

Odendaal maintained that the policy should state that if suspension or removal ensues, the substitute should be another faculty member in the department, but not an administrator or department head. Others disagreed, stating that the policy should not identify any particular type of substitute since this needs to be negotiated with the sponsor. Easterling suggested a statement in which the university and agency would consult with each other in naming a new PI.

Additional revisions were recommended (i.e. time periods for the provost and president to respond; exclusion of any language that suggested a second appeal) along with changes to grammatical and syntax errors.

The group agreed to adopt *lead investigator* language but not to include *key personnel*. Substantive changes included notification to the program manager and the reassignment of duties clause. Easterling asked that the revised policy be distributed to the group before it is sent back to Faculty Senate.

REDUCED TEACHING LOAD FOR PRE-TENURE FACULTY

Hyer presented a draft resolution on pre-tenure teaching release. The resolution states that, at a minimum, pre-tenure faculty would receive at least one semester of full or partial teaching release during the probationary period. When this release occurs is not prescribed in the document because this may vary by department.

Hunnings explained that the reduction in teaching load exacerbates the sense of excess resources bestowed on new assistant professors in business as salary and other perks have escalated to extraordinary levels, vastly exceeding the salaries of senior faculty in the college. The addition of a teaching reduction may cause resentment for seasoned faculty who would have to take over their course loads. Welch stated that although pre-tenure faculty in the college may make more money, these individuals also have higher expectations for scholarship. Hunnings also explained that the college would also have a hard time finding competent instructors to take up the additional work load. The College of Business supports new faculty by offering summer grants to assist in research efforts. Hunnings asked that the policy be inclusive of these types of incentives as well. Others argued that summer time for research is not the same or as valuable as time during the semester. Other colleges also offer summer research funds as part of their start-up packages.

Finney suggested that the Council of Deans discuss the implications of this policy so that all colleges benefit. Klein stated that he was unaware of release time in Veterinary Medicine. He stated that because it is a professional school, their issues are more complex. Hyer will ask McNamee to facilitate this discussion at the Council of Deans meeting on February 20.

RESTRICTION ON AWARDING OF DEGREES AT VT FOR ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

The Commission reviewed a request to waive the policy, per provisions in the Faculty Handbook, that precludes instructional faculty at the rank of assistant professor or above from obtaining a degree from VT. The waiver was approved (ten voted in favor; one abstention).

Odendaal asked if the policy should be revised to specify that a faculty member cannot receive a degree from *her/his own department*. Members of the Commission felt that the policy was not excessively burdensome, and it was worth discussing the individual rare case that arises. Finney added that he is not sure that we want to encourage tenure-track

faculty to pursue degrees at Tech after they have been appointed, but there may be instances where an advanced degree may be advantageous and assist the faculty in her/his current role.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Electronic Faculty Activity Reporting demo will be held during the March 14th meeting, 1:30-3:30pm (Alumni Hall in the Inn).

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA)
Minutes
February 29, 2008

Members present: H. Odendaal, P. Hyer, E. Lener, K. Eriksson, J. Finney (for Chang), B. Klein, J. Collier, D. Kniola, S. Easterling, K. Hunnings (for Sorensen)

Guest: Tom Inzana, Associate Vice President for Research

Odendaal called the meeting to order with four agenda items: 1) Policy on Removal of Lead Investigators, 2) Reduced Teaching Load for Pre-Tenure Faculty, 3) Faculty Recruitment-Related Proposals, and 4) Proposal for Research Incentive Plan. The agenda and minutes were approved

POLICY ON REMOVAL OF LEAD INVESTIGATOR

Revisions were made to the policy on the removal of lead investigators following discussion at the last meeting. The resolution was then voted on and unanimously approved. It will be sent to the Commission on Research for review and approval, as well as to the Faculty Senate.

REDUCED TEACHING LOAD FOR PRE-TENURE FACULTY

The deans discussed the proposed policy on reduction of teaching load for pre-tenure faculty during a recent meeting. The deans preferred not to have a university-wide policy, allowing them to continue with varied strategies to support the research endeavors of pre-tenure faculty. Other concerns include:

- Implementation of such a policy might provide one more avenue for appealing negative tenure decision if the faculty member claimed that they were not given adequate teaching release.
- Unclear whether Colleges need a policy of this nature. Is there another way to address the need without a policy? Are individuals not receiving promotion and tenure because there is no reduction in teaching? Are there data to support this finding?
- Colleges have different models, assignments, and teaching schedules. Deans may be more receptive if they were allowed autonomy in creating their own policy. The Faculty Handbook could then speak to best practices to assist in the implementation of the policy.
- Policy should convey the flexibility of when the reduction would occur (which it does). The subsequent sentence suggesting that it may be more productive during the second or third year could be deleted.

Hyer will attend an upcoming deans' council session to review some of the findings from the pre-tenure focus group and COACHE survey. It is not clear that the deans have received and/or internalized the need to address concerns coming from the pre-tenure faculty. Having such a policy provides greater transparency and visibility for pre-tenure faculty, a much-repeated theme in discussions with them. It would also be a positive contribution to recruitment efforts. A discussion with the Faculty Senate will also be scheduled for mid-March.

FACULTY RECRUITMENT-RELATED PROPOSALS

Hyer reported on proposals created to assist in the recruitment of faculty. These proposals are linked to the recommendations from the Race Task Force -- some of the suggestions are already underway; others will require additional funding. The following programs were suggested to improve recruitment outcomes through building relationships:

Recruitment Enhancement Grant

Program would provide extra funding for constituency groups to host receptions or other events so that candidates can find a community during the recruitment process; makes real something that is already happening.

VT Visiting Scholars Program

Program is a pre-search activity designed to identify potential candidates for current or future faculty positions. Provides \$1,000 per person for travel; an estimated \$10,000 a year for ten prospects. This program is open to people from underrepresented groups and individuals whose research is diversity related. Departments host scholars for a campus visit to introduce them to VT and build relationships that may lead to a hire.

Proposed Future Faculty Initiative

Intent is to identify prospective faculty by inviting 8-12 doctoral candidates who are close to degree completion to participate in an all-expense paid, two-day conference. The conference would look a lot like the Advance conference for doctoral students and post-docs. Candidates will be hosted by a Virginia Tech department and participate in enrichment sessions (i.e. how to negotiate a job offer). One resource for identifying possible invitees is the Southern Region Education Board's (SREB) database of fellowship recipients.

While the number of hires expected from such a program may be small, it should have a ripple effect if done well – participants may speak well of VT to their friends or urge them to look for openings here. This helps to build the reputation that VT is interested in attracting faculty from underrepresented groups.

The program would require administrative support. There may be some possibility of corporate or donor support to get the program launched – this option will be explored.

Diversity Cluster Hires

This program is the most expensive of the four. A set of 6 or more positions would be identified for a cluster recruitment around the scholarship of race or diversity more broadly. A wide variety of departments could participate in such recruitments. Hiring a critical mass of scholars with expertise in race/ethnicity/diversity would allow VT to make progress on other related initiatives, like transforming the curriculum and strengthening curricular offerings on race/ethnicity.

Hyer and Oaks spoke with administrators at Rutgers regarding their new diversity cluster initiative and learned some helpful strategies. Rutgers contacts warned about how

difficult it is to successfully recruit senior scholars, although more senior faculty of color are much needed at VT to provide leadership in various academic subdisciplines and to act as role models and collaborators for more junior faculty.

Several CFA members spoke to the need to hire several people per year in just two or three years maximum in order to gain any sense of momentum from the initiative, and to consider making the cluster at least ten faculty members to have a real impact. Finney expressed concern about the unspecified nature of the “cluster” and that it may be so broad that it does not actually accomplish the intellectual impact that comes with a more defined initiative. A concentrated focus may give us an extra advantage in attracting more people. Not all departments will find it possible to recruit for a diversity cluster. A cluster of this sort does not address general recruiting in a specific discipline.

PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH INCENTIVE PLAN

Tom Inzana, Associate Vice President for Research, presented a proposal aimed at providing salary incentives for faculty who successfully acquire grants and contracts. Such incentives are relatively common among medical schools and vary in detail. This plan is intended to boost the number of grants and contracts submitted; to give VT a competitive advantage in recruiting “high-end” researchers and retaining research-productive current faculty; to enhance faculty morale; and to provide faculty raises when the state is not able to do so.

PIs and Co-PIs on E&G funds would be eligible for one time bonuses from salary savings generated by grant funding. Fifty percent of salary savings, beyond savings required to cover summer salary or departmental requirements, is the maximum bonus an individual can receive. There is a sliding scale formula to balance the salary savings return to the Department and the PI, but is designed to be flexible to meet Department needs.

Concerns/Questions were as follows:

- Lack of structure and the possibility of misuse - Inzana explained that the department heads are responsible for reviewing proposals and guarding against diverting funds away from graduate student support or excess salary charges to maximize personal income
- Will this incentive apply to individuals who secure foundation grants which seldom allow overhead?
- NSF grants typically only allow two months of summer charges so it may be difficult to achieve sufficient salary savings from only NSF-funded projects.
- Would faculty members on calendar year appointments be allowed to participate? If so, do they need to achieve a threshold of equivalent summer earnings before the remainder could be used to provide a bonus?

Inzana explained that the next step in getting the policy adopted was to speak with department heads.

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA) Minutes
March 14, 2008
1:30pm- 3:00pm
Assembly Hall – The Inn

Members present: Hardus Odendaal (chair), Sam Easterling, Dennis Welch, Jack Finney (for Dean Chang), Kay Hunnings (for Dean Sorensen), David Kniola, Brad Klein, Edward Lener, Ken Eriksson, Pat Hyer (some members attended 3/13 demonstration)

Guest: Matthew Bartel– President, Digital Measures

For this meeting, CFA members attended the demonstration of the Digital Measures Faculty Activity Insight solution in order to provide input as to its appropriateness and functionality for faculty activity reporting.

Hyer introduced Mr. Matthew Bartel- President of Digital Measures. The university had been looking at models developed by Agriculture and Forest Products for faculty activity reporting but those models were not scalable. After examining the external models available, Digital Measures was found to be the most flexible and suitable to VT's needs. The reporting of scholarly accomplishments varies by discipline and flexibility is key to finding a functional solution. Department heads, deans, faculty members, librarians, several extension agents, and IT personnel were in attendance for this demonstration, and a second one held on the previous day. Feedback forms were provided and questions following the presentation were welcomed.

DIGITAL MEASURES ACTIVITY INSIGHT DEMONSTRATION

Matthew Bartel gave a brief overview of the company's history and purpose. Digital Measures was founded nine years ago in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the purpose of managing and reporting faculty/staff teaching and research and service activities. Digital Measures services over five hundred higher education institutions across the country. The demonstration highlighted key options a typical faculty member and administrator would be able to utilize. The following are the options that were presented.

- *Faculty options:* Faculty user options include managing activities and running custom reports. The “manage activities” option is organized under four headings that can be modified: Teaching, Scholarship, Research, and Service. All items have an edit, copy, and delete selection. Other features include an author's field that can include all VT faculty members on a drop-down list for selection of co-authors. Faculty can enter and manage their data at any time, and other databases can be copied into the system. CV's, class syllabi, and attachments of published articles or other documents. References can be outputted in a number of standard citation styles. Standard and custom “reports” are available, such as a NIH or NSF vita, a college annual faculty activity report, or a promotion and tenure dossier. Outputs can also be customized by the individual.

Certain data stored in BANNER will be loaded to minimize effort and to ensure accurate and consistent information across university information systems. Faculty-level data may be entered by an authorized second party, such as a student or administrative assistant. All entries and changes to records create an audit trail, should there be a question about when and who changed a record. Authorization must be specifically granted. Records are owned by the institution, not by Digital Measures, and security and privacy of records are important aspects of their company philosophy.

- *Administrator options:* Administrators will have additional options, such as reports for various accrediting bodies and ad-hoc reports to generate specific information. Administrator authorization for viewing and managing records follows current BANNER authorizations.
- *Concerns/Questions and responses were as follows:*
 - How is the data protected? Digital Measures is ADA compliant and strictly adheres to FERPA. Data cannot be sold on the network. Digital Measures also has a partnership with IBM and Iron Mountain to ensure security.
 - What are the steps to set up the system? Since the company already has base data and reports from other institutions, implementation can last between four to eight months depending on number of people and amount of customization. We should expect eight months to one year.
 - What are the support resources available? Each institution is assigned a client manager as well as the option to contact the help desk with a typical one day response rate. Unlimited web and phone training is also available.
 - What is the biggest challenge of using the system? The initial process of getting data into the system is the biggest challenge for many institutions. Some universities have people other than faculty enter data for them and load as much data from other systems as possible to address this challenge. Reports are useless if the individual faculty data are not entered.
 - At what level can data be customized? Customization is typically hierarchical, first with the institution, then to the college level, and to department level if necessary and appropriate.
 - The system seems to allow access to faculty records without their knowledge? Faculty are responsible for ensuring the quality of the information there. Most activity/accomplishment information is not highly confidential – there will be no social security numbers stored for example. If individual websites are developed using this information,

faculty members can select which items will be displayed. Due to the increase in external requests for information and accountability, the system will allow the university to answer questions or produce reports without having to request effort from individual faculty members. All of the activity information is currently on the faculty member's vita which has wide public exposure for many purposes, including sharing the many good things faculty members have accomplished.

- Can jpeg, videos, and charting functions be used and attached? Yes, these file types can be uploaded with no restrictions, and charts and graphs can be created in the system.
- If faculty members transfer will data still be accessible? Yes, only if both institutions are on the Digital Measures network. Clients are advised not to delete faculty and report information even after employees resign or retire since historical reports may depend on these records.

Hyer thanked everyone for attending and reminded everyone to complete the yellow feedback sheets. Matthew Bartel was available to answer or address any concerns immediately following the meeting.

Recorder: Tashika Smith, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA)
Minutes
April 18, 2008

Members present: H. Odendaal, P. Hyer, E. Lener, K. Eriksson, J. Finney (for Chang), D. Kniola, S. Easterling, Dennis Welch, K. Hunnings (for Sorenson)

Guest: Terry Wildman (Director of CEUT), Jim Collier (Faculty Senate)

Odendaal called the meeting to order with two agenda items: 1) University Committee on Evaluation of Teaching, and 2) Updates on CFA Policy Initiatives. The minutes and agenda were approved.

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EVALUATION OF TEACHING

The current teacher evaluations have been in place for the past 40 years. The University Committee on Evaluation of Teaching was created by the Provost last year to explore a new system for student evaluation of teaching. The committee, which consists of eighteen representatives from various departments, hopes to produce a final report by the end of the first summer session. Electronic copies of minutes from committee meetings and the final report will be made available upon completion. Wildman provided a working outline for the report and talked CFA members through six components (executive summary, introduction/background, literature on evaluation on teaching, methodology, data interpretation/discussion, and recommendations) of the document.

Wildman explained that the research on teacher evaluation is extensive; it is the most researched topic in education with over 2000 studies conducted. The section of the report that addresses the literature will focus on answering 13 frequently asked questions (e.g. Are students qualified to rate their instructors? Are student rating forms valid and reliable?).

A mixed-methods approach was employed to gather faculty opinions about the current teacher evaluation process. A survey containing 20 open-ended, Likert scale questions was distributed throughout campus. Five hundred faculty members responded. Focus groups of randomly selected faculty (various disciplines) were also conducted. The data collected will inform the development of the teacher evaluation instrument.

Questions on any new instrument should reflect a learner-centered paradigm and the multi-dimensional character of teaching. A factor analysis will need to be conducted to ensure that the questions are in fact measuring the dimensions identified, before the university fully adopts a particular questionnaire.

Wildman maintained that there is a need to determine effective use of the data collected from teacher evaluations. There are inconsistencies in how this information is currently being presented to faculty, and the committee questions whether the data are being used to improve teacher performance. Another issue is ownership and maintenance of whatever system is adopted. Wildman explained that there is a growing belief by many

faculty members that teaching is not highly valued and this makes many faculty members cynical about efforts of this nature. Identifying a department or senior official responsible for maintaining the system will be important to its usefulness and effectiveness in improving teaching.

One limitation of the committee's work is that they are focusing exclusively on improving student evaluation of teacher performance. There is also a need to assess the effectiveness of the peer review process. There are inconsistencies in how this process is currently being facilitated in various departments.

Questions/Comments Regarding Wildman's Report

- Evaluation format: Will there be a universal mandate of an online system? Should faculty have the option of using paper versus an electronic version of the evaluation? What is the response rate or participation level for online versus paper evaluations? Do online evaluations encourage more reflective or thoughtful comments? Do online evaluations encourage collusion among students? The committee has reviewed this literature and will comment on many of these topics in the report.
- Student Buy-In: Faculty should explain the importance of teacher evaluations in an attempt to increase participation and encourage thoughtful responses.
- What is currently being done with the data: Wildman explained that this varies across departments. All faculty members receive a copy of their evaluations. A copy also resides in the faculty member's personnel file. Teaching scores are also included in the P&T dossier and nomination packets for major teaching awards.
- Teaching Narrative: Is there literature that examines the overall narrative of teaching at institutions where there is more of a focus on research?
- Project leadership: What will be the direction of the project after Wildman goes on sabbatical? Collective vision is important to address at the university level.
- Benchmarking: Wildman explained that the committee collected information on practices at other institutions.

UPDATES ON CFA POLICY INITIATIVES

Lead Investigator Policy

Faculty Senate voted in favor of the resolution. After the Commission on Research reviews the document this fall, it will be sent to the University Council for approval.

Reduced Academic Year Assignments for Pre-Tenure Faculty

Hyer proposed the idea of establishing a policy to reduce the teaching load for pre-tenure faculty to the recent University Promotion and Tenure committee. Members of the committee were not especially supportive of a policy. The concerns were not with the idea of a pre-tenure teaching release per se, but more so with a universal mandate. A

policy guaranteeing a reduction in teaching load could present legal implications or other liabilities in situations where tenure is not granted.

Hyer solicited feedback on alternatives to addressing the concerns noted in the COACHE survey. One suggestion was to craft language on how candidates can approach these types of concerns. This information could be uploaded to the prospective faculty webpage as a negotiation resource. Mentoring was brought up as a possible solution. There was also a discussion about the impact of the policy passed last year that requires a two and four year review for pre-tenured faculty.

CFA COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION ON OTHER
COMMITTEES/COMMISSIONS:

Dennis Welch agreed to continue to serve on the Commission for Equal Opportunity and Diversity. Ed Lener will extend his appointment on the Employee Benefits committee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Odendaal will communicate with members via email on whether there will be a meeting held on May 2nd.

Recorder: Tracey Cameron, Office of the Provost