

Commission on Faculty Affairs
Minutes
October 24, 2014

Members Attending: Montasir Abbas, Rami Dalloul (Chair), Jack Finney, Velva Groover, Brad Klein, Chad Lavin, Drew Muscente, James Spotila, Bernard Taylor (for Robert Sumichrast) and Anne Zajac.

Guests: Mark Armstrong and Shoshana Milgram Knapp, English Department

1. Announcement to approve and post the minutes from September 26 meeting.
Those minutes have been posted on the CFA Scholar site.
2. Updates:
 - Self-plagiarism: COR and CFA reps meeting October 28 to discuss Research Policy 13020 (Policy on Misconduct in Research)
 - Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine: the acquisition of the School of Medicine by Virginia Tech may be delayed
3. Instructor Promotion Process: proposal to change the dossier preparation process
4. Resolution to approve a new name for two merged departments in the College of Engineering
5. Other

New Business:

1. Announcement to approve and post the minutes from September 26 meeting.

Amendments were made to Section 3, paragraph two. The last sentence was changed to read "However, regular faculty with primary appointments at the School of Medicine can enter with tenure, be on the tenure-track, or be on a non-tenure-track appointment" and the sentence "All are eligible for promotion in rank" was also added to the end of this paragraph. Minutes were passed as amended.

2. Updates:

a. Self-plagiarism

Dalloul announced that members from CFA are scheduled to meet with members from the Commission on Research on October 28th to discuss how to better define self-plagiarism.

b. Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine: the acquisition of the School of Medicine by Virginia Tech may be delayed

Finney explained that, upon further discussion, the timeline that had been created for acquisition of the School of Medicine was determined to be unachievable. The timeline presents difficulties in in large part to the communications that are necessary for accrediting agencies, government agencies, and the three boards of directors/visitors that are involved. The timeline is likely to be extended by one year, with a new target date of

July 1, 2017. Finney will continue to provide updates. Finney suggested that CFA should continue to move forward with evaluating how the School of Medicine handbook can be incorporated/combined with Virginia Tech's faculty handbook.

3. Instructor Promotion Process: proposal to change the dossier preparation process

Mark Armstrong and Shoshana Milgram Knapp from the Department of English were guests at the CFA meeting and explained their concerns in having a university procedure that prohibited instructors from receiving feedback on their dossiers during the promotion process. Knapp explained that she previously had served on promotion and tenure committees and noted that faculty were able to receive feedback from promotion and tenure committee members. The guidelines for instructor promotions prohibits promotion committee members from providing feedback on the dossier. Knapp expressed the opinion that instructors should be able to get feedback on the dossier from committee members.

CFA members questioned the history of the university guidelines, but the main leaders who created this promotion process and documents are no longer at Virginia Tech. Finney explained that the policy is not in the Faculty Handbook, but is in a university document, which can be found on the Provost's webpage. Finney then went on to explain that the intention for creating these documents was to have a parallel processes with the faculty promotion and tenure process. He added that the effort to have an instructor process was heavily driven by English and Math because they have more instructors.

CFA members discussed the advantages and disadvantages an instructor under review would have if he/she had a mentor on the review committee. Knapp responded that if this were the case, rather than the mentor serving as an advantage he/she would serve as a means of communication for delivering the feedback to the instructor.

Prior to making the decision to make the change in the instructor promotion process, CFA members reviewed the Departmental Guidelines (Section 3.4.4.1) in the University Faculty Handbook, under the Promotion and Tenure Guidelines section. They wanted to ensure that making changes to the university document would not result in a contradiction. Upon confirming that there was no language addressing the issue of providing feedback in the Faculty Handbook, the decision to delete the sentence "Members of the promotion review committee should not participate in the critiquing exercise," which was in the first bullet point under the "Promotion Dossier" section of the university document). CFA voted unanimously to make the change. Finney will have the new document posted on the Provost's web pages.

4. Resolution for a new name for two merged departments in the College of Engineering

CFA members reviewed the "Resolution for a new name for two merged departments in the College of Engineering." Finney explained the history of the merger, which was decided by Dean Richard Benson, College of Engineering. The college had a ten-person committee that met extensively and communicated with faculty, staff, and students about the merger.

The proposed merger is an administrative one and no changes were made to any of the academic programs as a result of the merger. The name change requires approval from CFA, University Council, and the President. Once approvals are completed, SCHEV will be notified about the name change.

Upon completing the first reading of this resolution, CFA members asked to know more about the relationship between mechanics and mechanical engineering. Finney offered to further investigate this relationship by the next meeting. CFA members will complete a second reading of the document during their next meeting.

5. Other

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity

Dalloul announced that Wornie Reed was unable to serve as a CFA representative on the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity. Therefore, Anne Zajac volunteered to be the CFA representative.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Recorder,
Elsa Camargo