

Commission on Faculty Affairs

Minutes

March 16, 2018

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

130 Burruss Hall

In Attendance: J. Ferris (Chair); J. Billingsley (for Rex Willis); R. Blieszner; R. Hicok; J. Finney, V. Groover; M. McGrath; M. Paretti; T. Schenk; R. Speer; P. Young

Absent: G. Amacher; L. Brogdon; S-Y Chien; G. Daniel; J. Spotila

Guests: T. Bluestein

Upcoming Meetings: March 30 (330E Burruss); April 13 (130 Burruss)

1. Welcome and Approval of Agenda **J. Ferris**

Meeting called to order at 10:30 a.m.
The agenda was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of March 2, 2018 Minutes **J. Ferris**

Two minor changes to the March 2, 2018 Minutes were proposed and approved unanimously. The first change was to add T. Schenk as in attendance, and the second was to remove P. Young from the in-attendance list as he was represented by proxy. After the changes were made, the Minutes overall were approved unanimously.

3. Position Paper describing how to support faculty members engaged in destination and strategic growth areas **J. Finney**

J. Finney, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, reported to the Commission that the Position Paper will be edited to offer points for consideration in regards to how departments can support faculty members engaged in destination and strategic growth areas. Additionally, these points will offer suggestions for other collaborative and transdisciplinary work such as how to support faculty engaged in work being done in Virginia Tech's institutes and other transdisciplinary projects. These suggestions will be about information sharing, and departments will be encouraged to incorporate the suggestions into their department expectations documents for faculty Promotion and Tenure.

T. Schenk asked a question about coordinating interdisciplinary areas to encourage new transformative work, and whether there is coordination going on between the Provost's Office and Office of Institutional Research. J. Finney suggested that there has been confusion about Destination Areas and Strategic Growth Areas, and that David Guerin, Associate Vice Provost for Communications, will continue to work on clarifying communications. Additionally, symposiums are being planned in regards to Destination Areas, and these will help encourage more understanding of Destination Areas and hopefully encourage more collaboration across the University.

The Commission also discussed cluster hires surrounding Destination Areas and how to manage faculty candidates whose work is very interdisciplinary and might not “fit” into a current department or college. The Commission suggested that some very attractive faculty candidates might not be offered positions because of this lack of “fit,” but that the University should consider developing methods to attract and hire these candidates.

Finally, once the Position Paper is edited to incorporate the suggestions mentioned above, J. Finney will bring the document to the Commission (as well as other stakeholders) to read and provide comment.

4. Promotion and Tenure Work Group Update

J. Ferris

J. Ferris, Chair of the Commission on Faculty Affairs, gave an update on the Promotion and Tenure Work Group. Currently, the Work Group is discussing quite a few topics, and suggested that they debate the extremes of solutions to encourage consensus and comprehensiveness, which has caused their progress to be slightly slower than anticipated. However, the Group has recently been working closely to offer a recommendation for the role of supervisors (i.e. Department Chairs and College Deans) in Promotion and Tenure discussions. The Committee and constituency is concerned with having complete and open dialogue about promotion and tenure candidates in front of supervisory-level individuals. The Work Group has suggested (and is working on draft language) that supervisors be excluded from the final summative discussion about candidates, just prior to the Committee vote. The Commission discussed the practical considerations of this possible change, as well as the need to balance the supervisor’s need to be present for the bulk of the discussion against allowing some time for discussion without the supervisor present. Other major issues that the Work Group is considering includes candidate notification procedures.

The Work Group intends on using their next few meetings to produce and release draft language for Promotion and Tenure guidelines for the Departmental and College level reviews. Once these drafts are ready, the Work Group intends on sending them out to various stakeholder groups on campus, including the Council of Deans, Department Chairs, the Faculty Senate, and the Commission on Faculty Affairs for comment. A letter will be attached to these recommendations detailing the rationale of the Work Group as a preamble-type document for stakeholder review and comment. The Work Group is also considering making presentations to these various stakeholder groups. Finally, once these recommendations are released and feedback solicited and received, the Work Group will then use their remaining meeting times to discuss this feedback and make changes, if necessary.

5. Other Business

J. Ferris

6. Adjourn

J. Ferris

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.