

Recent Successes, Ongoing Work, and Future Shared Governance Issues

Recent Successes:

Item 1: Funding for Faculty Travel

Additional funding was provided for faculty travel last year (lack of travel funding had come up in a Forum on Shared Governance the year before). In addition to the increased amount available, a new category was added to support professional development of faculty. While the overall amount is still lower than many would like it was still a major improvement and viewed favorably by many faculty.

Item 2: Revamp of the Tenure and Promotion Process

The procedure for tenure and promotion was reworked as a joint effort of Vice President McMillan, Associate Vice President Clark, the Senate Executive Committee, and the Senate Personnel Policies Committee. The new process was explained at the Faculty Symposium in August 2013. This year there have been no appeals on tenure and promotion (after a few years with several appeals). In addition the 2014 Senate survey asked three questions about the new process:

- 1) Was it well explained/communicated? (41 Yes, 1 No, 23 Not looked at/Been Involved)
- 2) Was it fairly administered? (25 Yes, 1 No, 39 Not familiar enough with it)
- 3) How does it compare to the old process (32 Better than the old one, 5 About the same, 3 Worse than the old one, 25 Not familiar with it)

Overall the tenure and promotion changes are a big success for the University.

Item 3: Shared Governance Process

In years past the shared governance process involved the Faculty Senate generating a number of questions, sending them to the administration, and holding a meeting where they delivered their response to the faculty. Over the years the process became more ritualized and less and less effective, and we stopped having the meetings (even though the process was still formal policy). Working together the Senate and President have worked out a new shared governance process, relying on monthly meetings between the President and Executive committee and a more open Forum on Shared Governance process. The result has been a great deal more information shared between the faculty and the administration as well as several policy changes that have grown out of the Forums.

Item 4: Policy on Policies

For many years it was unclear what the mechanisms were for updating policies or creating new ones. Working together the faculty and administration crafted a new policy (now found in the preface to the Academic Policies and Procedures Manual) which details the mechanisms and contact points for creating new policies and updating old ones.

Ongoing Work:

Item 1: Post-Tenure Review

Vice President McMillan, Associate Vice President Clark, the Senate Executive Committee, and the Senate Personnel Policies Committee are currently writing a policy to create a formal and detailed post-tenure review process (the current policy simply says it must be done at least every 3 years, with two consecutive unsatisfactory reviews possibly being grounds for dismissal). The draft process emphasizes faculty development, is aligned with AAUP principles, and contains faculty protections (such as an appeal process). The draft has been made available for general comment and is currently under revision to include the feedback from both the faculty and the department chairs.

Item 2: Review of the Academic Policies and Procedures Manual

Associate Vice President Clark, The Senate Personnel Policies Committee, and the Senate Chair are currently reviewing and updating the entire Academic Policies and Procedures Manual. The APPM currently contains many outdated references and unclear statements, and the review has helped resolve many of those issues.

Item 3: Faculty Salaries

After bringing up faculty salaries as a major issue at the Shared Governance Forums, Vice President Ross Walkup invited the Faculty Senate to review the CUPA salary survey and make recommendations. After looking at the CUPA data (which was drawn from similar institutions) both by rank and by discipline it became clear how low SE salaries are at the rank of Professor (less so for those at the rank of Associate Professor). The Senate recommended that the base salary for Professors be increased by \$6,000 and Associate Professors by \$1,000 to bring them closer to the averages in the CUPA survey. While this may or may not be possible given our budget allocations, the Senate would definitely like to be involved in the discussions about how this will develop in the future.

Future Shared Governance Issues:

Item 1: The travel reimbursement process

Although the increase in funding for faculty travel was much appreciated, the reimbursement process is almost universally seen as problematic, with many faculty finding the process onerous enough that they don't bother to apply for minor travel funding. Our sister institutions don't seem to have this issue so it is something we should work on (as we can use it to increase morale at little or no cost).

Item 2: Adjunct Faculty

An ongoing area of concern is the number of adjunct faculty and how large a share of the courses they teach. In addition the Faculty Senate is interested in aiding efforts to improve the situation

of the adjuncts we have, both in terms of adjunct preparation and communication. The issues our adjuncts have was intended as a Shared Governance Forum topic for Spring 2014, but these forums had to be canceled for various reasons.

Item 3: Family Medical Leave Act

At the request of individual faculty members the Faculty Senate is currently working on proposals in regards to the Family Medical Leave Act (in particular clarifying who is eligible for leave under the FMLA and the possibility of using accumulated sick leave for paid leave under the FMLA). This is currently an issue as faculty leave under the FMLA has often been negotiated on an individual basis and with inconsistent results.

Item 4: Annual Performance Reviews

Although by policy the performance of faculty members in various areas is reviewed annually, in practice these annual reviews are done inconsistently and not all faculty have received the results of these reviews. Given the importance of these reviews in generating feedback for tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review they need to be done in a more consistent fashion and yield more useful information. The Personnel Policies Committee has begun its evaluation of the process and the accompanying documentation.

Item 5: University Marketing

Although many individual offices and departments have their own recruitment efforts there does not seem to be a unified group or body that handles the overall marketing strategy of the University. Having a marketing plan around which individual efforts can be built is key to increasing our enrollment, and this plan and the body that develops it should take advantage of faculty input and expertise (especially that of the Department of Management and Marketing). There was an ad hoc faculty group looking at University marketing in the spring of 2014 and they would likely be interested in aiding this effort.

Item 6: Academic Vision of the University

Many faculty believe that the University would benefit from a clearer and more detailed Academic Vision. While the University Mission and Vision 2015 statements mention things like a challenging environment and an undergraduate foundation in the liberal arts and sciences, these statements tend to be fairly generic. Even if it is not a part of the formal "Mission and Vision Statements", a clear internal statement that talks about "who we are, what we do/why we do it, and what direction we're headed/why we're headed there" would benefit the faculty and give them a better framework on which to organize their current efforts and plan future ones.

Item 7: Cross-Disciplinary Programs

The Bachelor of Science in Liberal and Applied Studies is an example of one of Southeastern's cross-disciplinary programs. As it is not housed within any of the traditional academic departments there have been concerns about the program's academic quality and advising.

Given that as we respond to the needs of our local constituencies we may create new cross-disciplinary programs with similar issues, many faculty feel there should be a general framework for such programs which handles issues like academic quality, advising, and accounting.