Faculty Well-Being Advisory Committee

March 28, 2016

Meeting Minutes

Emerging Issues Conference Room 5100A, Hunt Library 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Attendees:

Jeff Braden, chair of FWB, Dean of CHASS

Katharine Stewart, VPFA

Tim Wallace, Sociology & Anthropology

Steffen Heber, Computer Science

Nancy Whelchel, OIRP

Tsai Lu Liu, Department Head of Graphic Design and Industrial

Mike Edwards, Parks, Recreation & Tourism

Jeff Braden began the meeting with an introduction and stated the outline and focus of subcommittee progress.

Helmut was not in attendance, so the social subcommittee was not discussed.

Tim Wallace discussed the report (sent morning, 3/28/2016) on **issues and findings from the subcommittee on issues related to interdisciplinarity**. This subcommittee, comprised of Steffan Heber, Annie Hardison-Moody and Tim Wallace met, in February and March to identify the issue-areas of this topic.

1. **Interdisciplinary cluster hires**

* Steffan interviewed relevant faculty members and department heads
* Overall: few reported problems
* Concerns: relationship between departments with cluster faculty unclear, no clear cluster budget, tension among cluster hire departments about who has access to resources, clarification of how RPT processes for Interdisciplinary faculty work, cluster annual report to departments, departments “punished” for cluster hires by losing a regular hire for department.
* Proposed solutions: Annual meetings with presentations from cluster hires, separate budgets and reports on disposition of funding, joint spaces for cluster faculty/coordinators within department, food event for cluster faculty and other interested faculty to mingle, allow department who make cluster hire to also be in running for a regular hire.

On the comment of budgets, Jeff pointed out the Budget Restructuring Task Force’s new recommendations to use Student Credit Hours (SCH) to determine Provost Allocations. This will affect when departments/colleges hire cluster faculty due to the contributions to SCH, as their teaching may not be dedicated to the home department. The Provost considered cluster faculty as part of the entire group, so they are counted in this process, which affects the way hiring will go.

Katharine spoke to the work of a task force she co-chairs with Margery Overton exploring the issues of interdisciplinary Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure (RPT) and Post-Tenure Review processes. There is little guidance about these procedures. The RPT guidelines for interdisciplinary faculty include interdisciplinary input to the DVF. Interdisciplinary faculty need to be communicating regularly with DVF, otherwise there can be departmental disengagement or even resentment. The other avenue for interdisciplinary faculty review: Interdisciplinary Review Committee (IRC) has very little guidance on how this is to be created and communicated with the department. IRC is made up of members from DVF and interdisciplinary faculty. The current policy allows them to confer promotion or permanent tenure in the faculty home department, DVF may feel overstepped if not adequately represented on IRC. This raises questions of how do we make sure interdisciplinary faculty are part of their home department and valued and understood for their interdisciplinary work and how do we keep an eye on the climate of those departments that are not receptive to interdisciplinary work. There needs to be a feedback loop for interdisciplinary faculty or IRC’s to talk to the DVF and department heads on a regular basis to accommodate a diffusion of responsibility.

Tsai Lu Liu commented on the differences in resources available to traditional versus interdisciplinary faculty per faculty member, and this may be of concern.

Jeff Braden suggested that in the eventual hope for recommendations to Provost, the subcommittee consider also thinking about these RPT procedures, as well as explore how departments accommodate interdisciplinary scholarship through emerging forms of discourse and foster engagement (invite departments to review those processes as a way on being more responsive).

1. **Opportunities for discussion about interdisciplinary collaboration and findings at the supra-departmental level**

* No survey, but not enough opportunities for faculty to learn about and develop engagement with other faculty interested in interdisciplinary work
* Solutions: compilation of existing data and survey of faculty on interdisciplinary activities

Jeff Braden commented on opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and scholarship -- may be survey work (Nancy Whelchel). We hope to compile data that we have for departments that are the most active in interdisciplinarity, and observe what procedures and patterns work well and can be applied across campus. Find data on which faculty who have interdisciplinary work (outside of departments), and what type of activities they may be engaged in (ex. CHASS, some faculty collaborate a lot and some do not -- ask departments to find why is that “one person” doing well).

Not knowing what kind of data exists, survey may go out that would develop data on int collaboration and scholarship.

Nancy Whelchel commented that there is limited data from COACHE. Able to use college-level (extent faculty feel supported supported, awarded in merit, etc.). However, in terms of barriers and specific, COACHE does not have this information. Extension and Engagement is about to put out a survey that may touch upon some of this, but it would be too late to partner with them for more questions.

1. **Spaces for interdisciplinary communication**

* Virtual space: campus-wide interdisciplinary medium, webinars, profile podcasts, web-ex network
* Physical Space: touch-down spaces for faculty to meet and exchange ideas and projects with those process the university (unsure of how student fit in), survey data to understand what they would seek in such a space

Tim Wallace explained that there is not enough opportunity in virtual space territory, campus wide. Listserve will not be a good fit to meet this need.

On the physical structures, Tim Wallace proposed a type of space similar to HQ Raleigh where faculty can use as needed to foster communication and real work in a touch-down space. Students may be left out (open to discussion). This may be off campus and/or on campus.

Jeff Braden echoed this need and commented that in his experience this has been hugely successful in successful projects leading to grants. Right now, we only have the Faculty Club, State Club, Lonnie Poole, and Faculty Lounge in Hunt Library (there are underused).

Jeff Braden also commented that as a Dean, he may have to make choices in allocating collaborative spaces, or making permanent offices (can’t do both).

There was discussion among the group about the growing trend of faculty who feel they do not need their own office.

Non-Tenure Track Subcommittee

Katharine Stewart described that the subcommittee met via a conference call

With Tsai Lu Liu, Marcia Gumpertz, Valerie Faulkner, and Whitney Jones, The group worked from a best practices document for non-tenure track (NTT) faculty within departments. that was established under Betsy Brown in order to establish NTT priorities (this document can be shared with the group). The discussion came up with two most important items:

1. **Promotion Standards and Rules:**

* Nancy Whelchel described that we have mostly positive feedback from NTT faculty.
* Items on the COACHE survey with with lowest “score”: clarity of standards of promotion and process.
* Standards are written from viewpoint of tenure seeking faculty, it is not clear how this fits into NTT faculty member.
* Needs to be either more clarity of rules and standards in college level or new standards of for NTT to for departments.
* Comments were made regarding the SME as documents to provide context for departmental standards of rules. Faculty infer what their SME says for focus to guide their efforts. It is necessary to include this info in standards, explicitly.
* Steffen Heber acknowledged that SME’s greatly vary per department, some may be non-existent and some very descriptive.
* Katharine Stewart stated that there is a template (skeletal) and some guidance on level of detail (acknowledges a risk of too much detail as not accounting for dynamic nature of work) for SMEs on the Provost’s website under dossier instructions.
* Percentage of faculty efforts needs to be documented and used in review.
* Faculty and Department head engage together on SME, but the Dean can sign off in discrepancies without faculty signature (SME labeling).
* Need to develop best practices or template for how SME’s are to provide context for faculty evaluation.

**2. Length of contract**

* Katharine noted the psychological impact of length of NTT contracts. Most are semester to semester or yearly, but can be up to 5 years.
* Goal is to encourage and support multi-year contracts, or develop best practices for earning multi-year contracts (guidance and encouragement)
* Other consideration:Governance is a big issue in some departments. Some departments involved NTT faculty in the DVF for other NTT faculty, some are included in faculty votes, and some are not even invited to faculty meetings.
* Other consideration: mentoring for NTT faculty.

Jeff Braden asked about fixed-term DVF involvement: in those departments who have the whole faculty (including NTT faculty votes) to guide the decision of the DVF (only vote reported), do the NTT faculty feel better?

Katharine responded by explaining that it depends on the department how the votes are managed and that DVF members ultimately must provide votes on promotion and tenure, but NTT faculty who were invited to faculty meetings and voted on department matters have a much stronger sense of engagement.

Nancy Whelchel stated that fixed-term faculty are less likely to interact if not involved in faculty meetings and votes, and that Adjunct/Permanent faculty were all lumped together in contract for the surveys, though employment had to be full-time

Tim Wallace suggested a probationary/ more rewarding contract assessment process (i.e. at the end of second renewal, the next renewal will be open for longer term).

Katharine stated that this process is harder where teaching demands are dynamic. Agreed that departments should begin to be encouraged where appropriate to start with shorter contracts, but over contract renewals, extend contract time. She stated that this serves not only stability, but also makes faculty more engaged. There is a need to encourage departments to address with it means to earn professorial rank-- easier to see career path at NC State.

Nancy Whelchel described that the NTT faculty are generally committed to NC State. 25% of NTT faculty said they would never leave NC State. Half said there is nothing they would change.

Jeff Braden asked if there were examples of departments doing well with NTT faculty?

Katharine Stewart and Nancy Whelchel described Statistics, Chemistry, Biological Sciences as good practices departments for NTT faculty. The subcommittee is pulling examples within and outside of NC State to find best practices.

Jeff Braden stated that there will need to be recommendations about NTT faculty to the following: Provost, Deans, and department heads

**Conclusion:**

Jeff Braden stated that Helmut did not call a meeting yet, but scheduled one for Thursday.

Jeff Braden will take Tim’s report and meet with Katharine to get action items together on who to put into action for his subcommittee recommendation. Jeff will use membership of existing committee to get things started.

Tim Wallace suggested that the committee consider meeting with the Provost.

Jeff Braden agreed to try to get the Provost at the next (and last) meeting.

Jeff Braden mentioned that Edy Deck (Aloft event coordinator responsible for programming with NC State) would like to sponsor a monthly faculty and staff get-together. Jeff asks committee to think about this.

Next Steps: Jeff Braden and Katharine Stewart will meet to discuss their initial take and will then get back with the full committee.

Nancy Whelchel will to get data regarding relevant topics.