Faculty Senate 3/14 minutes

PRESENT (34):
Abbas, Robinson, Agua, Ferris, Allnutt, Hicok, Leon, Brown, Barney, Anderson, Billingsley, Hawdon, Martin, Etzkorn, Corl, Bush, Ruohoniemi, Maycock, Puckett, Geyer, Matheson, Tegarden, Young, Shadle, Watson, Schenk, Hosig, Sultan, Bairaktarova, Mackey, McGrath, Sirgy, Nappier, Lyon.

- Agenda approved
- Minutes approved, with minor edits submitted by Susan Anderson
- University policies and knowledge assessment, Dee Harris, University Internal Audit.

  Internal audit is looking at ways that they can audit university policies- how they are created, vetted, managed, and who the stakeholders are. Do faculty and staff know where to find them? There are 179 university-wide policies, and 116 presidential memos (84 of them updated in the last 3 years), and compliance is not centralized at VT. Their current plan is to send surveys to faculty, staff, and students, and also to compare to peer institutions. They would like feedback on the survey questions and help distributing it.

  Responses from senators included:
    - An example policy would be helpful for the survey
    - A usability study would be more effective
    - Assistance from the Center for Survey Research would be helpful
    - There is too much policy sharing for non-applicable situations, but on the other hand there are policy issues we need to know that are not communicated
    - Train an administrator in each department to serve as a resource for faculty
    - At another university, there was annual training- surprised that VT does not minimize risk in this way
    - Would it be possible to begin with policies where the university is most vulnerable?
    - Training is inefficient; what is needed is information
    - Conflict of interest forms are a primary way policies are discovered
    - With presidential memos, it's hard to know whether they are modified by a later policy
    - Create a central website with user-friendly design; offer self-training

CFA resolution CFA16-17F
New language has been added to section 5.2.5, "In rare circumstances […]," which allows a department head to get an exception to promote restricted faculty if it is documented that the position cannot be moved to regular faculty. Responses from senators included:
- Desire for a standard process that is less dependent on the department head
- Open up promotion process to everyone; don't differentiate between regular and restricted faculty

- Possibly designate a length of service by which time promotion is available; perhaps 2 terms moves to regular faculty, or creates opportunity for promotion
- There is a danger that this category (formerly 200, now 40) will increase again if we revert to the previous policy
- Restricted positions also aren't eligible for merit raises

A motion passed to say that both categories are eligible for promotion and merit raises, and striking the 2 final sentences (one existing and one proposed). Resulting language:

"All non-tenure-track faculty members (both regular and restricted) are eligible for promotion in rank and merit raises in accordance with guidelines established by academic departments and approved by an appropriate college-level committee and the dean. Such guidelines should outline the process and criteria for promotion in rank; they should be widely available along with other departmental and college documents related to promotion and tenure."

Commissions and Task Force Updates

Task Force on Promotion & Tenure

The task force wants to address the issue of communicating expectations to faculty, and the provost would like to have a write-up on research & future activities. While some departments have specific requirements for P&T, there is nothing university-wide. The Faculty Expectations Document (suggestions for other names are requested) make it clear to everyone what the evaluation is on, and it can be updated. It is not an MOU, but makes it clear that there is more than one way to succeed. Responses included:

- It sounds too much like a contract
- How is it different from FAR goals?
- The document might not include positive developments that occur in the last year or two before evaluation
- Mentoring is very important but highly variable across campus

There is also new language preventing additions to the dossier that the candidate is not aware of.

PIBB team

The team recently had a productive meeting with Ken Smith, but more meetings are needed because there are so many questions. All evaluation types used now will still be in place, and metrics are additional information that will inform the conversation. There is a concern that this process will also influence the P&T process, and faculty evaluated on the extent to which they contribute to departmental goals. Administrators need data to make better decisions about how to split funds between colleges.

Commission on Research

- Sally Morton has a particular interest in metrics
- A draft Open Access policy is being considered and CoR would like to begin conversation on this issue in Faculty Senate in the coming weeks

Reminder that the Research Forum is Thursday from 5-7 at the Inn, Solitude Room.

[minutes submitted by Philipp Young, pyoung1@vt.edu]