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Council of Chairs Meeting, February 6th, 2014.

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COUNCIL OF CHAIRS, 2013-14
Minutes of the Meeting on February 6, 2014, 3:30 p.m.
Drinko 402; GC 134; SOP Conference Room

1. Attendance:

15 Chairs/Division Heads: Mike Castellani (CHM), Harlan Smith (FIN/ECN/IB), Dan Holbrook (HST), Marty Laubach (SOC/ANT), Josh Hagen (GEO), Allyson Goodman (SOJMC), John Schloss (SOP), Jane Hill (ENG), Allen Stern (AST), Shawn Schulenberg (PSC), Del Chrol (Classics), Tracy Christofero (TM), Missy Reed (Special Ed), Eldon Larsen (ENGR), Cam Brammer (CMM).

Guests: President Stephen Kopp, Gayle Ormiston, Mary Ellen Heuton, Mark Robinson, Juanita Parsons

2. Mike Castellani called the meeting to order, and turned the floor over to President Kopp, Eldon Larsen, Dan Holbrook, and Cam Brammer - who led the first part of today's meeting.

3. Eldon provided a set of Opening Remarks, laying out the structure of the group presentation to follow. He emphasized, as did all of the presenters, that the policy proposals to be discussed today constitute a coherent package designed to address major deficiencies in current Promotion, Tenure, and Salary Structure. Promotion, tenure, and salary policies are intertwined and interactive: the only way to address particular pieces of this policy landscape effectively is to address the entire landscape as a whole. This comprehensive approach is all the more relevant, too, in light of the current 20/20 Strategic Planning process underway.

Work in this area began 4.5 years ago, with a review of P&T policy. Leading the effort that has culminated in the policy package before us today has been the Faculty Senate's Faculty Personnel Committee (in consultation with the administration) and the Faculty Salary Adjustment Team chaired by Eldon Larsen.

A one-page handout was distributed at the meeting, summarizing the key features of the policy reform package, titled "Concordance for Proposed Changes to AA-26, Faculty Promotion and AA-28, Faculty Tenure." If you did not get a copy at the meeting check with Mike Castellani.

4. President Kopp opened his remarks by noting that the primary goal of this policy package is to untangle the "Compensation Conundrum" that has been created, over time, via individual policy reforms. The current comprehensive reform effort is an attempt to identify the root causes of this conundrum and to answer the following big question: What components of this policy landscape should be modified, or re-done? An overriding consideration is long-run sustainability: the policy reform package is not a "quick fix" but rather an attempt to place Promotion, Tenure, and Salary policies on a stable long-term footing. And ongoing assessment of the results of the reforms is built into the policy package itself. At least every 5 years, at the university level, the entire package and its performance will be reviewed. At the college/department level, such a review will take place at least every 3 years.

President Kopp emphasized two points about the new salary proposals: (1) a salary floor for each rank will now become policy (last year's salary-floor implementation was a 1-time MUBOG decision); (2) MU will now go to 100% Merit for raises - with the specific criteria for "merit" not defined in MU policy, but rather to be defined by the individual colleges.

5. Dan Holbrook then took the floor to discuss features of the proposed P&T policies. Dan emphasized, as did Eldon and President Kopp before him, that the proposed P&T policies are part of an overall package of policy revisions. P&T issues are intimately linked with salary issues; all must be addressed together.

Specific criteria for P&T are not going to be established by the university as a whole. Rather, the university policies put in place will set general minimum requirements and that the specifics will be developed at the departmental level – with input from and in consultation with the department's college.

Two of the important reforms included in the overall P&T package are: (1) Promotion and Tenure will now be linked – no faculty member can be promoted without first obtaining tenure. If P&T are applied for at the same time, the tenure decision will be made first. (2) "University Citizenship" will now be included as a consideration in the tenure process. This is not a "civility" or "collegiality" clause. Behind it is the idea that when granting tenure the university makes a long-term commitment to a faculty member; as such the university wants to encourage faculty to keep the interests of the institution in mind as s/he pursues the general faculty jobs of teaching, research, and service. The university wants, in short, to make long-term commitments to individuals who help foster a culture of engagement that will move the institution forward, towards its strategic objectives, over time. At what level will this criterion be defined? At the departmental/college level – not at the university level.

The inclusion of "University Citizenship" in the tenure process led to significant discussion and debate:

1. Marty Laubach suggested that this criterion is too nebulous, too subjective. And it really focuses on something we already include in the P&T process: Service. What does this criterion add that goes above and beyond the Service requirement? (A comment echoed by Josh Hagen later in the discussion.) Finally, can this criterion survive a court challenge?
2. Eldon replied that departments and colleges can define for themselves some "citizenship" criteria that can be supported, justified, and applied properly. And a key word, here, should be "contributor." Is this person a contributor? Is s/he helping to build programs and/or move the college and university forward? Departments and college, he believes, can develop ways of answering these questions about a candidate that can be documented and that make sense. And, as Dan Holbrook noted later in the discussion, if this criterion does become a consideration in the tenure process, departments and colleges must do this.
3. President Kopp noted that the courts historically have not questioned the judgment of faculty in the P&T process – as long as official policies and procedures are followed properly. And "citizenship" is a concept familiar to us all: we know, and can see, who is simply riding along on a committee or as part of a team, and who is engaging actively in that committee's or team's work. Marty Laubach, later in the discussion, came back to this point by noting that we are all familiar with individuals who fulfill the "letter of the law" in terms of their prescribed duties – but who just "don't show up" otherwise and hence never seem to be around to contribute to the culture of engagement that we need to move the institution forward. Do we really want to tenure such people? Eldon echoed this point by noting that when it comes to tenure the issue of "future promise" is always important.
4. Jane Hill made two comments on the "citizenship" issue. (1) How will this tie in with faculty participation on social media? Commentary in social media can indeed be reflective of "poor" university citizenship – and how can we take this commentary into account? (2) Should this criterion be put in place, the onus is on the individual departments to embed this criterion into the initial hiring decision and throughout the entire probationary period. Departments must be explicit about what

this criterion means and how faculty will be evaluated on it, so that it doesn't come as a surprise during the tenure decision process.

5. Mike Castellani asked why the policy proposal includes University Citizenship as part of the tenure-assistant-to-associate professor decision, and not as part of the associate-to-full professor decision. Why not incorporate this criterion into the promotion process at every level?
6. Allen Stern noted that since this criterion is for P&T purposes, is it not also thereby included for retention/termination purposes? President Kopp agreed, noting that the mid-period pre-tenure review process can and should take the candidate's citizenship activities and focus into account. Yes, termination for poor University Citizenship is indeed a possibility.
7. Discussion then took place concerning the role of the P&T Portfolio presented by the candidate. No one can "add to" the Portfolio after it has been presented to the department chair and signed off on by the candidate and the chair. So, as Josh Hagen asked, how can matters that reflect the candidate's university citizenship, such as commentary in social media, be brought into the process? Dan replied that additional information can be brought into the discussion, as the Portfolio moves through the review process level by level – as long as that additional information is put in writing.
8. Shawn Schulenberg and Mike Castellani noted that what the University Citizenship criterion does to the P&T process is add a "value system" into the mix. It moves the tenure discussion beyond a simple counting of articles and committee assignments, and beyond the calculation of OCR scores for Research, Teaching and Service. Jane Hill followed up by noting that the P&T Portfolio itself must become a dialogue with the principals involved in the tenure process at every level. A candidate must use the Portfolio to enter into a discussion with those charged with his/her peer-review. And committees, especially Department Chairs, must engage with the Portfolio as a whole and not just skim through it looking for items to add up. Finally, as several people noted, it is up to the committees, and the Department Chair, to summarize their interaction with the Portfolio in writing, carefully and coherently – so that at each level the dialogue between the candidate the institution becomes richer and more developed.
9. Marty concluded the discussion by asking if the citizenship criterion could become a vehicle for the exercise of personal grudges. Cam Brammer noted that HR would prevent this. Eldon noted that if individuals involved in the process bring such material into the discussion, all such material must be substantiated or it should not/will not be taken into account.

6. Eldon then took the floor to discuss particulars of the faculty salary proposals. The 4 key points he mentioned were:

1. Raises, as noted by President Kopp earlier, will be 100% merit-based. Each college will be required to develop its own Merit Policy.
2. The required pre-tenure review now carries with it the possibility of the candidate obtaining a 5% raise if deemed Exceptional – a raise that is separate from the mandatory raise that comes with promotion in rank. The pre-tenure assessment is therefore not just formative, but also summative.
3. When salary inequities are present, and beyond an individual's control, the new policy allows the relevant Dean to work with the Provost, on a case-by-case basis, to work out a solution.
4. The salary floor for each rank will, as noted earlier, become policy – and these floors can be adjusted periodically.

Jane Hill asked about the non-TT group of faculty. Eldon noted that salary policy for this group is not addressed in the current proposals, but that it will be addressed in the future.

Eldon's presentation concluded with an extended discussion of the history of the Equity/Merit system currently in place.

7. Mary Ellen Heuton (Senior VP for Finance and CFO) then took the floor. Mark Robinson, Budget Director and Juanita Parsons, Director of Accounts Payable and Payroll, joined her. Mary Ellen wants to introduce the Finance Division to the Chairs and begin a dialogue with the Chairs about how to improve administrative processes. In many areas, e.g., Travel, Mary Ellen and her staff plan to go back to the basics in terms of what is truly required of MU by state and federal law. As long as these requirements are met, the new overriding goal will be to create procedures that make sense and that will make the Chairs' job easier. And doing this will, of course, make the Finance Division's job easier.

Another issue to be dealt with, when it comes to making changes, is this: the State is implementing a new State-wide system for Finance and the Marshall Finance department is waiting to make certain changes until after that is implemented in July so as to not change things twice.

The biggest challenge Mary Ellen sees right now is communication. With so many layers of authority and responsibility between her office and the faculty, it is very hard to know how best to communicate changes in policies and procedures effectively. How can we work together to improve the communication flow, and thereby make our respective jobs easier?

Mary Ellen wants the Chairs to view the Finance Division as a partner in our work, not as an adversary. Please get in touch, and stay in touch, with the Finance Division when you have questions or concerns.

As the meeting closed, Mike suggested that we'll have Mary Ellen back later this spring, or in the fall, as a main speaker – so that we can get into the substance of the policies and procedures that so often bedevil us and begin a true dialogue on how to reform them.

The meeting concluded sometime around 5:15 p.m.