

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)
Meeting

March 11, 2008
3:00-5:00 p.m.
Corporation Room, University Hall

Minutes

Present: Ruth Colwill, Chair; James Dreier, Vice-chair; Ann Dill, Past-chair; James Campbell, Albert Dahlberg, Svetlana Evdokimova, Geoffrey Russom, Robert Smith, Gabriel Taubin

Professor Colwill called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. Minutes of the February 12 and 26 were approved.

Professor Colwill gave a chair's report. President Simmons cancelled her meeting with FEC officers this morning due to illness and will reschedule for a later date. The Officers met with the Provost and discussed the FEC's proposal for leadership awards. He liked the idea of having more than one award, took some notes, and will be thinking about it. The search committee for the Dean of Medicine submitted a list of names to the President for consideration. The Watson Institute is going to present a proposal to APC to give their people tenure so that they can attract more quality faculty to the Institute. The FEC suggested the proposal be vetted by the department chairs, this being a major change. The Provost and APC now have a better perspective on how the process of renaming departments, programs, institutes and centers should work. The FEC officers and Provost talked about his role in consulting with the Nominations Committee about ballot candidates for the Academic Priorities Committee (APC) and University Resources Committee (URC). Professor Colwill also discussed this with the Nominations Committee. The process agreed upon is that the Nominations Committee will draft a list of names to be shared with the Provost. The Provost will have the opportunity to comment on the list and can remove one or two names and/or suggest additional names. His input will then be brought back to the Nominations Committee for approval before they contact people on the list.

At a recent Nominations Committee meeting, Professor Colwill introduced the FEC's proposal to change the procedure for election of its members from a ballot election to a slate of candidates for vote at a faculty meeting. She explained that over the past couple of years, it has been very difficult for the FEC to find faculty members willing to stand for a ballot election on this Committee. The FEC also suggests reducing the number of committee members from nine to six. The FEC feels their knowledge of faculty committees' needs will enable them to provide good advice to the Nominations Committee when considering candidates for committee replacements.

The Nominations Committee agreed with the idea of changing the method of election from electronic ballot to a slate of candidates. However, they prefer not to reduce their membership from nine to six because they feel it would adversely affect their ability to work in groups by area when they produce their lists of candidates. Professor Colwill expressed concern with that process because there appears to be no oversight on what each group is doing. The Nominations Committee feels they are productive by conducting their work via email rather than meeting physically. Professor Colwill will prepare a motion to amend the election procedure for the Nominations Committee for presentation at the April 1 faculty meeting.

President Simmons has approved the list of names suggested by the FEC for the search committee. The ad for the Ombudsperson search will be posted next week.

Last December, the APC brought a motion to the December 4 faculty meeting to revise its charge in the Faculty Rules for the purpose of adding new language regarding review of new concentration and graduate degree proposals. The motion was tabled because there was not enough consultation between the APC and the College Curriculum Council (CCC) about the process for when concentrations are approved. Professor Colwill forwarded this proposal to the vice-chairs of the CCC and the Graduate Council asking them to consult with their committees for feedback. It is important that when a proposal comes from a committee or the APC that involves multiple committees that all constituencies be consulted.

The procedure for designating Degrees with Distinction is not clearly defined in the Faculty Rules. Although faculty set the general principles for designating Degrees with Distinction many years ago, it was never settled as to how it was to be done, so the Committee on Academic Standing worked it out. The FEC will propose a motion at the April 1 faculty meeting to bring the Faculty Rules in line with the procedure currently in practice. A question was raised as to whether or not this would affect the Medical School. Should this practice be applied to medical undergraduate students? Professor Smith suggested that Phillip Gruppuso, Associate Dean of Medical Education, be made aware of this procedure.

Professor Taubin has been interacting with the IT Strategic Planning Group at CIS on the FEC's behalf. He reported they are well into the planning process with a goal of producing a report on their recommendations in May. Six working groups have been studying research support, teaching technologies, etc. Kara Kelley, who is spearheading the IT strategic planning effort, is willing to speak with the FEC about their efforts and share draft documents they are preparing on their recommendations. Discussion ensued whereby the FEC felt satisfied that the IT Strategic Planning Group has covered all the bases and although they appreciate Ms. Kelley's offer to meet with them, they feel it is not necessary at this time. The FEC strongly supports the effort and hopes there will be an opportunity for them to provide input on the Report. The IT Strategic Planning Group is considering making a short presentation at the May faculty meeting and perhaps demonstrating their new technology by providing some computers in the lobby of Salomon Center. If this were to happen, they will need to advertise to promote it.

The FEC discussed three proposals currently under review by the APC: Renaming of the John Nicholas Brown Center (JNBC), renaming of the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS), and a proposal for a new Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CTSI). Professor Colwill has asked faculty to review the proposals on the Provost's website and asked for their feedback. There were objections to including "Cultural Heritage" in the proposed new title of the JNBC. This will need more discussion. There were no comments from faculty about CLAS which seems to be a reasonable request. Appendices were recently added to the CTSI proposal on the Provost's web site after there were some complaints about who was responsible for the proposal. Someone in the sciences raised concerns that the CTSI proposal reads like a chase for a NIH grant and that it was not competitive with other institutions. The University needs to look at the budgetary implications. Professor Smith noted that the collaborative efforts of the program are to be applauded. Chasing NIH funding is not necessarily a bad idea. As an institute, it needs to be viewed differently. It was suggested the Provost would benefit from the MFEC's input on this proposal. The MFEC will need to know what is expected of them in terms of input. It is important to get more positive feedback as to what could make this a competitive program.

The FEC recommends the APC widen their consultation about new proposals to include feedback from faculty within the departments and not just department chairs. Professor Campbell agreed to draft some language for Professor Colwill to send to the APC about the renaming of the JNBC proposal.

Professor Russom gave a report on the last MFEC meeting. Topics discussed included the relocation of the new medical education building, the search for a new Dean of Medicine, the Dean's budget, brief discussion about the CTSI, the Division of Public Health, financial aid for the Medical Program, Medical School admissions (its budget and diversity issues), and the Equity Task Force (discussing what tenure means in the clinical environment).

Professor Colwill asked for faculty feedback on the FEC's Report on Faculty Governance and received negative comments regarding TPAC's proposal to add a timeline for promotion review of tenured associate professors. Humanities Chairs raised concerns about the possible effect of a timeline on the standards for tenure. Feedback from some associate professors suggested that they should know when they are ready for promotion, and that it was not necessary to add a timeline. Concern was expressed about the potential for deleterious consequences of opting out of a required review. There was lengthy discussion of whether the phrase "important contributions to the university" needed qualification. Timeline for productivity was discussed and how it can change over time. It is important to have a "pure" timeline for the proposal, or it could "muddy the water" between criteria for promotion to Full (scholarship, teaching, service) and the timeline. The FEC discussed that the addition of a timeline to require promotion to Full review after 10 years in rank as associate was just one step to address the question of promotion of tenured associate professors. President Simmons would like Brown's culture to change, but TPAC may not be the best place to do it because its dependency on membership and a presidential mandate renders it unstable over time. The FEC should take this by the reins as it is a critical faculty issue. It will take a vast cultural change to make this happen. FEC must be involved or it's possible that other constituencies will make the decision without faculty input which may be unfavorable.

Pros and cons of a "pure" timeline component were discussed whereby the FEC concluded that only the timeline for associate professors should be specified in this motion. There are lots of ways to assess faculty's productivity. Should there be a separate statement for this? It was suggested that departments review their own standards and criteria and then provide them with general guidelines that must be followed. Criteria at other institutions were discussed. Professor Colwill will send a note to TPAC about their recommendation for change to the motion regarding associate professors for their comments. Final drafts of the motions for the April 1 faculty meeting must be ready by 3/17. Professor Colwill will send the draft motions for the April faculty meeting to the FEC for review.

Not all of the FEC's recommendations will require a faculty vote. To get a sense of the faculty's support for a particular item not requiring a change in the Faculty Rules, Professor Colwill will bring the item to the faculty for comment at the upcoming University Faculty Meetings.

The meeting was called to executive session at 5:05 p.m. and was adjourned shortly thereafter at 5.10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Moreau
Secretary

