

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)
Meeting

November 14, 2006
3:00-5:00 p.m.
Corporation Room, University Hall

Minutes

Present: Ann Dill, Chair; Ruth Colwill, Vice-chair; Bob Pelcovits, Past Chair; Lundy Braun, Svetlana Evdokimova, Nancy Jacobs, Chad Jenkins, Jody Rich, William Rakowski, and Geoffrey Russom.

Guests: Reid Cooper, William Risen

The meeting began at 3:06 p.m. The 10/24/06 minutes were approved as submitted.

Professor Dill gave a chair's report. The FEC officers discussed the proposed enhanced leave policy at length with President Simmons, and she urged the FEC to forge ahead in developing the policy as an interim step towards a longer-term goal of even more enhanced coverage. Professor Dill also discussed the leave policy with Dean Vohra who encouraged the FEC to take the bull by the horns and craft a longer term policy.

The FEC officers recently met with the Undergraduate Council of Students (UCS) and Graduate Student Council (GSC). The UCS would like to see more uniform teaching evaluations across campus. They also expressed concern about lack of participation by professors in the Critical Review. The UCS created short-term courses for students in January and posted them on the Web. The FEC officers encouraged them to think about courses that benefit students the most, in particular those that might teach important skills not covered in traditional courses. The GSC was concerned mainly about work/family life issues, mostly related to housing.

Christopher Powell, Energy Manager, asked for the FEC's input on two faculty volunteers for the new Energy and Environmental Advisory Committee. After some discussion, the FEC voted unanimously to recommend the two individuals.

Professor Braun reported that Dean Adashi spoke at the October Medical Faculty Executive Committee (MFEC) meeting about the strategic planning process in the Medical School. He explained his vision for Brown's Health Science Center. The MFEC discussed residency training issues as well as issues related to the gap between hospital-based faculty and campus-based faculty.

Professor Rich introduced the final draft of a proposal to amend the section of the Faculty Rules pertaining to the MFEC charge and composition, adding a faculty member in the Clinician Educator Track to its membership. Faculty members in this track devote substantial time to teaching and are involved in scholarly activity but do not have voting rights. Representation on the MFEC will afford them the opportunity to play a role in medical faculty governance and give them well-deserved recognition for their contributions to the Medical School. The MFEC also proposes to increase committee membership from 18 to 20 faculty members. Other changes are

mostly housecleaning. Discussion ensued whereby a motion was made, seconded and approved to bring the Motion to the Faculty at the December 5 faculty meeting.

Professor Dill brought up several questions for the FEC to think about with regard to the proposed leave policy: Do we want to consider having the FEC forward a longer-term proposal into which an interim proposal would be embedded? Do we want to attach a timetable with a set date for reaching 100% salary coverage to it? What would it take to offer a sabbatical semester (after 6 semesters of teaching) at 100% coverage and do we have enough information about the resources to say what can be expected in a few years? What does the FEC see as advantages and disadvantages of short-term interim proposals? Do we want to consider the issue of including Lecturers in the sabbatical policy or hold off on it until a longer term option is established and consider it later?

President Simmons feels that if they go to the Corporation with an interim proposal that, with significant additional resource investment could be expanded, it might be considered. The FEC will draft the next version of a proposal based on the FAC proposal and comments received from various discussions, postings, and messages. The URC still needs to look at the proposal's financial implications. Data is still coming in from other institutions and the FAC is working on incorporating flexibility into the proposed policy. Perhaps we should think about a plan that would mandate 100% coverage of a semester's salary (after 6 semesters of teaching) by 2010, with no interim step. These questions will be discussed at the length at the 11/28 FEC meeting.

Professor Risen was invited to discuss the Advisory Committee on Honorary Degrees annual report distributed with the FEC agenda. The report is short in detail because deliberations of the committee are confidential. Their efforts were well-received by the Board of Fellows last year and a fair number of honorary degree recipients at the 2006 Commencement were recommended to the Fellows by the Honorary Degrees Committee. The committee members worked well together, and he would like to see them to start working earlier in the spring. Professor Risen will be present at the December 5 faculty meeting to present the report.

Professor Cooper discussed the annual report from the Committee on Grievance with the FEC, also included with the FEC agenda. Since he is fairly new to the Grievance Committee and was recently elected Chair, he consulted Professor Keach (past chair) who assisted him with writing the report.

The Committee would like to see the creation of a more unified policy statement regarding administrative handling of complaints against faculty, particularly with regard to non-sexual harassment, and asks the FEC and University administration to seriously consider it. They came to this conclusion when the Committee needed to consult a policy statement concerning sexual harassment, the EEO and Affirmative Action guidelines, Handbook of Academic Administration as well as the General Counsel's office in order to inform themselves during deliberations and guide them in their decision on a grievance.

The Committee dealt with an administrator's objection concerning the rights of individuals or groups against whom a grievance is filed. Based on their experience with this case, they recommend the FEC consider discussing whether abuse of the grievance process is a problem in general and what could be done to curb the abuse, if it exists.

The Grievance Committee would like their relationship with the new Ombudsperson to be more than just informal. Professor Cooper would like to refer the grievant, during initial contact, to the Ombudsperson taking advantage of her skills and services in conflict resolution. The Committee

feels that a path of attempting conflict resolution is healthier for the both the aggrieved individual as well as the institution.

Discussion ensued with regard to grievance procedures and cases mentioned in the report, the FEC expressing concern about some of the language. They recommended that issues in the report which are relevant to the faculty be highlighted without speaking so much about specific cases. Professor Cooper will revise the report and submit it to the FEC in time for inclusion in the December 5 faculty meeting agenda packet.

The FEC agreed that further discussion about the Leave Policy is necessary at the December faculty meeting, so Professor Dill will bring it up during her FEC report. The FEC will revisit the Leave Policy again on 11/28.

The meeting was called to Executive Session at 4:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Moreau
Secretary