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Faculty Senate - March 29, 2010 Faculty Affairs

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Minutes of the Faculty Senate Faculty Affairs Committee
March 29, 2010

Members present: Steve Thomas (Chair), Lora Beebe, Roxanne Hovland, Mary McAlpin, Carla Sommardahl, Yan Zhong

Steve Thomas called the meeting to order at 12:10 in room 650, Hodges Library

Minutes from the meeting of January 15, 2010, were reviewed and approved.

I. Action items considered:

A. Formal approval was given by common consent to the 3 resolutions drawn up by Steve Thomas and to be submitted to the Senate in order to: (1) add a “Best Practices” Statement concerning Non-Tenure-Track Teaching Faculty to the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*; (2) add the position of “senior lecturer” to the *Faculty Handbook*; (3) define the terms of multi-year lecturer appointments in the *Faculty Handbook*.

B. Formal approval was given by common consent to submit a resolution to the Senate to change the section of the *Faculty Handbook* dealing with promotion to professor, to contain the following language:

“After serving at least the prescribed five years as an associate professor, a faculty member should consult with his or her department head before initiating promotion procedures. The final decision on proceeding rests with the faculty member. However, if a bid for promotion is unsuccessful, the faculty member must wait at least two years before applying again for promotion.”

C. Discussion ensued concerning proposed revisions to the *Faculty Handbook* and the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* concerning faculty advising and mentoring of students, sent to the Committee by the Campus Taskforce on Advising. Several concerns were expressed:

1. Several members of the committee expressed serious concerns about the pairing of advising with teaching in faculty evaluation. Are these activities to be considered equivalent in importance, as suggested by the wording “teaching/advising”? Or is advising considered to be a subordinate function of teaching? What is the precise rationale for not including advising under service?

2. No distinction seems to be made between advising, in the traditional sense of helping students to choose courses and map out a longer term curriculum, and mentoring, in which professors provide ongoing and extensive professional advice, primarily although not exclusively to graduate students.

3. No clear parameters are provided by which department heads are to judge the quantity or the quality of a candidate's advising/mentoring, other than a written statement by the candidate and "input from students and peers, as appropriate."

4. The first sentence of the paragraph on advising/mentoring proposed for inclusion in section "2.22 Teaching" of the *Faculty Handbook* is unclear, i.e.: "Faculty members advise and mentor students as an important component of their scholarship in teaching and learning." What is meant by "scholarship in teaching and learning"?

D. Cumulative Performance Review Process: This item is still under consideration by the Legal Department of the University and will not be taken up this year.

II. Remaining concerns to be addressed by the Committee this year:

A. Should it be required that departmental and college bylaws be posted on websites?

B. How should search committees for Deans be composed?

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary McAlpin