

Faculty Welfare Committee

December 9, 2013, 11am

Carr Building 200B

Meeting Minutes

Members in attendance: Donna Bickford, John Clarke, Tim Ives (Chair), Kelly Giovanello, Holning Lau, Christine Stachowicz, Deborah Stroman

Others in attendance: Ashley Nicklis (Senior Director, Benefits and Work/Life Programs), Katie Turner (Executive Assistant), Anne Whisnant (Deputy Secretary of the Faculty)

State Health Plan update

Ashley Nicklis reported that the BOT is considering whether Benefits Focus owes money back to the State Health Plan for contractual issues with performance during the enrollment process.

ACA update

Ms. Nicklis said that Human Resources is in the process of creating a universal policy for adjunct eligibility for health care. The next step is assigning FTE to existing adjuncts. She said there may be possible impacts on Post-doc and RA/TA health plans.

Policies update and wish list

Prof. Kelly Giovanello provided an overview of the types of policies listed on policies.unc.edu. There are two types of policies: university and administrative.

She explained that university and administrative policies list policies that pertain to faculty, but some do not. A link to faculty policies is listed under administrative policies. That link goes to the Academic Personnel Office website. Those policies relate to benefits, leave, and compensation.

Prof. Ives asked if the policies are up to date.

Prof. Giovanello replied that the dates are not listed on some of the policies.

Ms. Nicklis suggested contacting Gwen Burston. She explained that there is a general policy committee whose charge is to consider university-wide policies.

Prof. Deborah Stroman asked what the next steps are.

Prof. Ives said that the committee is gathering information, but he also wants to prioritize what is achievable on the committee's wishlist.

Prof. Stroman asked if the committee should focus on improving a communication tool or taking up a substantive issue.

Prof. Ives said that both could be done.

Prof. Giovanello said the committee could prioritize links that need to be included on the Academic Personnel website. She suggested putting more links for information about IRB procedures and research ethics. She said the committee could make these recommendations to the Academic Personnel Office.

Dr. Anne Whisnant suggested that the committee consider developing a new Faculty Handbook that includes policies recommended by the AAUP. She pointed out that there are resources available on the AAUP website at <http://www.aaup.org/event/strengthening-faculty-handbooks-webinar>.

Prof. Stroman asked why the handbook no longer exists.

Dr. Whisnant said that the hard copy handbook went out of date and the policies were moved online.

Katie Turner said that keeping policies up to date on the Academic Personnel Office's website might be similarly challenging.

Ms. Nicklis suggested the site could simply link out to policies that are maintained by other departments and offices.

Ms. Stachowicz said that others would have to keep their policies up to date.

Prof. Giovanello said that the site would need to point people in the right direction.

Prof. Stroman said that it might be helpful to create a checklist for new faculty.

Dr. Whisnant agreed and added that a handbook that goes beyond policies and gives some tips and advice to new faculty could be a helpful resource.

Dr. Donna Bickford said that University Counsel was concerned about the handbook that was written several years ago. They opined that the policies were clear as they existed and that providing interpretive language could create confusion about policies and put the university at risk of being sued.

Prof. Ives said the committee still might be able to use the document.

Prof. Holning Lau said that an online program for faculty with the checklist could be helpful.

Dr. Whisnant suggested creating a short document that lists policies that might be helpful at different career points or life events.

Prof. Ives asked Prof. Stroman to draft the checklist.

Prof. Stroman asked the committee to come up with issues and information to include. The committee suggested including information about the following: benefits, Sakai, teaching resources/support, the Center for Faculty Excellence, the Office of Faculty Governance, tenure

guidelines, the Office of Academic Personnel, childcare, vacation time policy, and retirement options.

Prof. Stroman asked the committee to identify information they wish they had as a new faculty member that was difficult to find. The committee said the following topics were difficult to find information about: parking, parental leave, the Office of Sponsored Research, faculty grievance/hearings procedures, the Ombud's Office, the Dean of Student's Office, Alert Carolina, the Office of Accessibility, Counseling and Wellness, athletics, The Farm, identity-based support centers, health insurance, records management, faculty development, and sabbaticals.

Other issues/future business

Dr. Bickford said she would like an update on the salary equity study and the provost's response to the findings.

Dr. Whisnant said she read an article in the TDH that said the study had been released. She was not aware of its release.

Dr. Bickford said she is interested in parental leave policies. The policy is biased against dual hire couples and chairs seem to be discouraging people to take leave.

Prof. Lau said sabbaticals and benefits to domestic partners are major issues. He said for the university to adopt benefits for domestic partners, GA would have to approve.

Dr. Bickford said that UNC has some control over policies because the parental leave policy is not approved by GA.

Ms. Nicklis said that benefit plans require legislative approval, while policies that are central to the University sometimes do not.

Dr. Bickford asked if the University could look outside for other plans to offer benefits to domestic partners.

Ms. Nicklis said the University is prohibited by law from offering alternative plans.

Dr. Bickford asked if the ACA allows for any flexibility.

Ms. Nicklis said it doesn't because people can purchase insurance plans on the open market.

Dr. Bickford asked whether departments could provide a salary subsidy.

Ms. Nicklis said departments can but it depends on the availability of funds and creates an equity issue.

Ms. Stachowicz said that she is interested in recruitment and salary equity issues.

Dr. Whisnant said that she is interested in helping with the development of a new Faculty Handbook.

Ms. Turner said she is interested in whether adjuncts will be given health insurance benefits.

Ms. Nicklis said she wants to make things better for all workers at the university and wants to be a general resource for the committee.

Prof. Giovanello said she is interested in recruitment, retention, and perks like a faculty lunch room.

Prof. Stroman said she is interested in tenure and promotion and salary equity.

Prof. John Clarke said he is concerned about external controls on professional medical practice.

Prof. Ives said he would like to see a central office for faculty.

Dr. Bickford suggested that the Center for Faculty Excellence might serve as the central hub.

Ms. Turner said she would get a copy of the salary equity report.

Dr. Bickford suggested that the committee invite Gwen Burston to the February meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Turner
Executive Assistant, Office of Faculty Governance