

Faculty Welfare Committee

January 13, 2014, 3-4pm

Carr 200B

Meeting Minutes

Members in attendance: Donna Bickford, Kelly Giovanello, Timothy Ives (chair), Holning Lau, Christine Stachowicz, and Deborah Stroman,

Members absent: John Clarke

Others in attendance: Ron Strauss, Executive Vice Provost; Ashley Nicklis, Senior Director of Benefits and Work Life; Kathryn Turner, Executive Assistant; Shelby Dawkins-Law and Martin Caver, Graduate Assistants

Introductions

Prof. Ives led the group in a round of introductions. New graduate assistants working on the faculty handbook project (Dawkins-Law and Caver) introduced themselves to members in attendance.

Professor Ives gave some background on reasons the FWC has reconvened and some of the issues being addressed: health benefits, faculty handbook, pay equity, faculty retention, then ceded the floor to Mr. Strauss for a presentation on retention and salary equity.

Faculty Retention and Salary Equity

Dr. Ron Strauss began a PowerPoint presentation on his work retaining faculty hires at the University.

He began by explaining that the metrics used by his office involve a calculation of those faculty receiving external offers compared to the percentage of successful counter-offers by UNC.

He said his data shows that external offers were about average this past year, but more faculty who got an external offer decided to leave. He said that there is not an ongoing crisis, but the past year is worrisome. There are 3,600 full-time faculty, tenure track and fixed term faculty, but his office does not have retention data for part-time faculty.

Dr. Strauss noted that around 2010-11 his office began a strategy of “pre-emptive retention offers,” which are at the discretion of school's department chair in discussion with the dean and the provost's office. He explained that sometimes they are able to go to General Administration for additional funds to retain top faculty. Most of the time, he meets with the faculty member to discuss possible retention offers. He also noted that offers may not be from another university, but increasingly come from the private institutions, think tanks, and foreign institutions.

Prof. Stroman asked if they had the data disaggregated by race and/or gender, because black faculty may not be getting the same treatment that other faculty are getting.

Dr. Strauss replied that he has not done that, but that he has not noticed particular patterns. He said the retention rate is not just based on “erosion” (people who are simply dissatisfied), but on people who are getting other offers they genuinely are seeking, a move they are desiring to make. He acknowledged that some faculty attempt to seek other offers in order to get a raise, but that can sometimes lead to “buyer's remorse.”

Prof. Stroman noted that women faculty are coached to only ask for a raise with another offer in hand.

Dr. Strauss noted that retention success has dropped recently. He showed data outlining which institutions faculty have left to join, arguing that UNC has many competitors, but Mr. Strauss voiced most concern about NCSU, because it is in the same system with the same benefits.

Dr. Strauss reported that external offers have gone down over the past 3 years. He submitted data showing that from 2012-13 there were 76 external offers. UNC countered 34, and 56% of those 34 remained at Carolina.

Dr. Strauss also noted that since Oct. 2010 we have hired 14 full professors and 31 associate professors from other universities, however he added that faculty is more likely to leave than in the past. He asserted that this is because external offers from non-universities and abroad are on the rise and that these are very difficult to counter (9 departures abroad, 5 to non-universities, last year is a big proportion of our loss).

Dr. Strauss explained that there is no evidence of mass faculty exodus or a crisis in faculty retentions. He said that in the past he has proposed the use of a retention fund administered by the Office of the Provost to quickly respond to external offers. One reason that faculty retention is so important is that there is a loss of productivity, talent and external grant funding for departures. Replacements may require a start-up package and there is a period of adjustment until the new arrival's productivity resumes.

Prof. Stroman asked if there is a ballpark figure for an amount of money for retention Dr. Strauss needed. Dr. Strauss stated that it would be difficult to account for (would have to be an ongoing sum or negotiated with the hiring units), but would take whatever given. He said that he could easily use \$1 million per year for retentions but that \$600,000 would be a more realistic figure.

Prof. Ives asked how long the idea of a retention fund had been circulated. Dr. Strauss said that he requested the fund from the previous provost a few years ago and has begun discussions with Provost Dean about it.

Dr. Strauss said that he interfaces primarily with the Office of the Provost and the Office of Academic Personnel (Gwen Burston's office). He noted the Targeted Hiring Program has successfully recruited 130 faculty and funded their first three years of their career at Carolina. Faculty hired through the program are kept confidential as much as possible so that they are treated as equals. These hires have an 85% retention rate. Those who left have not left because they did not get tenure. To bring them on board affirmative action and EEOC regulations are waived to speed up the hiring process.

Prof. Stroman asked if there were exit interviews for all faculty.

Dr. Strauss said that these are seldom done by his office, "very sporadically."

Prof. Stroman asserted that it is conceivable that people could leave and that no one could have ever sat and talked with them.

Dr. Strauss concurred, but said that this should never happen, most retention should happen at the department level. He said that retention is about so much more than money. It is about feeling admired and cared for and appreciated, and having personal issues and family issues taken into account.

Prof. Stroman said that she hears about problem that females and people of color deal with. She said the nature of higher education is that excellent researchers are promoted, but they may not be good at managing people. If a department chair cultivates a good relationship with their dean, she can hire and fire at will.

Dr. Strauss acknowledged that there can be problems like that on occasion but that he hears less about that. In the interest of time, he shifted topics to discuss the salary equity report.

Dr. Bickford asked how the Office of Provost will guide an institutional policy change when systematic biases are often the result of unintended decisions.

Dr. Strauss said they needed knowledge of systemic biases, and then resources to correct for the problem. He said that some differences will remain, some career paths are gendered, some schools and disciplines are systemically gendered. He gave the example of the art department not getting paid as much as the chemistry department, but there are also improving gender distributions within these schools.

Prof. Stroman asked if the key fixing systemic biases is more money to or will, because it seems like there is money (gave the example of the targeted hiring program), and that there is more a need of will.

Dr. Strauss concurred but stated that it is also about nurturing people once they are hired, and making them feel comfortable once here. He explained that the targeted hiring program has grown over time, gets more requests than can be funded, and is used strategically to see how certain units respond.

Dr. Stroman discussed the need for clustered hires. Dr. Strauss said that they are doing this when possible, giving the example of recent cluster hiring in the School of Pharmacy.

Faculty Handbook discussion

Prof. Ives asked the committee what issues should be covered in the handbook.

Prof. Stroman asked if the legal issues surrounding the creation of a handbook had been resolved.

Ms. Turner responded that David Parker will consult on the project so that we can be in sync from the earliest stages as to what the finished product will be.

Prof. Ives asked the committee to think about what its role should be and how to get information and data to Ms. Dawkins-Law and Mr. Caver.

Dr. Bickford noted last meeting's list of things that needed to be improved and included, and that it might make sense begin to organize around those.

Prof. Stroman noted the AAUP's best practice categories for university handbooks and stated that there could also be a catch-all or "work/family" category in addition.

Ms. Turner noted that work on a website had begun.

Prof. Ives asked committee members to contact their counterparts on other Welfare Committees at other universities.

Prof. Giovanello noted that we need to go through and get rid of redundancies and overlap.

Prof. Ives stated that this needs to be an ongoing charge of this committee, continually updating and revisiting the handbook.

Ms. Stachowicz stated that it is important to be able to link to the correct departments that are already "owners" of certain content.

Dr. Bickford said that WordPress is great because you can see broken links immediately.

Prof. Stroman asked how we are going to juggle the faculty handbook with inequity issues, problems with salary, and state health plan.

Prof. Ives stated that this needs to be on-going and we need to do both at once, because it will help new folks.

Ms. Nicklis asserted that the real issue is who "owns" faculty. In other words "Where is the one-stop shop?"

Dr. Bickford stated that we should beta test this product in the fall and ask what is still needed, what needs fixing, does it work across schools, and other issues (equity issues, etc.) will come up more by working on the handbook that we might not normally see.

Prof Ives asked if we have the right categories yet.

Prof. Giovanello stated that a spreadsheet would help us make sense about what we already have.

Prof. Ives said that we should send out different topics as they arise.

Prof. Stroman referred again to AAUP "buckets" as helping to drive a mission of what the handbook should achieve.

Ms. Turner referenced the UVA handbook.

Mr. Caver asked how to frame the data that is compiled.

Prof. Giovanello asked if we should we each take a look at other handbooks.

Prof. Lau asserted for a side by side chart of lists – ours, other institutions', and the most recent handbook.

Prof. Giovanello stated that committee members should bring as long a list as possible.

Prof. Ives asked said we will use the next meeting as a working meeting. Members should think about how you want this to be formatted as a final product, because the next step is taking this to the faculty council.

Prof. Giovanello said that we should invite Gwen Burston if her office is ultimately going to be the home for this.

Prof. Ives asked if we should send a letter to the chancellor or provost about a retention fund, subsequent to a request for the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to disaggregate Dr. Strauss's data by race, gender, and ethnicity.

Dr. Bickford stated that what's also important is who is getting the pre-emptive retention offers.

Prof. Ives asked what are our next steps are in clarifying the issue, compiling data, and making recommendations from the faculty welfare committee.

Prof. Ives stated that maybe what is required is a faculty ombudsman or advocate.

Prof. Giovanello stated that psychology has great mentoring and structure.

Ms. Bickford said that this could be used as a model for other departments.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin Caver
Faculty Governance Graduate Assistant