

FACULTY SENATE

PLENARY MINUTES

DATE: January 17, 2024

TIME: 3:00 pm

LOCATION: MCOB 265

- Call to Order 3:08 (did not make quorum)
- Approval of Minutes November 15, 2023
- Approval of Agenda
- President's Report (In writing)

- Old Business:
 - Resolution for annual COLA adjustments- although there was a response, it was not what most had hoped. There was no commitment to a COLA or space for it in the annual budget. While administrators have had a pay increase, there has been no COLA for everyone else. It continues to be difficult to attract and keep faculty.

 - Inversion/Compression/Equity Salary adjustments-In the past it was called "merit based." It had to be 5.2 standard deviations above the department mean. Hopefully the new process is clearer and more equitable.

 - Commitment by admin to do a salary survey and to work toward an increase up to the 50% percentile. They are considering raises for next fall depending on enrollment and operational costs. They said we need a 3-4% raise (an additional 400 students), in order for the raise to be considered. Concerns were raised over the cost to become an R1, when we can't afford to function as an R2 institution with faculty and resources. We can't even utilize the resources we have as an R2. More funding seems needed to become an R1.

 - Adhoc Teaching Effectiveness Committee-There hasn't been a meeting since Dr. Kovalseki retired. The recommendations at that time were: Peer review (using an established and developed protocol) along with other reviews such as student reviews; Each college develop a written criteria of expectations published in faculty handbook; That faculty develop and maintain a portfolio in Watermark.

 - NTT Instructional Track Faculty Policy-The meeting was cancelled and rescheduled for tomorrow, so hopefully there will be more clarity at the next meeting.

- R2/R1 Recommendations—a plan is being put together to move to R1. 70 research PhDs are needed; the average yearly is currently 45. A business plan is being put together on how to make that move. Medical school is hoping to move from 10 to 20 PhDs, and there are several other programs that have been identified. Part of the current model for business school is student-funded PdDs. Is the push for growing the for-profit or for funding for students to get PhDs? Is there consideration for an MD PhD program? The requirement is dissertation based research.
- Strategic Priorities—sent earlier. Five priorities. We have asked that there be a priority that includes faculty as other institutions do. Christina shared what other institutions do, which includes a separate priority for faculty (i.e. Auburn’s example of compensating and caring for faculty). Michigan, Alabama, Auburn, were all examples. UWF as a comparison of the same size institution was also used. The goal will be to get language more firmly embedded that will include engaged faculty and staff in strategic plans and priorities—even if no money is promised, can we at least have language that recruits and supports faculty and staff? This isn’t meant as an attack on upper admin, but rather a plea to include supportive language that has not previously been there. Positive feedback came from the Presidents’ Council after the meeting. Senior leadership said they don’t want to be too specific with their priorities because they want the deans to have some wiggle room. It would also be great to develop a little more of a “celebrity faculty culture”—wherein faculty do something great, and they are promoted so that students want to come take classes from them.
- The meeting on ombudsperson policy: because the word “consensus” was a nonstarter, the policy would not be approved, but they were open to the senate recommending people that will then be selected from by the university president. The revision of the policy continues.
- Parking issues have been resolved so that there is a better process for those who have disabilities so that they can now go online like everyone else instead of going in person to CEDARS. They have to have both their placard and their permit to park in designated parking. The University followed up quickly after they were notified of this issue.
- New Business-Donna had an equality work climate meeting with Dr. Billingsley. Possibly those strategies used with students to feel connectivity and support will work for faculty as well.

SEARCHES: External for VP for Economic Dev and Research; Search for Police Chief (by March 18 will start).

Faculty Qualifications are being condensed into one document, driven out of Dr. Guest’s office. This is supposed to simplify getting people qualified to teach

different things. This may reduce the number of exception letters needed. Clarification will be sought from Dr. Guest's office.

It was brought to Donna's attention that we need to stop asking about salaries and ask about how we can help with retention. Faculty retention was also discussed in terms of not only salary, but childcare, not continuing to increase copays, and other fringe benefits. How will we recruit as there is a large number of people nearing retirement.

- Adjournment