FSAC Minutes

March 22, 2007

1:00 - 3:00 Sue Jameson Room

Present: Carlos Ayala, Carol Blackshire-Belay (left at 2:00 p.m.), Sue Hayes, Maria Hess, Geoffrey Skinner, Sunil Tiwari, Beth Warner, Helmut Wautischer; Victor Garlin (as CFA representative for first hour of meeting).

Convened at 1:03 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Adding item 3: Excellence in Teaching Awards. Approved.

Approval of Minutes: Approved.

Reports:

No report from FSAC chair.

Blackshire-Belay reports that she will act as liaison for potential strike activities on campus.

No report from Academic Freedom Subcommittee.

Hess postponed her report for discussion as business item 3.

Business Item:

Item 1, Provost Ochoa (TC 1:00 p.m.) on RTP policy. Ochoa had charged FSAC with a revision of the RTP policy to assess two core weaknesses, (1) clear articulation of expectations from faculty undergoing RTP, and (2) finding a solution to address a legal inconsistency about the official role of the provost in RTP. He presents reasons in favor of emphasizing the role of the provost in RTP procedures. Currently, it is openly recognized that the provost gives feedback to the president. This poses a legal conflict due to the lack of a provision that allows a candidate to rebut the provost's recommendation. Giving the provost an official place in RTP procedures will add to the power of the provost's office and changes the current 3/2 (faculty/administration) levels of review to 3/3. Ochoa believes that this is appropriate, since the provost is the chief academic officer concerned with the health of academic offerings in a system-wide perspective.

An objection was raised concerning workload for the provost office. Ochoa believes that this can be solved. He cites SDSU as a much larger campus where such powers are given to the provost. A question was raised whether the president delegates such role to the provost. Ochoa states a court case in Los Angeles that establishes the role of president as final approver for RTP action, thus a president's role is never of simply celebratory nature. Ochoa states that by placing the provost in the loop officially, faculty might give more serious consideration to this level of review. Unless the provost's role is established in blue paper, the consultation function would have to be removed. The president has not stated a preference for such delegation of duty.

An objection was raised that the timeline for RTP does not allow for a sixth level of review. Ochoa believes that this can be solved.

Item 2, RTP Policy continued (2:00 p.m.).

A summary discussion of changes to the RTP policy concerning the role of the provost brought the following results:

* A potential conflict of interest within the office of faculty affairs would require additional administrative staffing to act on such sixth level of review.
* The workload increase for the provost undermines the efficiency of this level, unless other duties would have to be cut.
* The shift in emphasis from 3/2 (faculty/administration) levels of review to 3/3 levels brings an undesirable change to faculty governance.
* The lack of clear language by the president concerning this matter poses a concern, especially in light of instructions to remove compromising language from current documents.
* In its current standing, the role of the provost is very effective, due to close consultation with the deans.
* This is the fourth year of FSAC discussion concerning this matter, a vote is called upon.

FSAC unanimously recommends that no sixth level of review should be added to RTP, that the role of the provost should remain unchanged, and that legally conflicting language should be removed from documents.

Item 3, Excellence in teaching awards. FSAC unanimously accepts a proposed timeline change for excellence in teaching awards to be as follows: Call for nominations (first Friday in February), Nominations due and names published (third Friday in February), Dossiers due from nominees (first Friday in March), Due date for signed comments (third Friday in March), Committee announces decision (early April).

Discussion about changes to the pools of candidates is postponed to next meeting.

Adjourned 2:47 p.m.