End-of-year Report

Faculty Affairs Committee

May 2016

Membership

The Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) for academic year (AY) 2015-2016 originally consisted of members Elizabeth Allman, Andy Anger, Nicole Cundiff, Chris Fallen, Valerie Gifford, Joshua Greenberg, John Heaton, Jak Maier, Leslie McCartney, and Walter Skya. John Eichelberger served as the Ex Officio member. Walter Skya convened the first FAC meeting, held in September. Chris Fallen was nominated and elected to chair. Leslie McCartney agreed to serve as Secretary for a second year. In January, Elizabeth Allman resigned from FAC to serve on the Planning and Budget committee.

Face-to-face FAC meetings were held monthly and a “Google Group” was used for online discussion and announcements. A shared “Google Drive” folder was used for collaborative editing of selected FAC documents. Ownership of the electronic Group and folder will be transferred from Chris Fallen to the next FAC chair, upon request.

Andy Anger graciously volunteered to convene the first FAC meeting of AY-2017.

Actions and Discussions

Senate by-law revisions

FAC brought a motion to Senate for revision of the bylaws to expand the pool of faculty eligible to be nominated for and elected as Senate President-Elect to include elected Senate Alternates. Previously, eligibility was restricted to only Senators and chairs of Senate Committees. This restriction contributed to elections with only one eligible and willing candidate. The motion to revise Senate bylaws was passed by the Senate through the process for amending the Senate Constitution and Bylaws.

Support for student-led campus Sustainability efforts

The campus RISE Board requested the Senate to recommend that faculty support the student-led campus sustainability efforts through optional donations matching the student sustainability fee enacted through ASUAF. After several discussions, FAC wrote and passed resolution in collaboration with the RISE Board encouraging voluntary faculty donations for campus sustainability. The resolution was brought to Senate but was narrowly defeated in an open vote.

Faculty Overload contract benefit rates

FAC member Andy Anger brought an issue of faculty teaching overload contract benefit rates to the committee that often causes overload contracts to be categorically denied due to cost. In particular, units are charged the full faculty benefit rate (approximately 45%) for overload contracts even though many of those benefits (such as leave, time off, and health insurance) do not accrue for the faculty performing the overload work. However, units are charged a much lower benefit rate (approximately 10%) for qualified staff and adjunct faculty to teach the same course. Andy Anger and Jak Maier drafted a resolution describing these concerns and requesting that UA statewide revisit the befit rates charged for faculty teaching overload contracts due to the unintended academic consequences the current benefit rates have on course instruction decisions. The resolution passed the Senate, and FAC will need to remain engaged with UA and Faculty Alliance to ensure the follow through beyond Senate.

Other issues considered

FAC considered several issues that never moved out of the committee. Two of the issues are described below.

One faculty outside of Senate brought an issue to FAC regarding policy and procedures for faculty to follow when one of their enrolled students is charged with a serious crime that prevents the student from completing the course due to incarceration or a ban from campus. FAC considered the issue and where such policy could be adopted. FAC eventually concluded that the existing “Incomplete” grading mechanism was sufficient to accommodate most of these rare but unfortunate situations.

Another faculty asked FAC to revisit the Department Chair policy that was amended through FAC during the previous academic year. Several small changes were suggested and agreed to. Two of those changes were significant. One non-controversial change corrected intended language specifying eligibility to vote for department chair. The second suggested change restricted eligibility to be nominated and to serve as department chair to only faculty represented by one of the applicable faculty union collective bargaining agreements. This change had proved to be controversial during the process to revise the Department Chair policy in previous years. However, FAC eventually agreed upon language that effectively stated this restriction and brought a motion to the Administrative Committee where it was tabled. A copy of the motion is stored in the FAC Google Drive share.

Unfinished Business

Faculty Blue Book revisions and joint appointments

In the preceding academic year, FAC discussed recommendations from the report by the ad hoc committee on Joint Appointments for the purpose of amending the UAF Faculty “Blue Book,” which has been undergoing revisions during the previous three academic years. The Unit Criteria Committee formed a subcommittee that resumed progress on the Blue Book revisions this year, in collaboration with FAC, and is incorporating recommendations from the Joint Appointments Committee. Valerie Gifford from FAC served on the joint subcommittee. Efforts by the Unit Criteria and Faculty Affairs committees to revise the Blue Book will resume nesglumi1(,)2T* [(G1(to4le)6(es)1(u)23(orm(n)5c -0. -0. -