Faculty Council Committee on Fixed-term Faculty  
September 9, 2011

Present: Toews, Gilliland, Tisdale, Lee, DeSaix, Irons, Whisnant, Boxill  
Not Present: Kramer, Renner

The first meeting of the 2011-2012 academic year began with introduction of committee members and a decision to hold regular committee meetings at 2:00 p.m. in Stone 215 on the same days that Faculty Council meets.

The committee began to establish its goals for the coming year, both immediate and long term.

- Revisit the Spring 2010 survey results.
- Track closely the development of the Master Lecturer rank in Arts & Sciences.
- Support reconsideration of “Master Lecturer” title for the new third-tier rank in Arts & Sciences. Other titles mentioned in the meeting were University Professor, Professor of the Practice, and Standard Professorial ranks with the modifier “Teaching” [i.e. Teaching Assistant Professor, etc.]. Many are unhappy with the gender bias of the current proposed title; therefore, the committee should facilitate a continuing conversation on the topic.
- Investigate and form recommendations on length of contract terms for people who have worked effectively in a position and achieved seniority [and who do not receive longer contracts automatically with a promotion]. One-year contracts for fixed-term faculty have become the “norm” since the budget crisis began. The committee should seek further information from Provost.
- Investigate role of outside letters or “external letters” [implied “academic” recommenders] in HR promotion criteria for professional schools fixed-term faculty. Is an “academic” recommendation always available, and is it always the most effective recommendation for all positions, for example positions focused on engaged scholarship? Find out Provost’s perspective on this issue.
- Obtain report on “to-date” promotions to Senior Lecturer in Arts & Sciences. If possible, assess how departments are interpreting the criteria and if the “applied practice” across departments is in a reasonable range of consistency.
- Consider question of how to encourage “best practices” for promotion of fixed-term faculty across the University. Is some consistency of criteria possible? Reasonable? How might this question relate to different position names used for fixed-term faculty across campus? [Committee members reiterated that titling in the School of Medicine is not a problem.]
- Track development of titling issues in new online programs in the University.
- Continue discussion of “Lecturer” title in Arts & Sciences. Committee members noted concerns about the impact of the title in letters of recommendations for students and how other universities and other schools on our own campus perceive the rank as identified by that title. For example, “Lecturer” has very different connotations in the School of Medicine.
- Raise question again about fixed-term faculty eligibility for IAH’s Leadership Program. Currently the criteria stipulates tenured-track faculty only. If necessary, write an appeal to the Director to outline and substantiate concerns.
- Explore how SACS [Southern Association of Colleges and Universities] accreditation might relate to some of fixed-term faculty and titling issues.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m. Next meeting scheduled for Friday, October 14 at 2:00 p.m. in 215 Stone Center.