Minutes of the Dornsife College Faculty Council Meeting

November 2, 2016

Present: Jeff Chisum (President), Trisha Tucker (Vice President), Dan Pecchenino (Secretary), Wiebke Ziebis, David Tompkins, Matthew Kahn, Shannon Gibson, Amber Miller (Dean of Dornsife College), Steve Mackey (Dornsife Business Office), Rebecca Broyer, Michael Hadjidaniel, Geraldine Peters, Emily Zeamer, Lori Mesrobian, Sheila Briggs, Alison Dundes Renteln, Gioia Polidori, Nathalie Burle, Francesca Italiano (visitor from French & Italian), Jim Valentine (visitor from American Language Institute)

Absent: Bob Girandola, Antoine Bechara, Iva Bozovic

I. Introductions
   a. Jeff Chisum had everyone go around and introduce themselves to Dornsife Dean Amber Miller and Senior Associate Dean Steve Mackey from the Dornsife Business Office

II. DFC Questions for Dean Miller
   a. Merit Review
      i. Dean Miller has studied the Provost’s Office’s requirements for Merit Review
         1. We will now be conducting reviews for pre-tenure and equivalent every two years, and every three for post-tenure and equivalent
         2. We will be using a numeric system (out to one decimal place), not our previous Meritorious, Outstanding, Exceptional system
         3. For junior TT faculty, we will be doing developmental review in years 2, 3 and 5
            a. Year-3 review is very in-depth and trying to put someone on the path to tenure
            b. Year-5 is not as in-depth as the previous, but it’s designed to guide people toward solidifying their tenure profile or potentially moving on from USC if tenure looks unlikely
         4. Lori Mesrobian asked when this would be implemented and how it would affect people this year
            a. Dean Miller said that it would be based on when we were hired
            b. She also noted that we can request a merit review any year, and that the merit rank from the previous year would hold over in the non-review year
         5. Alison Dundes Renteln suggested we should have an ombudsperson in the Dean’s office for merit review appeals who is detached from one’s own department
            a. Dean Miller said that these appeals are handled by someone in the Dean’s office and that conflicts are acknowledged
               i. Dean Miller also said the Dean’s Office is working on a “Who to Go To for What” list
6. Sheila mentioned that those faculty whose rankings are lowered due to the “50% Rule” can lose research funding
   a. Dean Miller said she is working to change this to the extent that she can within the Provost’s guidelines
7. Geraldine Peters asked how these merit changes would affect Research faculty
8. Michael Hadjidaniel mentioned that the mentoring within many departments (particularly for RTPC faculty) is not extensive enough, and others echoed this
   a. Jeff asked if there is any Dornsife-wide standard/plan for mentoring
   b. Dean Miller wondered if we could do this not in the departments, but at the Dornsife-level
      i. Jeff suggested perhaps doing this on the Divisional-level
      ii. Alison mentioned that this a concern on the Provost-level; suggested much of this could be an enforcement problem; Sheila echoed Alison’s concerns and noted a lack of standardization across departments

b. Computer Policy for Funded Faculty with Teaching/Service Requirements
   i. Dean Miller said that what she would like to do is simplify funding for faculty
      1. Basically all faculty would have a small pot of money that they can use for any reasonable academic purposes
      2. Need to see if this would work financially
      3. Hope is to help all faculty a little

c. Teaching Evaluations
   i. Jeff mentioned that there has been a Provost-level committee looking into this
      1. Alison brought up the issue of students who really haven’t been attending classes filing out evals
      2. Alison also suggested other methods for assessing teaching, like CET visits
         a. Dean Miller said that they are working to make visits available by request, but not a requirement
      3. Natalie Burle mentioned that in French the evaluation is essentially ongoing and can be cumbersome
      4. Matthew Kahn brought up poor participation rates for online evaluations

d. Interdisciplinary Teaching
   i. Issue of team teaching
      1. Dean Miller doesn’t yet know the budgetary issues for this with regard to making the math work
   ii. Faculty teaching in other departments
1. How do we facilitate interdisciplinary teaching without Dornsife’s budget getting hurt?

2. Lori asked if there is a point-person in the Dean’s Office to help with new initiatives

e. Dornsife “Signature Undergraduate Experience”
   i. Support for Undergraduate Research
      1. Big issue seems to be faculty and students not having an understanding of money available for a huge range of projects
         a. Make this more transparent
   ii. Value of a Liberal Arts degree
      1. How can we improve recruitment and communication?
         a. Dean Miller says we are going to hire an institutional researcher to dig through data to help us make better case to parents, particularly with regard to salaries of liberal arts grads
         b. Need to better define the Dornsife experience
            i. West Coast, 21st-century, forward-looking core
            ii. Will put together a task force to address what this should look like—not specific classes, but big idea

f. Infrastructure Support
   i. Lori brought up potential FERPA issues with shared offices
      1. Steve Mackey brought up issues with departments being far-flung (Chemistry is spread over 9 buildings) or like the Writing Program, half the offices are inaccessible
      2. Steve Mackey also brought up the basic fact that we don’t have enough space
      3. Alison also brought up maintenance issues in existing spaces
      4. Dean Miller said that this is one of the most difficult issues she has had to deal with both at Columbia and here
         a. She said that any egregious cases should be sent by the department chair to Jim McElwain, the college architect

III. Debrief—What should our priorities be in memo to Dean Miller?
   a. Who to go to for what?
      i. Alison suggested an ombudsperson to deal with issues separate from the department structure
         1. Neutral, confidential, guidance-oriented
   b. Merit Review rank percentages
      i. Remind her about desire to eliminate “50% Rule” and/or deal with fallout from it
      ii. Address potential lack of clarity about the new “number system”
      iii. Should departments be waiting to do Merit Reviews this year?
         1. And what about departments that have already conducted the reviews?
      iv. General transparency issues surrounding how merit review is connected to salary
      v. Encourage Dean to make changes she seems open to making
vi. Request a document of the changes she is hoping to make

c. Dornsife “Signature Undergraduate Experience”
   i. Alison suggested DFC should help shape the vision by asking for seats on
      Dean Miller’s task force
   ii. Alison brought up the Renaissance Scholar Program

d. Mentoring
   i. Perhaps creating standards for across Dornsife divisions

e. Remind Dean Miller of other questions submitted by other faculty
f. Top-down structural problems
   i. Graduate funding (Block vs. Slot system)
   ii. Libraries?

IV. Faculty Malaise Issues
   a. How are all of the issues connected to feelings of faculty malaise?
      i. People want to participate, but the compensation for doing so is not
         sufficient

V. Dornsife Speaker Series
   a. How do we want to proceed with this?
   b. Should it be named after some famous faculty member?
   c. How do we attract people to an event?
   d. Should this be an internal event or an external event?

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Pecchenino, Secretary

The Dornsife Faculty Council