Minutes of the Dornsife College Faculty Council Meeting

April 5, 2017

Present: Jeff Chisum (President), Trisha Tucker (Vice President), Dan Pecchenino (Secretary), Geraldine Peters, Gioia Polidori, Emily Zeamer, Shannon Gibson, Iva Bozovic, Rebecca Broyer, Bob Girandola, David Tomkins, Antoine Bechara, Lori Mesrobian, Nathalie Burle, Sheila Briggs, Michael Hadjidaniel, Dean Amber Miller (Guest), Vice Dean Stephen Mackey (Guest), Steve Mack (Guest), Maura Crowley (Guest)

Absent: Matthew Kahn, Wiebke Ziebus, Alison Dundes Rentln

I. Dean Miller’s Visit
   a. Salary benchmarking
      i. Jeff Chisum explained the background on the issues and discussed the appropriate benchmarks for the different kinds of faculty
         1. Noted that our T/TT should be compared to elite R1 peers
         2. Steve Mack from the Faculty Affairs Caucus explained their argument that RTPC faculty should be compared to T/TT faculty at elite Liberal Arts colleges
            a. Focus on teaching
            b. Similar service profiles
            c. Similar level of research “light” work
      3. Dean Miller asked why “Ivy+” institutions aren’t better comparisons
         a. Steve noted that at many of those schools don’t treat Teaching faculty as full members of the faculty
         b. Jeff noted that comparing us to “freeway flyers” at other schools isn’t appropriate
      4. Dean Miller asked about how Research faculty should be compared
         a. Jeff and Geraldine Peters noted that R1 researchers are probably the best comparison
   b. “Baseline” salary
      i. Michael Quick commented that USC raised “baseline” salaries 10% this year, will raise them another 10% next year, and ideally 10% the following year
         1. Stephen Mackey said that no one in Dornsife is making under $50K, and very few under $60K
            a. Stephen Mackey said that he would get us numbers on this
         2. Steve Mack asked what the university’s position is on salary compression
            a. Dean Miller noted that this has been a challenge for her at both USC and Columbia
            b. Steve Mack asked what the process is for actually alleviating this compression
i. Dean Miller said this was done between the Chairs and her office, with the chair establishing initial raises and adjustments each year

ii. Stephen Mackey noted that this year’s salary pool will be bigger and that Dean Miller is negotiating for more money

c. Faculty development funds
   i. Jeff asked about the status of the Dean’s desire to create faculty development accounts for each faculty member
      1. Dean Miller noted that this is still in the works, but that our faculty development grant structure next year will remain the same

d. Sabbaticals and gap funding
   i. Geraldine Peters discussed some of the challenges facing Research faculty in terms of funding
      1. Research faculty pay 65% overhead to the university
      2. The foci of funding institutions change, often quite rapidly
      3. People must adjust, which can make it difficult to get new funding right away
   ii. To support people in these “gaps,” Geraldine is proposing that funds can be drawn from the “fringe benefits” sabbatical pool to give researchers time off to “reprogram” their research
      1. Jeff framed it three ways:
         a. Can we have gap funding?
         b. Can we use sabbatical money to fund this?
         c. And who is eligible for these sabbaticals?
   iii. Dean Miller noted that this is a very complicated political issue
      1. Funding may be so tenuous that this won’t be as high a priority as it needs to be
      2. She asked Stephen Mackey to look into this for Geraldine

e. Dean’s Cabinet
   i. Dean Miller explained the idea
      1. 5 faculty cabinet members, and 3 staff cabinet members
         a. Stephen Mackey, for instance, is handling many different staffing issues, but not Advancement or Strategy & Communications, which are divided between two other people
         b. On the faculty side, we will have the 3 divisional deans, plus 2 more
            i. Undergraduate will handle all big-picture undergrad education issues
               1. Jeff reiterated that he hopes this dean will be an excellent teacher
                  a. Dean Miller agreed
            ii. Graduate/Professional will work with divisional deans to keep PhD programs competitive
1. Dean Miller said that PhD training is not just about “reproducing ourselves.” Need to provide students with resources for non-academic careers so we can get as many smart people out into the world as possible.
   a. Will analyze the landscape to see where different kinds of programs might need to be developed (MA, certificates, online)

f. Curriculum Caucus
   i. Iva Bozovic noted that the focus of their report is the need for better undergraduate mentoring
      1. Noted that it is currently a piecemeal approach
         a. Some departments have good ideas, but they are not often codified
         b. Student organizations are not as integrated into this as they might be
         c. Some departments might need more resources to make this happen
            i. Not just financial support, but time spent by alums telling students about professional and research opportunities
         d. Outreach to students needs to be improved via department websites
            i. Fellowships, internships, career opportunities
         e. Departments are not connecting back to Dornsife Student Pathways
      2. Dean Miller asked what universities are doing mentoring (separate from advising) really well
      3. Big movement on these issues is unlikely until the new College Undergraduate Dean is in place

g. DFC Resolutions
   i. Teaching Eligibility
      1. We passed a resolution that “expertise” should determine teaching assignments
         a. Dean Miller does not think there will be a problem making this the policy
   ii. Voting for Merit Review and Promotion Committee membership
      1. Wherever possible these committees should be appointed democratically
         a. Gioia Polidori asked if the current distribution requirement of merit reviews can be changed at the Dornsife level.
            i. The Dean noted that this is a Provost-level issue
         b. Maura Crowley asked if majority vote cast by rank-eligible faculty committees is the final word, or if chair’s vote is determinate
c. Dean Miller recommended taking resolution to the Chairs
d. Emily Zeamer proposed making Merit Review
   requirements clearer, more nuanced, and customizable for
   each department
   i. Dean Miller reiterated that she doesn’t want to
      make Merit Review any more onerous for faculty,
      but that she does want the departments to decide
      these issues for themselves

II. Post-Visit Discussion
   a. Salary issues
      i. There was some confusion around the discussion of salaries
         1. How many people are actually under $60K?
         2. And how are raises actually determined?
            a. Still a lack of clarity here
            b. Steve Mack asked for more discussion of how the merit pay
               increases are determined
            c. Lori Mesrobian asked where the money for promotion
               increases come from
            d. Sheila brought up the issue of cost-of-living adjustments
   b. Merit Review
      i. Still some confusion around how merit ranks are determined and divided
         1. Lots of ideas for how we might make the process less opaque,
            but…
         2. … we need to determine which are coming from the Provost and
            which are coming from Dornsife
   c. Final recommendations
      i. David Tomkins suggested that we need to get a sense of where the
         administration stands on our benchmarking proposal
         1. Jeff will type up a report that summarizes what the DFC has done
            this year
         2. We know the Dean has seen it, but we still will need to have a
            discussion with the Provost
         3. Emily called for both a short-term and long-term view on this issue
            and the Merit Review process

III. Previous meeting minutes
   a. Approval postponed until next meeting

IV. 3/22 Academic Senate Meeting
   a. Presentation and proposal from Darren Ruddell on sustainability
      i. His proposal was approved at the meeting
   b. Jessica Parr presented the changes to the Faculty Handbook
      i. One big issue was teaching at other schools
         ii. Jeff’s sense is that the new policy recommendations could create more
             bureaucracy
   c. Michael Quick presented
      i. One issue discussed was the minimum salary for people on H1-B visas

V. Election
a. Move of Psychology into Natural Sciences
b. Will address how this affects proportional representation over the summer

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Pecchenino, Secretary

The Dornsife Faculty Council