

Dornsife College Faculty Council

Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting

Date: March 4, 2020

Room: Irani Hall, Room 321

Present (15): David Crombecque, Melissa Daniels-Rauterkus, Gerald “Jerry” Davison, David Ginsburg, Bob Girandola, Devin Griffiths (*president*), Yuka Kumagai, Sri Narayan, Jessica Parr, Andrea Parra, Michael Petitti, Gioia Polidori (*vice president*), Alisa Sánchez, An-Min Wu (*secretary*), Emily Zeamer.

Absent (4): Marianna Chodorowska-Pilch, Antonio Elefano, Shannon Gibson, Joe Palacios,.

Guest (1): Steven Finkel (Dornsife Dean of Graduate & Professional Education)

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings (01-22-20 and 02-05-20)

- 12 of the DFC present vote to approve January meeting minute, zero oppose, and two abstain
- 11 of the DFC present vote to approve February meeting minutes, zero oppose, and one abstain (with 3 minor amendments)

Update

- *Salary and Merit Raise:* **Devin** started with Dean’s announcement for the merit raises to be 3%; we should celebrate this. **Jerry** said that the policy not to match the cost of living increase has ended up salary erosion over time.
- *OCAP:* **Devin** updated in the Senate Meeting Provost announced a new taskforce to investigate OCAP. Devin is sitting on the Taskforce, which will meet every two weeks from next week. Suspension of OCAP is dropped but great to get this investigation going. The Taskforce plans to release anonymous report (on numbers of cases etc.). **Jerry** still think it is a bad strategy to allow the system to continue, and he hopes that the Taskforce pays attention to procedure and not just flowcharts. **David G.** concerned about no consequences written or known from the OCAP cases, and said that we need to think about victims. Devin expressed his confidence on the Taskforce in making this procedure more transparent. Also OCAP might have personnel change but don’t know how much. Another thing to push is to understand why we (had to) hire police force in OCAP.
- *Merit Review:* **Devin** reported on the meeting with Dean Stott and said that DFC should work on merit review recommendations for all tracks. Dean Stott will take our documentation as guidelines for consideration in the merit review. The merit review will include both quantitative (applying weight based on appointment profile (e.g. 40/40/20) for merit calculation) and qualitative review, and will provide examples for how merit review would look like for faculty in each rank & track of each department. Devin thus asked caucuses to

work on the set of recommendations. **David C.** mentioned during the meeting, Dean Stott mentioned that merit calculation will allow faculty, specifically TT to change their percentage of appointment on the profile. The short-term goal is for faculty to change the profile for merit review (e.g. when submitting for the review, one can request the percentage change and the committee review whether to accept it. The long-term goal can be to add teaching in the TT appointment.

Jessica suggested to add a check-in conversation (verbal meeting) after merit review to provide the faculty suggestions on how they move forward. **Gioia** commented that she did not receive any qualitative feedback on her promotion case and it is possible that other people have not received any qualitative feedback either; **David G.** responded it is this year – now they provide small paragraphs as feedback. **Devin** suggested that some informative guidance can be added for every section – basically when any number is given -- and we should encourage them to share the feedback with mentors and to incorporate it into mentoring process.

Jessica added that we should also push back the mandate on the spread of merit pool. **Jerry** concurred about that; we still do not know who mandate it. As to profile change, **Jerry** suggested that this needs to determine ahead of time i.e. one year before merit review, so the chair can arrange teaching and other assignments accordingly.

Discussion with Dean Steve Finkel on Graduate Student Teaching

Devin welcomed Dean Finkel and described our hope to have Dean Finkel to share his thought about graduate teaching opportunities and to have the discussion about it.

- **Dean Finkel** started with a central and general proposition that graduate students cannot teach lectures as the sole instructors. At a meeting with Dean Miller today, she said that she is open to other ways to handle this. One thing is to encourage DGS as well as in the PhD Academy to think about syllabi: a) Encourage graduate students to help design syllabi, b) Give a guest speech and others (in discussion) and make sure their names are in the syllabi so this is a tangible item to show potential employers. **Gioia** asked whether there is an existing policy on how many lectures a graduate student can give in one course. **Dean Finkel** replied that he is not aware about that. But **Devin** thinks technically the TA needs to cover lectures when the instructor is not available.

Jerry asked where the rule (for grad students not being sole instructors in lecture) is coming from and what is the rationale. **Finkel** answered that could be from prior administration. We are a private school, so there is an expectation that with the tuition students paid the courses should not be taught by graduate students. Some DFC member commented that it is required from other schools (e.g. UPenn) to teach a course. Not sure why we cannot provide this opportunity in a university like this. That's important training for grad students to have sign of success in the university setting. **Finkel** said he is not sure where the new provost stands on this yet, but Dean Miller is willing to ask about this. **Jerry** added if we are really concerned about the education providing to under grad, some procedure that faculty does not

spend time doing chores for classes) might be good. And it is laudable for the sensitivity that people should get their money worth, but having grad student teaching does not necessarily mean the loss of quality.

Jessica mentioned about the Burg Teaching Fellowship (Chemistry) – PhD students are responsible for 30% of the (supervised) lecture and postdoc for 40% of the lecture. **Melissa** mentioned about a school's model that have funds by college for graduate student teaching which help graduate students be competitive in the job market; and we have not heard complaints from undergraduate students. We can build it into infrastructure so TAs (teaching sole classes) can have education training summit before they teach. **Dean Finkel** agreed about the training and said we have 593 (CL593?) now to support them, but surely more will be needed.

Finkel asked whether something like 30% lecture good enough for someone to be a “co-instructor”. He assured that he does not view this as a blanket policy but more for graduate students who want to do this and in a departmental level. Need a different name on this type of program (e.g. Assistant Lecturer is already used in the Writing Program). **Sri** added that in Chemistry the fellowship is a competition. **Finkel** said CET used to have this as ‘teaching fellows’. **Emily** added that is what they called ‘junior seminar’ in Harvard; graduate students compete to teach that. **Finkel** thought that sounds attractive – we want a small model, maybe a 10 to 11-week course with some flexibility. Maybe not some high stakes courses for undergrads. **Shannon** then shared the program, called Future Faculty in University of Miami; graduate students applied for it with identification of the goals and what (classes) you can contribute. There are four modules per semester, about 1-1.5 hours each with guest lectures. The lecture included something like ‘How to structure a course and engage students’. I thought they are useful.

Shannon followed to ask for a question: She asked why her department now has less TAs but more Readers/Graders, specifically just for reading and grading; it is not useful for them nor instructors. **Finkel** answered that is by faculty request -- for those courses not having TAs assigned, faculty can make the case for some assistance. The reader/grader gets stipend. The discussion then went on about the management issue – some readers/graders are not present in the lecture which is a part of their responsibility; faculty should manage that and also not let them do more than they should, as workloads in courses vary. **Shannon** said the problem being no opportunity to feedback or evaluate from instructors (to the readers/graders) at the end of the semester so the bad ones get shuffled around.

Devin came with a different idea -- to have PhD students to be Teaching Postdocs for one year; our grad students can do the work and not just from external hire. **Finkel** responded why can't they apply for the positions? **Devin** said the Teaching Postdoc is not designed for that. **Finkel** said there have been scenarios where students waiting for jobs or prove of dissertation and is on the need/grant status, which is a waste. It would be good if they are on a different status. **Melissa** suggest to use ‘Visiting Scholar’. **Finkel** agreed and said we need to create that. **Alisa** said that will mean much for the program like the Writing Program. **Alisa** then raised a couple issues:

- It's good for grad students to have opportunity to teach and learn to be teachers, but to make sure undergraduate students to have effective instructors, we (Writing Program) have very intensive trainings. We teach them our disciplines and make sure they get ready in a short time. I will like to see this process to be set up so there's some investment on faculty's teaching appointment.
- It is also important to make sure graduate teaching is not a competition to part-time faculty, so PT faculty is not losing their workload.

The responses from **Finkel** is that anything they come up for sure will consist of pedagogical components. **Finkel** requested DFC for general feedback on the following questions:

- What's really important for us to move forward. Is co-teaching okay? – as this is easy for us to implement.
- As to the training part – that's a great example The Writing program has. It is very important. There are a lot of models out there.
- How much is the demand that we are talking about and in which departments; what is the best opportunity that we can provide to the graduate students?

Devin responded that instructor record would be good for graduate students on the job market. **Finkel** agreed that we need to make sure everyone to understand the goal here.

Next, **Gioia** asked about TA workloads and what exactly our TAs should do? **Finkel** answered that TA's responsibility for each course would be different. Never heard that they can't grade exam. The thing we come down is the workload – each TA works 20 hours on average per week (some weeks can be more and some less). Certainly if it's the first time if they teach the course, they should go to the lectures. Our graduate students are helping university but they are not regular employees. When they are an RA, that's a different story. **David C.** mentioned different cultures in different department - sometimes a culture is 12 hours. **David G.** added that his department has TAs signed for contract on 20-hours. **Finkel** concluded that ultimately each TA signs for contract from the Graduate School to have 20 hours on weekly average; as long as the expectation is clear, it is generally okay.

- **Finkel** announced the stipend schedule change. Starting from August 2020, grad students will be paid 12 months annually. They will have summer coverage and health insurance. **Jerry** asked what is the benefit for TA/RA getting the same amount of money from 9 months to 12 months. **Finkel** answered that every year we have students that don't know how to budget and can't pay rent in summer. Another reason is the 12-month schedule this makes some departments such as Chemistry with grants easy to disburse.

The baseline is \$30,500 per year at university level, and some programs pay more to be competitive. **Devin** asked what is the implication for those teaching in the summer. **Finkel** said there were only 42 students teaching in the summer; generally graduate students should not teach in the summer. If students teach in both fall and spring, they'll now also received stipend in the summer. That is different from teaching or working in the summer. Having say that, if they work for educational goals and for their scholarship, then they can do it. We are trying for them to just focus on scholarship. (Andrea) We found out that in the faculty

handbook only teaching should do summer teaching so we have not had graduate student teaching for several years.

- **Gioia** asked a question that was brought up by a member of the Joint Provost -Senate Task Force on Research Faculty on why Research Faculty cannot advise PhD students (whereas TT typically have PhD students who came in with 2-years TA/RA funding. **Finkel** answered that the policy is determined by programs and departments. General rules that RTPC faculty is permissible to be on the dissertation committee but up to each graduate program to determine their own rules on top of that. So that is a departmental rule, and we (Dornsife) don't decide.

Finkel concluded with his visit by saying that Dean Stott and he works closely on a lot of teaching related work; he makes sure that the grad students are not misused and Dean Stott takes care of the undergraduate education.

Discussion of Elections and Awards

An-Min reported that the election nomination continued to March 25. **Devin** has sent invitation for nomination to some chairs. **An-Min** said this really helped to get some TT faculty nomination in. We have received enough nominations for this DFC election (4 seats for Humanities, 3 seats for Social Sciences, and 3 seats for Natural Sciences).

As to Service Awards, questions raised on whether there will be certificate and frame besides the monetary rewards (\$500). The Service Awards nomination is open to also March 25. **An-Min** will send reminder after DFC election nomination closes.

Update (continued from Update before Dean Finkel's joining) and New Businesses:

- *End of Year Dinner:* **Devin** is looking into a different venue than university club. Rock and Riley have space. **Yuka** said that some place such as the Vietnamese shop in USC Village rent out the entire space. **Devin** to check. **Shannon** suggested alternatively we can stick to University Club but do it at their outdoor patio, where they can do buffet and beverage.
- *COVID-19 update & teaching online:* **Devin** updated that LA County has declared public emergency and recommended people not to travel. **Shannon** questioned about teaching continuity online. CET and ITS will be overloaded. There are no clear directions from the university on how to deal with students as we are not health professionals. **Devin** expressed similar experience (no university guidance) about the decision on whether to run or postpone the conference he's hosting this week. **Shannon** raised more potential questions for teaching online on Blackboard and Zoom, as well as things not on CET e.g. how to use Google doc, Login problems on phones. **Shannon** is giving a talk about teaching online next Monday and will share contents to all DFC members. Not sure if it'll be recorded.

Devin mentioned that Blackboard contract has been reviewed and continued. But based on the ITS update during the Senate Meeting, he is not sure if this will be a long term contract. **Jessica** said that Chemistry is moving away from Blackboard. She recommended an online resource gradescope.com. It gives two free semesters of use up to 300 students. While there

is some learning curve, it is much more friendly for giving students assignments and for them to upload. You can scan papers and batch grading on numerical answers and it's good for large exams. Jessica has used it in large intro classes.

- *DTS system update*: Devin mentioned that DTS is moving away from the current CMS system and will switch to Wordpress, but the process will take about 18 months. The soft launch is scheduled for next summer and the actual launch will be later in 2021-2022.
- *Dornsife orientation*: **Gioia** reported that Kat Reynolds said there is no plan for Dornsife orientation. New hire orientation will be only on University level. **Gioia** has started talking with Dean Stott on the orientation.
- *Mentoring*: **Gioia** talked about the suggestion of a questionnaire from Dean Stott to ask RTPC faculty whether they have mentors or not. We can potentially ask more questions. **Jessica** suggested the questionnaire to come from Dean's Office or at least joint (between Dean's Office and DFC) so it'll be more effective. Devin said we can have questions on merit review and mentoring. Jessica also suggested to push Dean Stott more on having a volunteer (yet permanent) survey on merit review. It will help to get some snapshots now and it is important to have the information in a long run. If this becomes a part of merit review process, we can have records about chairs – for example, as soon as a new hire gets the review, we know if there's a problem. It can also be in the annual activity report – some department already requires that.

For the RTPC mentoring events, Gioia asked if any suggestions for speakers. The responses include as follows:

- For Social Sciences: (Shannon:) Nina Rathban, Professor (Teaching) of Political Science and International Relations; (Gioia:) Erin Moore, Professor (Teaching) of Anthropology; Arthur Auerbach (PS); Shannon can also be a speaker.
- For Humanities: Trisha Tucker, Associate Professor (Teaching) of Writing; Daniel Pecchenino, Associate Professor (Teaching) of Writing and etc.
- For Natural Sciences: Jessica.

Andrea mentioned that she is organizing some events for Language faculty, since the profile for the Language faculty can be different from others in Humanities.

- *FDD for RTPC update*: **Gioia** found out that Emily Anderson (Professor of English; TT) technically serves as a Faculty Development Director (FDD) for RTPC in Humanities RTPC; she gets a course release. One thing we should think is whether we want tenured faculty or not as an RTPC FDD. If we want an RTPC to serve the role, then we should make it clear.
- *Promotion*: **Yuka** suggested to add discussion in mentoring events about continuous appointments for RTPC in the promotion guideline.

Meeting adjourned at 4:28 pm.

Respectfully,
An-Min Wu