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Proceedings of the Faculty Forum

November 3rd, 2003

Items discussed at the Faculty Forum are as follows:

Department Head Terms

Provost Stan Albrecht detailed the latest on the issue of Department Head Terms. The proposal is to install a five year term, with a possible second 5 year term following an approval review. He listed the background and rationale for moving in this direction

1. The university lacks clearly defined procedures that define entry, conditions of service, and exit for those faculty who serve in administrative assignments.
2. Some of the colleges were already moving to a term appointment system for department heads.
3. The current system creates some difficulties for incumbent administrators who desire to give up their administrative appointment and return to a faculty role.
4. The return to full-time teaching and research of highly qualified scholars who have held administrative appointments can present important opportunities to the department.
5. Institutional excellence can be enhanced as individuals with diverse cultural and academic experience are presented with opportunities to participate in the administrative structure of the university.
6. New perspectives on departmental goals and leadership needs, facilitated through term appointments, are critical to maintaining currency in innovative administrative strategies and initiatives.
7. The service as an administrator should conclude with dignity and a sense of fulfillment.
8. The change will encourage younger and female faculty to anticipate and prepare for a period of administrative service in their careers.

He then discussed the concerns that have been voiced over this issue, and gave explanation on how they are resolved.

To see the complete list presented at Faculty Forum, click [here](#).

Health Care Benefits

Caryn Beck-Dudley and Kevin Womack presented a brief overview of the current health care status. One of the major issues on the premium price was to stabilize and increase the reserve, which is a four year program. They will know what to do to the plan next by watching the projected nation and state-wide increase in health care costs. The question on how much health care premiums will be increased will be determined by how much the legislature give USU in compensation this year. The benefit package will not be used to fund athletics, or hidden projects. All benefit money will go to the benefits program of the University.

The regents are requesting a 12% increase in benefits coverage, which comes close to cover the cost of benefits increase, which is a 14 or 15 % increase. This translates to a small increase in the benefits package this year.

University Budget

President Hall gave a brief explanation on how USU is surviving even though we are tremendously under leveraged. The University has very little long term debt, all of which will be paid off in the next

ten years. There are proposals pending legislative approval regarding a new living-learning center, a parking terrace, and enhancements to food services in the student center. The University is very viable and strong in terms of underlining financial strength. The then pointed out and briefly discussed selected items on this years budget request. These include a 4 % increase in compensation, 3.5% to salary, and the remaining to medical and dental insurance. Also he discussed access funding, or unfunded growth in the student population. While tuition has gone up significantly, USU still falls in the bottom 25% nation wide. The Board of Regents recognize that other interests such as the engineering initiative and the nursing partnership with Weber needs to be funded. Funding construction on the new library is a key budget problem. Funding has come from Tier II tuition dollars, but will need to come from other means this year. Student tuition dollars have been used to hire new faculty, but discussions now are whether tuition money could also be used to help with salary increase if funding does not come from the state.

To see the University Budget Request for 2004-2005 click [here](#).

Faculty Retention Issues

Ronda Callister spoke on Faculty recruitment and retention in the Colleges of Science and Engineering. The National Science Foundation has awarded a \$3 million grant to go forward on a study of Women in the Workplace. Their primary question is how to change the climate in academic institutions so women not only stay, but thrive. Women have left academics in droves for the last 20 years, even while the number of women obtaining doctorates has soared. One reason identified is that of discrimination, which is not only based on gender, but culture as well.

To view the article click [here](#).

Mentoring for Promotion and Tenure

She then explained how 40% of the women involved in this study reported having inadequate mentoring. Men also have reported inadequate mentoring, but at not as high a percentage. Studies have shown that those who have mentoring are more successful in their careers. Mentoring is less effective when assigned, and highly more effective when volunteered by experienced faculty. She encouraged those who feel that their experience would help newer faculty become more successful, to seek mentoring positions.

Understanding the Promotion Process

Kim Sullivan explained that there needs be a clearer understanding of the tenure and promotion process, particularly the expectations outside of the department. The guidelines for becoming a full professor and other promotion positions are vague, and the faculty need a better idea of what they need to accomplish and have a better understanding of what their expectations are.

The Science and Engineering recruitment team is preparing a process to reduce unintended bias when recruiting. Studies have shown that it is more difficult for a female applicant to be awarded a teaching position or promotion than a male. The recruitment team is currently trying to develop ways to evaluate and screen candidates fairly.

Ombudspersons

Christine Hult explained the need for Ombudspersons to be elected in all colleges. Some colleges already have them, but most do not. They are needed to be present in meetings to keep track of due process for candidates. This will regulate the tenure and promotion process across campus.

To see report presented to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee click [here](#).

Promotion/Tenure Process and the Mediation Program

Chris Fawson presented two issues currently being dealt with in the Provost Office. He has found that Promotion and Tenure is one of the least understood processes at the university. The code clearly defines the process and faculty, including administrators should take the opportunity to better educate themselves on this process. Those seeking promotion or tenure have many sources to help them better understand the process, and the steps they need to take.

Faculty have expressed their frustration with the grievance process when seeking resolutions to problematic situations. A proposal is currently in the works which will create the Board of Mediators. The responsibilities of this new board is to help in dispute resolution which will aid in the grievance process.

To view the Mediation Handout click [here](#).

To view the Mediation Policy Process Procedures click [here](#).

Open Forum

The items brought up by faculty in the open forum include a letter read regarding the gay and lesbian issues, and the need for more recognition and visual support on campus. The item will be placed on the agenda for the next Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting. The issue of Course Evaluation on the web was discussed, and it was suggested that they be removed from an open website and placed on the Quad system. President Hall recommended that a proposal be drafted and sent through the appropriate channels and it will be considered. One last suggestion for energy conservation purposes is to simply turn off the lights in rooms not in current use.

The 2003 Faculty Forum adjourned at 4:36

The meeting was attended by 101 individuals.