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Faculty Affairs Committee Minutes (04-04-08)

Faculty Affairs Committee

Date: 04-04-08

Present: Stacey Parker Aronson, Timna Wyckoff

Absent: Bart Finzel, Tom Mahoney, Argie Manolis, Pam Solvie,

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m.

Pareena Lawrence, Social Science Division Chair: Job Classifications

As a follow-up to a previous meeting with the Director of Human Resources, the committee invited Social Science Division Chair Pareena Lawrence to discuss some of the issues surrounding the complexity of the job classifications. According to Lawrence, most division chairs detest the job classifications. She recognizes that resource issues is the root of the problem and that this is related to retirement benefits, which now begins in year one for faculty, in addition to issues related to job responsibilities. Her perception is that for the Twin Cities campus, this presented itself as an administrative nightmare for one-year positions. Interesting enough, however, she notes that from her conversations with Dept. Chairs at the TC campus they continue to hire full time visiting professors at the assistant levels; as the departments appear to have the funds to cover the retirement benefits, even for temporary faculty hires. However, given that UMM is experiencing a budget shortfall, it appears that this is one place where we can save on costs but it does impact the applicant pool and the final hire. She mentioned that the Division Chairs have discussed having an internal UMM official job classifications (i.e. visiting assistant or associate professor) for those faculty hires with the requisite degrees.

Wyckoff suggested that such job classifications should be present on the ads for recruitment.

Lawrence reminded us that there is also a salary threshold at which retirement benefits apply.

Wyckoff asked her if Social Science employs adjuncts or other faculty in other job categories for which different classifications would be useful.

Lawrence noted that these issues tend to arise more with new hires. For example, Management needs someone with expertise in business law or other skill-based classes. Her major concern is for full-time faculty called instructors which are needed for sabbatical replacements and temporary full-time hires (non-tenure track searches). She would like to remedy these first.

Wyckoff asked if she had other issues for the Faculty Affairs Committee.

Lawrence brought up the issue of workload. She wondered whether online classes taught during the regular semester should be counted as part of regular workload. Given that these classes are part of Continuing Education, they generally do not count as part of the regular course load. She also wondered if enrollments in some of these online classes are negatively effecting enrollment in regular UMM classes.

Request from Pieranna Garavaso regarding Recruitment Funds for Tenure Line Faculty Searches (see below)

Recruitment Funds for Tenure Line Faculty Searches

Humanities Division Advisory Committee

3/6/08

Currently, UMM has no policy for funding faculty to travel to national conferences and conventions to interview and recruit new tenure line faculty.

In the last ten years, Humanities faculty from the English, Foreign Languages, Philosophy, and Studio Art disciplines have traveled to conferences for the purpose of interviewing and recruiting new tenure line faculty. Up until very recently, faculty have been expected to pay for these trips using OST funds, which never quite covered the full cost of a trip. The difference was made up out of pocket. Search committees were told that since they were choosing to conduct conference interviews rather than telephone interviews, the university would not pay for travel for recruiting and interviewing. More recently, small amounts of money from the Dean's office have been made available for travel to conferences for recruiting. Unfortunately, this funding has still been inadequate, only partially reimbursing one member of a search committee. This insufficient funding is not even guaranteed; search committees must make a case for their request.

Why conference interviews are essential for many disciplines in the Humanities:

1. Telephone interviews have been found by many disciplines to be an unsatisfactory method for the evaluation and selection of candidates for on-campus interviews. Much is lost in a telephone interview: not only gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and other such interpersonal cues, but also a sense of how the candidate presents himself or herself. This has occasionally resulted in committees bringing to campus, at considerable cost, a candidate who might have been screened out in a face-to-face interview.

2. For numerous disciplines, interviewing at major conferences rather than telephone interviewing is the norm. Recently hired tenure-track faculty at UMM have noted that they were told as graduate students to be wary of accepting jobs

at institutions which conducted telephone rather than conference interviews, since the implication was that such programs were poorly-funded.

3. Timing is extremely important for national searches for tenure-line faculty.

Disciplines have found that it is impossible to conduct telephone searches prior to the end of the fall semester, and extremely risky to wait until after national conferences (a number of which are held at the end of December) to conduct them. Interviewing at conferences is thus key to being competitive with other institutions.

This last point ties in to our stated goals as an institution. According to UMM's Strategic Plan, we are to "develop a strong faculty community" and that we "intentionally attract diverse faculty and staff." Appropriate funding for recruitment is crucial to achieve these

goals. It is simply impossible to attract talented and diverse faculty if search committees are limited to conducting phone interviews. Some candidates may already suspect that we are a low-quality feeder institution with a regional focus; mimicking the recruitment practices of such institutions confirms this view of our image, in their minds. If we are to be a public honors college, funding to attract high-caliber faculty is absolutely essential.

We therefore request that national tenure line searches at UMM be funded such that search committee members be fully reimbursed for conducting interviews at national conferences. No faculty member should be expected to recruit faculty for UMM using funds earmarked for research and faculty development (OST funds) or personal funds. We are aware, however, that not all disciplines require this support. Thus we advocate creating a system that is equitable, need-based, and emphasizes accountability for the use of these funds. The recruitment of tenure line faculty is crucial university business and must be treated as such.

Wyckoff and Aronson endorsed the recommendation of the Humanities Division Advisory Committee but recommended that, due to budgetary constraints, a limit be placed on the number of search committee members funded. That is to say that all members of a search committee should not necessarily be funded to attend the conferences. We thought that common practice generally dictates that there be two search committee members funded.

Request from Steve Burks: Reinstatement of the Fall Faculty/Staff Picnic

The Economics and Management Disciplines request that the Administration restore the fall faculty and staff picnic. We strongly feel this event adds real value in terms of encouraging the civility and coherence of the faculty and staff community. If funds are an issue, we suggest that the Chancellor provide only drinks, and make the food potluck. Alternatively, we would even go so far as to request that the Dean's dessert be cancelled and the faculty and staff picnic be reinstated, if there is only enough funding for one. [status: passed; unanimous]

Wyckoff and Aronson endorsed a reinstatement of the annual Faculty/Staff Picnic but would also like to see the Deans' Dessert retained, due to the fact that these functions serve different purposes. The Faculty/Staff Picnic is more social, while the Dean's Dessert is both social and professional.

Spring 08 Elections

Aronson will contact division chairs with information regarding Faculty Affairs Committee elections. The positions for which there need to be elections are as follows:

- Social Science (2 years)
- Math & Science (2 years)
- 1 P&A staff (2 years)
- 1 non-tenure track faculty member position (1 year 08-09; 2 years 09-10)
- Humanities (for sabbatical replacement) (1 year)

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Stacey Parker Aronson

Chair, Faculty Affairs Committee