

Council on Academic Freedom, Faculty Quality and Faculty Welfare  
February 25, 2005 in 354 Tigert

Attendees:

Reza Abbaschian  
Doug Cenzer  
Michael Katovich  
Chris Snodgrass  
Gloria Sheffield (controllers Office)  
Larry Ellis (Human Resources)  
Corky Taylor (Bencor)  
Hugh Bishop (Bencor)  
Ed Poppell

Meeting commenced at 3:10

1. Although our council is concerned with faculty welfare issues we asked Ed Poppell and the group from Bencor to give us a presentation about a FICA alternative program for OPS (non-RFS employees). Over 140,000 people in the state are currently using this plan and it is proposed that this plan be implemented at UF, probably early this next fiscal year. It has already been “blessed” by the Faculty Staff and Benefits Committee. Basically part-time employees will put a minimum of 7.5% pretax dollars into the plan. This would be in lieu of the current 6.5% the employee and employer (UF) would be putting into social security. This way the employee would have the monies placed into a 401A-like plan, which is portable and can rollover into other plans (such as a 403). Approximately 25% of OPS employees at UF do not make enough money per year to even qualify for social security. Employees could put much more than the minimum 7.5%, and in fact, could put up to \$42,000/year into the fund. The fund can be fixed or have other investment options. The university would save approximately \$3 million, with another \$3 million savings through contracts and grants.  
There is an advantage for faculty with this program in that when one retires, all the vacation and sick leave (up to \$43,000) could go into this plan, saving the faculty and university FICA dollars.
2. The members of the council present discussed how we could shorten the name of our council (The Council on Academic Freedom, Faculty Quality and Faculty Welfare). After much debate, we arrived at ‘Faculty Welfare Council’.
3. The council was tasked by the senate steering committee to suggest a plan for compensation of the faculty senate chair instead of having each chair go through individual negotiations with the administration every year. The committee obtained one plan from the University of Louisville. There the senate chair and vice-chair are compensated with a salary increase. In 2000, that dollar amount was \$12,000/year for the chair. This money was used to “buy their way out of teaching” etc. Input from other universities has been sought, but as yet there are no

responses. The council suggested that the department receive an equivalent of 50% of the faculty members 9 month salary. This money could be used to cover the faculty members teaching, or be used to pay the salary for lab technical assistance for that faculty member who would have to re-allocate his/her effort in teaching and or research to perform duties as chair of the senate. A reduced percent could be calculated for the vice-chair commiserate with his/her efforts in this position. The senate office should also have staff and an annual budget (phone, copy, travel, etc) sufficient to accomplish its mission.

4. It was suggested that there be a follow-up by the senate that each college have their by-laws in place and on the web to demonstrate all are practicing the concept of faculty governance.
5. It was likewise suggested that there be in place a set of published guidelines, with follow-up on the evaluation of administrators (deans and chairs) by faculty.
6. One area that received much discussion was the rumor of changes in the distribution of overhead (IDC) monies and its use. This was considered a faculty welfare issue that should be addressed by our council. It was the strong opinion that targeting faculty IDC (either current accounts or future distributions) would have serious consequences on faculty productivity as well as moral. IDC monies are used by faculty to aid in their research programs. Examples for the use of such funds is to help pay graduate student stipends, provide bridge funding between grants, obtain preliminary data for subsequent grant submissions, etc. These funds are a small investment that has been successful in our faculty seeking additional grants support, which brings in even more IDC. If these funds were reduced, overall productivity would most likely be reflected in lower grant success and even less indirect money coming into the university. Likewise reduction in the IDC to departments and colleges could have similar effects. Some examples for IDC at the department and center levels are for the use of graduate student stipends, travel to scientific meetings, etc. At the college level examples for IDC cited were for start-up funds for new faculty, seed grants to faculty, etc. Thus IDC are all used to enhance the research efforts of the individual units, which results in eventual success of the faculty/units to generate even more IDC for the university as a whole. The council understands that we are in a budget "crisis" and the use of all sources of monies should be evaluated. The IDC to faculty is a very small portion of the total IDC to the university. It is indeed the successful faculty that brings in overhead money. It would not be prudent to target these individuals and penalize them for their success. Before any action is decided on IDC, we should determine how our peer universities use overhead monies and evaluate how any deviations from our current practices impact on the faculty/department and their research programs.
7. Potential Summer teaching budget decrease and impact on tenure-track faculty was brought up and will be discussed at the next meeting of our council.

Meeting adjourned at 5 pm