

Levin College of Law (report 11/02/05)

The Levin College of Law has as its mission ``educating professionals, advancing legal scholarship, serving the public and fostering justice''.

The college has around 86 regular faculty members, a significant number of adjunct faculty, and around 1200 J.D. students. It has 12 centers and a number of clinics. There is a tension between the desire to have the college recognized for its excellent scholarship and the need to prepare practicing lawyers.

The culture of the college reflects the fact that the faculty includes many lawyers. Particular care is paid to rules, and there is healthy debate about issues in the college. The faculty is very involved in the governance of the college and spends significant time doing it - process and written documents are important.

Notable practices:

1. The faculty makes policy, published in the Faculty Policy Manual, and the administration puts the policy into practice. Policy written into the manual is followed; other recommendations by committees may fall by the wayside as committees turn over each year.

2. Faculty meetings are held monthly for an hour, and attendance is strongly encouraged. Non-tenure track faculty have been brought into the process.

3. There is a once a year retreat/strategic planning meeting.

4. Faculty committees play important roles in the life of the college.

An annual signup sheet solicits preference for committee service, with 1/4 - 1/3 returning the sheets. The Associate Dean for

Academic

Affairs, in consultation with the Dean, nominates individuals for these committees, and the slates are voted on by the faculty in

March.

There is no nominating committee, no executive or faculty advisor committee.

5. Important committees for an academic year are in place the prior spring;

continuous service limited to 2 consecutive terms. Sometimes initiatives developed by a committee one year are abandoned the next because of turnover.

6. The dean has veto power in initial appointments, but prior to using

this power, the dean must consult with the Appointments Committee. If the veto power is used, the dean must explain to the faculty in writing why he elects not to forward the faculty's recommendation.

7. Term of dean specified as at most 5 years, renewal for up to 5

more after positive review by a special committee of 5 faculty members elected by the faculty as a whole (election triggered by T&P comm.)

None have been evaluated recently, since none have lasted that long.

8. Selection of representatives to the Faculty Senate: start with self-nominations, construct a ballot, take nominations from the floor,

and elect by secret ballot as with appointments and tenure.

Vignette: Faculty member alerts Dean of interesting issue; Dean brings it to a faculty meeting, suggests that faculty committee study it, and nominates a workable committee; the faculty then votes on it a faculty meeting.

Vignette: A faculty committee spends a year examining programs/centers, makes some recommendations with difficulty, and, having learned a lot in the process, eventually, the faculty votes to have the administration conduct the evaluations.

The Dean's Office includes associate deans for the following functions:
(1) academic affairs; (2) administrative affairs; (3) faculty development;
(4) students, professionalism & community relations; (5) library and technology; (6) international programs.
The page also lists assistant deans for admissions and for career service, and lists the director of summer programs.

The college offers a number of different degree programs, but does not have departments in the usual sense. This practice and the fact that the administrative structure is quite flat is a mainstream model for law schools.

Governance documents:

The college intranet is said to have the following documents:

UF Law Faculty Policy Manual updated yearly (The 6/16/04 version is posted on Faculty Senate site)

Faculty committee assignments:

Teaching related information/policies: student face books, course schedules, exam schedules, syllabus policy, policy on religious holidays,

Other policies: travel guidelines, conflict of interest policy, outside activities forms

Associate Dean of Academic Affairs George Dawson is uploading past minutes of faculty meetings

Committee Structure:

Rotation of committee membership:

As a general rule, no person shall serve more than 2 consecutive years as a member of

(1) Appointments Committee

(2) Curriculum Committee

(3) Non-Tenure Track Legal Skills Faculty Appointments and

Retention

Committee

(4) Promotion and Tenure Committee

Appointments committee

The Appointments Committee drafts the hiring policy for full faculty

approval before interviewing potential faculty candidates. It works with dean to identify personnel needs, establish priorities of needs, locate prospective faculty members, evaluate candidates, and make a written recommendation to the faculty for a vote. The committee is elected and the chair of the committee is elected by the voting members of the committee. Tenure with an original appointment can be granted only on a vote of the tenured faculty. If 2/3 of faculty vote to extend an invitation to a candidate, the committee will do so.

Curriculum Committee

Promotion and Tenure File Committee:

appointments should occur in the spring of each year
dean refers names of those eligible by reason of time in service
2 colleagues each make classroom visits for a total least 2 hours

Faculty Support Committee

Mentoring of junior faculty is done by committees with no evaluative function.

Non-Tenure Track Legal Skills Faculty Appointments and Retention Committee

Academic Standards Committee: faculty oversee grade rules, etc.

Admissions Committee: faculty choose the actual candidates for admission.

Financial Aid Committee: faculty make scholarship decisions.

Facilities Committee: faculty oversight of the building and how the physical facilities are utilized

Faculty Development Committee: faculty write policies on faculty issues

such as sabbaticals and merit pay.

Teaching Committee: faculty evaluate teaching and make policies dealing with teaching.

Jean A. Larson, November 2, 2005