

Jeffrey's Meeting Notes

Action Items

- [] Complete faculty elections and email results to George
- [] Provide feedback on the coming video update on the state of shared governance for the Board of Trustees report.
- [] Encourage adjunct faculty to communicate their concerns around workload and equity to Fraser Smith, Shaheen Gorgani, or Jeff.

Outline

Updating Faculty Manual Language

- Rosemary Millar provided two options for updated language that includes adjunct faculty.
 - Eric Nottke suggests removing the distinction of “full-time” from the eligibility criteria, leaving “adjunct faculty who have accumulated 3+ years of service.”
 - Discussion followed regarding whether this would need to be consecutive, and the Council agrees that as written it would not. This wording is more inclusive and can reach a broader range of adjunct faculty.
 - The motion was thus amended, seconded by Dmitri Vorobiev, and approved without opposition.
 - The group agrees on the idea of using simpler language for the manual, emphasizing practicality over semantics. The simpler language can be matched in other sections, gradually improving access and readability.
- Jeff George proposes updates to the language for the Grievance Committee.
 - There is a discrepancy in the Manual regarding the term of service – it would be updated to say 3 years in both places.
 - The hearing procedures developed this year would be included in the manual, so that future committees will not have to reinvent the wheel.

- There is a suggestion to change the requirements for eligibility so that anyone who has previously served as an associate dean or dean could not serve in this role.
 - Robust discussion follows. For background, the Grievance Committee is empowered under UNC System Policy, and serves as the final forum for disputes between employees and supervisors that have not been resolved in multiple prior stages of the grievance process. It is a “catch-all” for disputes that do not fall under non-renewal of contracts (Reappointment Advisory Committee) or termination (Reconsideration Committee).
 - Multiple members debate whether this change would or would not help to eliminate biases for the administration in the hearing process.
 - Multiple members discuss the spirit of the policy and therefore the purpose and impact of this change. There is general agreement that it provides some balance to the power of the administration to determine the terms of contracts, which is generally their purview in both the UNC System and the State of North Carolina.
 - The Council also generally agrees that assistant deans are considered faculty, act on behalf of faculty, and should not be prevented from serving in this role.
 - Joe Lopina points out that the language should be clear as to whether current and/or former assistant deans can serve.
- The proposed changes are tabled until the next meeting. They will be revised and sent to the Council for further consideration between meetings.

Discussion on Adjunct Faculty Contracts

- George and others discuss the distinction between temporary part-time and full-time adjuncts, emphasizing the need to clearly define "full-time adjunct faculty" in the manual.

- Rosemary Millar mentions that some part-time faculty have been present for years, and some adjunct faculty receive specific benefits.
- George reports that the concerns most often raised by adjunct faculty are equity of workload and compensation, and suggests that Council could advocate for more clearly-defined policies in these areas.
- George asks all Council reps to encourage adjunct faculty in their school to speak to Frazier Smith and Shaheen Gorgani, who represent adjunct faculty, or contact George directly.

Potential Future Faculty Manual Updates for Faculty Council

- George proposes several questions for Council to consider next school year:
 - Should there be term limits on FC & standing committee reps?
 - Should we create a position of Past Chair?
 - Should we establish formal succession of Vice Chair to Chair?
 - Is one year the right term length for FC officers?
 - Should there be more than 3 officers?
 - What items go to EPC? Why do they approve the calendar, but not Minimum Class Enrollment Policy (for example)? (This may need attention this summer, along with development of training for new EPC reps.)

Report on Faculty Chairs' meeting with UNC System President Hans

- George shares key points from a meeting with President Hans on April 3rd, highlighting the importance of the report of the Faculty Assembly task force "Making the Case for Liberal Arts Education," on which we are represented by Elizabeth Klaimon.
- President Hans seems to indicate a tightening of the university system budget is likely, and indicates the need to examine administrative bloat.
- President Hans emphasizes the importance of maintaining public support for higher education by correcting misunderstandings about access, affordability, and value of college education.
 - The impending "demographic cliff" due to declining numbers of high school graduates will affect funding at all UNC System institutions. This is exacerbated by rising rates of HS grads entering the job force instead of seeking

- Strategies also include improving transfer pathways, offering qualified HS seniors direct admission to the UNC System without application, and reaching a larger percentage of the adult learning community.
- President Hans spoke to the need to sustain attention to important matters in the face of a chaotic environment,
- Faculty Chairs asked direct questions about the emphasis of the System/Board of Governors on studying Return on Investment, as well as the importance of preserving academic freedom.
 - The concept of “bending but not breaking” is not landing well, nor are “it could be worse” or “we’re doing this to stay ahead of [insert external pressure]. These may be the lesser of two evils, but worse is worse, and it feels like death by 1000 papercuts.
- President Hans pledged to improve communication from the System Office regarding implementation of changing DEI policies, including the waiver process, with the goal of creating more cohesion across the 17 campuses.
- President Hans indicated he is working to communicate the significant negative impact that removing or gutting tenure protections would have. This refers to the pending update of Chapter VI of the UNC System Policies, which has been delayed several times.
- Important items referenced in this meeting (all attached to this email):
 - March 20 memo from system office regarding tuition increases
 - REACH Act
 - DEI in Higher Education Act

International Student and Faculty Concerns

- George raises concerns about the lack of warning issued to other UNC System campuses when immigration law enforcement actions have been taken on their campuses, citing NC State as an example. The reality seen in these cases seems to contradict the information sent to our campus by Campus Police.
- The group discusses the potential impact of visa issues on international students and the need for clear policies.

- The importance of supporting international students and ensuring they can complete their degrees is emphasized.

Enrollment Minimums and Course Reporting

- George explains the rationale behind the enrollment minimums policy and the potential impact of the second phase of the System's Return on Investment (ROI) study.
 - Our funding would be drastically lower if we were held to the credit hour generation model used by the other 16 institutions instead of the full time enrollment (FTE) model – thus, we already have an exemption from the system to preserve our funding.
 - Our credit hour generation data WILL be reported by program, but it will be easy to determine which specific teachers have particularly low numbers. Programs and teachers could be targeted for funding cuts by the system as a result.
 - Our policy was developed with a robust set of data that will help the Provost and Chancellor defend the minimums they have chosen in the face of this unflattering data.
 - The timing of this policy was driven by the need to be prepared for when the data goes public.
 - Part of the phased implementation next year will be accounting for co-listed courses (offered at both grad and undergrad levels), which will reduce the number of courses that fail to meet the minimums.
 - The policy includes safeguards:
 - Specific exemptions for certain types of courses
 - An additional 5% exemption per school.
 - A warning system to flag courses that fail to meet the minimum early, allowing schools to make adjustments before those courses would be considered for cancellation.
 - Explicit designation of the dean as the decision-maker regarding changes made as a result of the policy.
- The group discusses the challenges of meeting the minimums and the broader implications for faculty workload and institutional funding.

- The importance of ensuring the accuracy course listings (including capacity, assigned space, and credit hours) and the need for adjustments to the schedule and curriculum are highlighted.
- The group considers the broader implications of enrollment minimums on faculty workload and institutional funding.

Final Remarks and Future Plans

- George will provide an update on the state of shared governance to the Council by video, to the Board of Trustees in May, and then to the full faculty as usual.
- George reiterated the need for the faculty to sustain attention to the things we can change, and to take advantage of the opportunities available to implement schedule, curriculum, and enrollment changes that improve sustainability and provide better equity of workload and compensation. There WILL be work involved, but we cannot afford to let the chance for improvement slip through our fingers – and we are in the best position to craft changes that work.
- The importance of clarifying and recording administrative policies and the need for better communication and support are reiterated.

Attached to this email: