

Dean's Council Minutes

2/15/17

1. Dean's Council will begin at 12 noon on 2/22/17, to allow for additional time to work on faculty regulations.
2. Brief discussion re. the need to clarify the staffing and procedures in the Office of Academic Services re. student accommodations for exams. Dean Taylor said he would follow up with Judy to find out the hours and procedures.
3. Dean Taylor reported the new University policy regarding faculty and staff retirements is that there will now be one end-of-the-semester party/acknowledgement for all retiring individuals, rather than individual celebrations. Departments will not be allowed to use discretionary funds to host parties for individual retiring members. Departments may host "pot-luck" celebrations for members of their departments. Concern was expressed about perceived disrespect to retiring community members, and the problem of inviting alumni/ae to such informal events in a way that makes donations less likely. In response to a question from the Council as to whether this policy was open for discussion, Dean Taylor replied that the issue was discussed extensively at Cabinet, and it was his sense that this policy would not be revisited at this time.
4. Deb Liebowitz joined the meeting at 1:30 to discuss the Media and Communications major and minor proposal that will come to the faculty in March. In response to questions, she discussed the rationale for the make-up of the minor, the change of the existing Film, Media and Communication minor to a Film Studies minor in addition to the Media and Communications minor. She indicated that:
 - a. The entire faculty was solicited in a number of ways to indicate their interest and inclusion in the discussion about the Media and Communications major which included the discussion of the Film Studies minor. Deb encouraged people to send additional courses for inclusion in the major or either minor.
 - b. Regarding the number and scope of required courses, Deb responded that versions of those courses do exist, and that they are revised/re-titled courses. In the design of the new major, there was attention both to the important core content courses, as well as a way to create a cohort of students who move through the major together.
 - c. There will be upcoming 300 level topic courses that will be options for the major that will be broader than that, and that the number of credits and 300 level courses are on par with other majors.
 - d. As we are interviewing for the tenure track person to supervise the major, and that next year it is likely that there will be a new hire that will supervise the practice courses in the major. It was asked if this means that the major cannot exist without this second person; Deb agreed that was the case.
 - e. We are actively working with faculty in a number of areas to bring in additional cross-listed courses and how best to do that. Regarding the need to hire a second person to do practice, Deb said that a solid person cannot be built on one person alone, and that many of the practice courses already in the major (e.g., Art) are already maxed out. In

addition, the likelihood of an immediate capacity problem in our practice courses is high.

- f. This major is a potential game changer in bringing in a host of new students for this program, in addition to meeting the needs of current students. The specific focus in the broader area of practice will need to be determined, in part depending on who is hired this year.
 - g. Regarding the visual arts lab, we are working on where that will be, and to find out what existing needs are in addition to what the new needs will be, to consider how to organize it. The University is committing funds to get this done. With respect to the connection to the digital humanities program/Mellon, there are a number of issues with that, and that there is a challenge balancing teaching space with student lab space. There is a discussion of how to divide up and share space to remedy this problem, which would likely be in the library. This would likely come on-line in Fall 2018.
 - h. The new line will be in Communications, rather than split between Communications and a host department, although they would likely be co-located in a department. Members raised the issue about supervision, feedback for promotion, etc – governance issues that are critical for any new person, and would like to hear more about how that is structured. Deb said there is a plan for how it starts, acknowledging the existing inconsistencies across current programs and departments. Deb agreed that there needs to be clarity about the new hire’s host department and what is involved. She said she can write up a description of how interdisciplinary programs are run, and how it will work for this new program. There will be a program committee, like there have been for other interdisciplinary hires, that is involved in supervision and promotion decisions. Deb left the meeting at 2:07.
5. Program chairs have raised a workload issue; for example, supervising adjuncts, overseeing space and budgets, assessment, etc., but that there isn’t necessarily compensation or release for that work. Program chairs are not necessarily compensated for running programs in the way that department chairs are.
 6. The Council next discussed a recent draft of the absence policy; members of the committee raised the concern that faculty didn’t have options within this for their own policies. Dean Taylor suggested that we could say that we as a faculty agree that there are things that constitute legitimate absences, but that doesn’t necessarily mean there is no consequence for missing the class. For example, they may not “lose points,” but there may be missed material that impacts course performance or the final grade. Students would ultimately be responsible for mitigating, if possible, the impact of missed work. Language need to be clear in ADA section that if a professor cannot accommodate the requested accommodation without compromising the integrity of the course, the student may not be able to take course. The Council agreed that there are a number of key issues to address in revision: there are legitimate reasons why a student may miss class; no matter how legitimate a reason is, it is possible a student may miss work that cannot be made up and would impact their grade, and students need to be realistic about the effect of absences on their course performance and grade; while there may not be a “deduction,” missing material can affect their grade in some other way; faculty will work with

students to find ways to minimize the impact of their absence, but ultimately it's the student's responsibility; ADA issues allow for reasonable accommodations that do not compromise the integrity of the course; staying away from articulating the number of absences that are permitted; reworking the language around absences (excused? scheduled/anticipated?).

7. Maria Masucci joined the meeting at 2:45 PM to discuss the COF guidelines on promotion for NTT (non-tenure track) faculty. Dean Taylor noted there are both ethical and legal reasons to get these guidelines established. Maria said she hopes that the faculty see it in the light of how COF approached it – that this was about having clear expectations and standards of process in supporting all faculty. She said that there has been some uneven application of responsibilities across departments in expectations of NTT faculty. The main pieces of this proposal are: a set of titles that reflect how we value the individuals in these positions; position clarifications (# courses, 1-2 year appointments); offering a clear path to promotion, which is not tenure. It was asked, as an example, if someone can count her prior teaching before Drew as teaching credit, to adjust the timeline, as we do for TT (tenure-track) positions. Dean Taylor said that would need to be negotiated at the time of hiring, and that there should be language that indicates teaching credit at the time of hire can be negotiated. The question was raised if this would be applied retroactively for current faculty, or whether they would have to wait until their current contract was up for renewal to renegotiate their standing. Dean Taylor clarified that a first year associate professor and a 7th year associate professor are not paid the same, and there should be a ceiling for lower levels (associate professor should not make more than a full professor). Current NTT faculty would be able to renegotiate their current status. There was discussion about the need for equity across departments and positions, and for that to be clearly stated in the guidelines and in appointment letters, and how to change that for first year appointments vs. second or longer term appointments, how that might change depending on the their own professional interests and the needs of the departments, as well as that there should not be an expectation of service by NTT in their first year. Maria also clarified that everyone would do an annual report, which would look a bit different than the one that TT faculty currently do, and would give faculty the opportunity to describe what they were doing. The question was raised regarding timeline re. when annual reports would be due, department decisions would be made, etc., especially depending on whether people are here on one year or two year contracts, including the concern that the contracts too specific in some ways, and can contribute to the “two-tier” system. Dean Taylor responded that for people who are interested in being great teachers, but only in teaching, the NTT ongoing position is valuable. There was a discussion as to the next steps for this document; Dean Taylor indicated that after it was discussed by the CLA faculty, it would likely go to the COFs for the other schools, but ultimately it would need to go to the Cabinet and Board of Trustees for approval, given the financial and policy implications.

The meeting concluded at 3:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Cermele