

# Spring Faculty Meeting Notes

4/13/2017

**3:30-3:45 Informal conversation**

**3:45 Meeting called to order by Parliamentarian Steve Lahey**

**Item I. Call for Approval of minutes from the Fall Faculty Meeting on December 8, 2016** by Dean Francisco.

Motion to approve: Dan Hoyt (Sociology)

Seconded: June Griffin (English/Dean's Office)

No calls for changes. Minutes were unanimously approved.

**Item II. Opening Comments. Dean Francisco called for an overview of committee work for the year as recounted by a committee chair or (if chair is unavailable) a committee member.**

Executive Committee work was recounted by Dean Francisco who convenes this committee. The committee has been reviewing and strategizing about the building of partnerships. Partnerships from a traditional perspective usually means university/industry partnerships. In visits with alumni, Dean came to be aware of the need to take a broader perspective on the idea of partnerships. The College wanted to survey with a view toward how faculty across the many disciplines represented in the college understand the idea and potential of partnerships. The committee is in the process of developing a set of principles to foster/encourage around partnerships—to guide departments and faculty in pursuing them. Associate Dean Jockers reported that the response rate was roughly 70% with good representation across the many disciplines. The survey was developed, distributed and analyzed with the help of BOSR. The survey underscored the need for some guidelines. Once the guidelines are drafted, Dean Francisco suggested the guidelines would be forwarded to Chairs & Directors for discussion and feedback.

Promotion & Tenure Committee work was recounted by Assoc. Dean Beth Theiss-Morse. She directed those in attendance to the committee report included in the agenda. She thanked the committee for their work and talked about how hard and well the committee members work.

Committee on Student Academic Distinction, Awards and Appeals: Assoc. Dean June Griffin discussed the work of this committee and talked particularly about distinction. The committee noted that the number of students writing theses seems somewhat low for a college the size of Arts & Sciences. The Committee has worked with UNL's Writing Center to offer workshops on thesis development and writing. There are also some guidelines for working on theses that the committee hopes will help students and faculty work well together.

Curriculum & Advising Committee: Assoc. Dean June Griffin explained that the timeline for curriculum has shifted at the university level, so she has been working to get that message out to departments. The committee has also been working with the new Courseleaf system.

Assessment Committee: Assoc. Dean Pilson oversees this committee but was not able to be at the meeting. Dean Francisco characterized the assessment work that has been undertaken. He

also talked about program review and the need to work with units and programs across the college to understand (in a systematic way) their resource needs.

Research Advisory Committee: Assoc. Dean Jockers described the primary activity of this committee (reviewing award applications). In addition, that committee distilled all the survey data that was collected regarding partnerships.

Space Committee (ad hoc): Assoc. Dean Jockers also described an ad hoc committee which focused on assessing space needs across the college. Representatives from humanities, social sciences and sciences served by interviewing the college's all chairs and directors to gather information about space needs in the immediate, medium-term and longer-term. The resulting document would then be used to negotiate across campus for resources to address those needs. While Jockers expressed optimism, he acknowledged that some of the bigger needs/shifts won't happen until (likely) summer 2018. The Dean drew attention to the fact that the college's travel awards were able to move forward in spite of travel freeze because the College Dean's Office made a strong argument for the relationship between research-related travel and international visibility for research. The Dean also commended the College leadership (associate deans, chairs, directors, etc.) for keeping the college moving forward with strategic hires in the midst of a hiring freeze. With hiring comes additional pressures on space.

Endowed Professorship Committee: Assoc. Dean Theiss-Morse explained that the committee, this year, reviewed the nominations for named professorships and that the College used those deliberations in ranking and making recommendations to upper administration regarding nominees. She also asked department leaders to consider faculty members who would make good additions to this committee.

An additional announcement regarding College's Instructional Improvement Fund was made. The College made 5 awards and anticipates another round of calls for proposals in the upcoming year.

### **Item III. Opportunity for faculty ask questions arising from annual reports of the various college committees.**

Jeanette Jones (History): Asked whether the college had considered changing the due date for College theses as one way to raise the number of students who participate. Her sense is that students sometimes pull out because the theses are due early in the semester of graduation. Assoc. Dean Griffin explained that the due date has to do with the timing of graduation and the printing of diplomas. So the deadline will not be changed. However, the Honors Program has shifted their deadline to match the college deadline which might help honors students plan and increase the likelihood that honors students would submit their program thesis to the college for distinction consideration. While there is no plan to move the deadline earlier, a focus on publicizing the value of the thesis and encouraging students to start early may help.

### **Item IV. Recommendation from the College Curriculum & Advising Committee to approve the proposed changes to the Academic Programs and Policies, Course Restrictions in the college portion of the Undergraduate Bulletin.**

Assoc. Dean Griffin introduced this curriculum change proposal by explaining that there was a redundant rule (Bullet 4) which the committee recommends removing. The second issue

in this proposal is Bullet #1 which the committee believed goes to the college's core values in terms of what counts or doesn't count for academic credit in the college. The committee then did some research both in terms of the history of Bullet #1 on UNL's campus and also in terms of practices across the Big 10. In terms of the rule at UNL, the committee determined that the rule initially existed as part of the Classics & Religious Studies minor. According to Assoc. Dean Griffin, research across the Big 10 revealed that no other institutions in the Big 10 Academic Alliance allow credit for courses that advocate for a religious belief or particular faith (which appears in the curriculum proposal as part of the justification for this change).

Marco Abel (ENGL) moved to approve motion.

Matt Jockers (ENGL/Dean's Office) seconded the motion and it was open to discussion.

Bob Gorman (History) worried that the situation this proposal addresses is more complicated than it may appear. He offered the example of a student bringing a course taught in Latin from a seminary which a student could then use as a Latin course at UNL. Students studying classical latin have done that in the past, he explained. Because the course advocates a particular faith, the proposed policy would preclude that course from being used now.

Roland Vegso (English) argued that the proposed policy moves the burden to the student to make the case that such a course should count. He explained that as he understands the proposed policy, the course can transfer in the kind of case Gorman described. It is not automatically excluded but does require some additional paperwork.

Max Mueller (Classics and Religious Studies) raised a second concern about the policy—as worded—being too broad. He explained that it appears to him that any course offered at a religiously focused institution would be excluded and he wouldn't allow that. Assoc. Dean Griffin explained that it's not the case that the course would be excluded based solely on the institution that offers it. Rather, it would have to do with the focus of the course. Mueller raised a second concern about the ideology of secularism, itself. As a secular institution, he offered, the college is proposing a judgment that is, itself, ideological and not all that different from a religious institution. Priscilla Hayden-Roy (MODL) argued that the proposed wording of the policy seemed vague. Both "religion" and "faith" are very broad terms. Assoc. Dean Griffin explained that the current policy requires that the college already to be making some of these kinds of judgments. She argued that moving from restriction to exclusion might actually be helpful to students. Priscilla Hayden-Roy (MODL) asked for clarification that this policy applies only to courses that are being transferred to this college.

Motion was approved (both bullets) with one abstention.

#### **Item IV. Opportunity to ask questions of the Dean**

Dean Francisco asked how many faculty are reading "From the 12<sup>th</sup> Floor" (electronic newsletter). He explained that the goal of that newsletter is to communicate how the deans are working to move the college forward.

Dean wanted to focus on some positives (though he acknowledged that some of the news this spring—in terms of budget—has been negative). Two faculty from Institute for Ethnic Studies have been awarded Fulbright. He congratulated Joy Castro on her leadership of that unit. An Arts & Sciences undergraduate has also been awarded a Fulbright.

The Dean also congratulated the Department of History for winning the NU system-wide teaching award.

The Dean noted that the College had a significant number of faculty who were awarded named professorships. The Dean thanked department and program chairs for helping faculty to make strong cases and for their work in nominating outstanding faculty.

The Dean also called on Prof. Bob Gorman to announce 70 students were invited to be inducted into Phi Beta Kappa this spring.

The Dean also noted that the College's Future of the Humanities Symposium (March 2017) was garnering positive national attention.

Marco Abel (ENGL) announced the Humanities on the Edge speaker is beginning and invited others to attend.

Matthew Loar (Classics and Religious Studies) asked if the Humanities Symposium would be repeated or if there are some other planned future steps. The Dean said that the college would do something like this again, but not every year. One question he shared was whether, going forward, we could be even more strategic (and perhaps a bit narrower) in terms of goals for next steps. For example, how can we use the insights from this symposium to get us rethinking curriculum. Christina Brantner (MODL) offered that she enjoyed the symposium but that she was very interested in what happens as a result of the symposium. Dean agreed and described an article that appeared the *Daily Nebraskan* where the student-writer was hoping to see where faculty take the results of the forum. Dean wanted to encourage faculty to engage student in this. The Dean shared another story of a student who was moved by the event—he happened to be working in the auditorium while the symposium was going on.

**With no further questions or comments the meeting was adjourned at 5:05.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Debbie Minter