APPROVED 4/24/2014

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ACADEMIC SENATE
APRIL 17, 2014: 12:00-1:50 p.m.
CAMPUS CENTER/Bamboo Room 2610

Present: J. Beck; S. Boedo; J. Chiavaroli; P. Darragh; D. Defibaugh; W. Destler; T. Engström; H. Ghazle; S. Gold; J. Haefner; B. Hartpence; J. Hertzson; G. Hintz; S. Hoi; M. Laver; C. Licata; J. Lisuzzo; E. Lawley; J. Lodge; S. Maggelakis; K. Mousley; S.M. Ramkumar; M. Richmond; V. Serravallo; H. Shahmohamad; R. Stevens; C. Thoms; L. Villasmit Urdaneta; J. Voelkel; R. Vullo; J. Winebrake (alt. for F. Walker)

Members Absent: H. Boice-Pardee; S. Bower; J. Goldowitz; T. Jefferson; M. Kotlarchyk; R. Kushalnagar; K. McDonald; T. Policano; R. Raffaelle; C. Sheffield; B. Trager; L. Wild; H. Yamashita

Presenters/Guests: Eileen Bushnell, Kristen Waterstram-Rich

Interpreters: Cheryl Bovard, Wendi Gammen

Tech Crew: Nick Jones, Vincent Lin

Call to Order:
Communication Officer's Report: Minutes of 4/3/2014 were approved as amended.

Executive Committee Report

- Eileen Feeney Bushnell reported that all Executive Committee positions have been filled except for Communications Officer. This position requires taking notes during meetings and would be a better position for an experienced senator to fulfill this role. Executive Committee elections will be April 24 and nominees can still be nominated up to the time of the vote.

- The last Academic Senate meeting will be May 15 and lunch will be provided, farewells given to senators departing and new senators coming in have been invited. The senate will proceed as usual as there are agenda items to cover.

Revised Policy E7.0 (Annual Review and Development of Faculty)
Proposed E7.0 Document: https://ritdml.rit.edu/handle/1850/17250
E7.0 PPT Presentation: http://hdl.handle.net/1850/17261

K. Waterstram-Rich reviewed the entire revised policy and listed on the PPT were the recent edits made to Policy E7.0 as follows. (Please refer to the link above for details of the full PPT presentation):

- Section II.B now mentions that expectations may depend on faculty rank, classification and college. The change in wording helped clarify that all ranks may not include all areas of performance (i.e. lecturers do not have to have scholarship. (See PPT for details of wording).

- Section II C – Names of categories have been modified and now read: Outstanding, Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, Needs Improvement, and Unsatisfactory. Expectations will be reflected in the faculty member’s plan of work.

- Section II D – removed “professional misconduct” phrase; removed all guidance for each category with respect to the overall ranking of performance. Lists short definitions of each category that is listed in II mC.

- Section II E – Timeframe for the period of review shall be January 1 through December 31. The overall process must be completed by April 15 or the next business day. These dates are in the documents so that the review process is completed in time for the letters of salary notification in May, that take effect July 1.

- Section II F – Now reads “expectations within their college and academic unit” not “norms within their fields.”

- Section III c. – FEAD funds will now be available for lecturers with multiple-year contracts.

Discussion and Q&A ensued.

- G. Hintz: When did we go to the 5-tier categories of performance for evaluation as it is so confusing.

K. Waterstram-Rich: It has always been a set of 5 classes, not 3, since 1996.
Provost: Staff Evaluations have 5-tiers so to the extent that there is alignment with faculty and staff evaluations, we now have a better system with aligning the two.

G. Hintz: I worry that 5 classes will lead to very, very few faculty reaching the top tier of “Outstanding” and with someone winning the Nobel Prize, this may be seen as the only way to get an “Outstanding.” We are creating a carrot on a stick that would be so unattainable.

M. Laver: I wrestle with this issue as well but the basis for this process is the Plan of Work and how did the faculty member’s performance compare to his plan? Each person’s plan is different.

B. Barry: He did not agree with changing “Does Not Meet Expectations” to “Needs Improvement” as everyone needs improvement in some area.

L. Villasmil: A person who writes an ambitious plan will make it difficult to get “Exceeds Expectations.”

M. Richmond: The Plan of Work needs to be written with the Department Head so the negotiation of this is between two people. So it takes a real conspiracy to game the system.

S. Gold gave the example of someone publishing a paper and then actually publishes two papers, not one, which leads to “Exceeds Expectations”, correct? Yet if the faculty member is in a rank that typically publishes three papers per year, then by this measure the faculty member who wrote two papers does not meet expectations. So is the person judged relative to the Plan of Work or relative to his peers’ actual performance?

G. Hintz: I echo this sentiment and it is a given to do a good job and somehow we have diluted what we do every day with teaching.

T. Engstrom: I hope we avoid turning ourselves into quantitative accountants. We should allow the evaluation process to remain within the sound realms of judgment. The one inconsistency is that there is a great deal of difference across departments when it comes to percentages associated with the categories and, consequently, with salary levels. The question is whether we have checks and balances in a very decentralized system. Will this process be fair to everyone?

M. Laver: Doesn’t the Dean have to approve all these evaluations?

B. Hartpence: Yes, but different deans have different standards.

T. Engstrom: This is not a good picture of how to be equitable across the board.

S. Hoi: The details of the process is important. In our college the department heads work together to form evaluation metrics but Policy E7.0 does not address this possibility.

T. Engstrom: He gave the example of two chairs who evaluate differently and on the basis of having different values, which could create a serious structural problem, compounding over time significant differences.

K. Waterstram-Rich: So are you suggesting that Department Heads meet with each other and the Deans to figure out the distribution of funds or do the Department Heads need to establish metrics for each category?

S. Hoi: Yes, you have captured my idea.

S. Maggelakis: I send e-mails with the guidelines to my department chairs (i.e. Outstanding would be a 2.0-2.5 percent increase in pay, Exceeds would be 1.0-1.5 increase, etc.) so all department chairs would have some uniformity. Discussion takes place regarding raises to be given and recommendations are made.

K. Waterstram-Rich: Is the senate suggesting that this Policy include words to this effect or is what is here presently in policy okay and this just needs tweaking?

T. Engstrom: I would like to see an Institute level commitment to equity and oversight.

G. Hintz: Do we publish anywhere the statistics of faculty ranking and maybe this sort of transparency would help.

M. Laver: Is it possible to separate the remunerative aspect and the evaluation itself, and are they inextricably linked, and if so this may be a problem.

K. Waterstram-Rich: These are tightly linked.

B. Hartpence: He said he has seen changes in administration and there has been no similarity in the evaluation standards across RIT. He noted to keep in mind that RIT has been changing its standards over the past 10 years. He said he does not have any faith that this wording will be adhered to by the administrators.

K. Waterstram-Rich: If a faculty member has a grievance, then we will need a consistent policy. If there are no standards in the policy then it would be difficult to refute a grievance.

Provost: He reviewed some things happening and what is coming in the future:

- Salary and Compensation Studies have been made thanks to the Advance Grant team. HR has brought in Towers Watson to get this compensation framework started across the campus and looking at benchmark schools. Judy Bender has been asked to put together an action plan by May to communicate this information to the colleges and faculty.
The conversation at senate today has been the same conversation at Deans Council. These conversations are critical and the Provost suggested that this topic of how to use the evaluation process to decide merit allocation continue to be discussed among the Deans and then be brought back to senate in the Fall 2014 for discussion.

- **M. Laver:** Can we leave the policy as proposed and leave many of the items we have been discussing as a charge for FAC for next year? Academic Affairs now wants to review this.
- **T. Engstrom:** The Academic Senate gives charges to the FAC and perhaps the AS should charge FAC not to take action until after the Provost’s effort has taken place and is then brought back to senate.
- **Provost:** FAC could still proceed as we do need to know what the categories are for the Deans’ discussion.
- **B. Barry** moved to amend Section II C: Changing “Needs Improvement” to “Does Not Meet Expectations.”
  - The question was asked why this was changed to start with.
- **K. Waterstram-Rich:** It was considered too harsh to say “Does Not Meet Expectations.”

Motion to amend Section II C. in Policy E7.0 to now read “Does Not Meet Expectations” instead of “Needs Improvement” passes with 11 in favor, 3 opposed and 8 abstentions.

- **H. Shahmohamad:** Should we change 5 categories to 4 or to 3?
  - **M. Richmond:** No.
  - **T. Engstrom:** Yes.
  - **S. Gold:** To have 5 categories means there is a middle point and “Unsatisfactory” is very hard to meet.
  - **J. Voelkel:** An odd number of categories is good and said that a discussion of these categories is not so important as tenure is not based on this.
  - **S. Maggelakis:** Many universities are using 5 categories and HR here at RIT uses 5 categories to evaluate staff.
- **S. Gold:** Using the Plan of Work as a point of comparison could lead to many appeals. It is very hard for a department chair to guide the Plan of Work properly. It is better to include comparison to other faculty in the department or in the college, as well as comparison to the Plan of Work. The time and effort placed on a Plan of Work is so important.
  - **M. Laver:** A member of my college wanted to not have a Plan of Work and would that radically change the way things are done? What is the value of a Plan of Work?
  - **Provost:** Many policies are built upon the Plan of Work. Speaking as a faculty member, he said he would want to know how he would be evaluated and would need to see what the expectations are in regards to the Plan of Work. And from a supervisor’s point of view, the evaluation should be tied to the Plan of Work. This is as close to a contract as we have.
  - **T. Engstrom** commented that with regard to comparative fairness, the Plan of Work should be a part of the process, but not the only part of this process.
  - **M. Richmond:** With diverse faculty (having now more research in the midst of teaching) it is hard to compare faculty to each other and the Plan of Work allows supervisors to treat faculty individually (those who teach and those who do research).
  - **V. Serravallo:** The Plan of Work is not a contract but is a Plan.
  - **K. Waterstram-Rich:** Referred to lines 38 and 39 of the revised E7.0 and it does mention consistency with college expectations.
  - **B. Hartpence:** The policy also says criteria may vary among academic units and faculty members and comparing faculty with different responsibilities is very difficult.
  - **K. Waterstram-Rich:** The Plan of Work is mentioned and faculty would be evaluated on your responsibilities and not being compared to your peers.
- **H. Ghazle:** Can we devise a form which is distributed across all colleges or are we going to leave the evaluation up to individuals? Having a form would bring consistency in the process, and this would be fair to all.
- **K. Waterstram-Rich:** The Provost and the Deans are looking at the process, and this will be discussed in the fall.
  - **H. Ghazle:** If FAC works with the Deans on this it would be better.
- **Some senators agreed that it would be best to bring forth a policy now so the Deans could work with the document as a starting point.
- **J. Chiavaroli:** The stakes are so small here, since merit monies are so small. We will never have a nice, equal fair system for such a small amount of money.
T. Engstrom moved that we add the following sentence as the last sentence under II B, starting at line 41, as this is not currently in Policy E6.0:

“The Provost will oversee the consistent application of the performance criteria and the annual increment associated with the performance criteria.”

M. Richmond: Does the Academic Senate have the authority to do this?
M. Laver: We have the authority to make recommendations.
T. Engstrom: We are inviting the Provost to take on this responsibility.

Motion to add the wording to Policy E6.0 as proposed by T. Engstrom passes with 14 in favor, 3 opposed and 3 abstentions.

B. Hartpence: Faculty in my unit were surprised by what was stated, that faculty are not supposed to be evaluated against each other, yet in my unit faculty are compared to each other all the time. Is this isolated to my unit or is this generally the case across RIT?
Provost: There are no specific written guidelines on that topic, When I was a Dean at another college, I did use that as a general principle based on a rubric that was in a comparison mode. Yet there is some comparison in evaluations as colleges do use the average of the student ratings. This is a great topic for the Deans and Department Chairs as an emerging principle.
T. Engstrom: It would be good for the Deans to have this discussion with faculty within each college so that each college can address and discuss the issue. And to have this discussed at the governance level so that there is openness and transparency.

S. Gold: The date for completion of the review is April 15, so faculty must meet with department chairs before April 15. Most performance evaluations are based on two semesters and if one misses a semester that is a big loss. Department chairs may write evaluations during January intersession. Wouldn’t it be better to set the deadline closer to a semester boundary and suggest the review process be finished earlier, such as February 15.
M. Laver: What would the ramifications of moving this date to February 15 be?
S. Maggelakis: In COS we find April to be a good time for planning next year’s teaching and evaluation meeting. It works well for us. The faculty submits their Plan of Work, the department chair writes the evaluation and then the two meet to discuss this.

L. Villasniil: The planning schedule and the evaluation schedule is different (calendar year versus academic year).
T. Engstrom: The evaluation should be done in advance, so the Plan of Work can be made in response to it.
K. Waterstram-Rich: Possibly the date of April 15 should be moved. First the annual review takes place and then the Plan of Work is developed. This is the only way for the Plan of Work to address concerns raised in an annual review. The Plan of Work from the year before is brought into the annual review. It is addressed in the policy.
R. Vullo: This policy does not give the faculty person time to improve as the timeline gives faculty only Fall Semester to make changes in performance.
J. Winebrake: This is a pushback from HR and we need time to draw up the contracts, etc. Can we go to HR and see if the process can get moved to the summer? We need to have a discussion with HR.
S. Boedo: In our department there are 40 faculty and one department chair. We submit self-evaluations by January 6. The department chair has to read 40 evaluations and then writes 40 documents. This is very hard for a department chair to do this by April 15. And it would be very difficult if the date were moved earlier.
S. Maggelakis: The Plan of Work is tied to performance and is not a contract and it can be changed by mutual agreement.
S. Hoi: I do understand the time pressure department chairs would have. A reasonable expectation is that they come up with the evaluation earlier and it is important to think of the effect this has on a faculty member.
S. Boedo: The issue is not the department head being there during the Tiger Term (January Intersession). Usually faculty are writing their Self-evaluations during the holidays and during intersession to get it to the department heads by January.
T. Engstrom: Can this discussion be deferred until the Provost discusses it with the Deans and then returns to senate in the fall? We need administrative clarity before the senate makes the determination.
S. Gold: He suggested that at the end of the summer to hand in the annual evaluation from Fall/Spring. In September the chairs do the evaluation and them meet with their faculty to write up the Plan of Work for the next Academic Year.
Provost: That is a viable alternative. And then the merit distribution would be decided in January and awarded in July, one year later. Yet there would be a lag in merit distribution.

- M. Laver: Any new E7.0 policy changes would not go into affect until January 1, 2015, so we have time.
  Provost: We would like to see this policy approved this year.

K. Waterstram-Rich completed the review of changes under III C. Faculty Development regarding lecturers with multiple year contracts being eligible for FEAD funds.

- H. Ghazle: What is the difference between a “senior lecturer” and a “lecturer with a multiple year contract?”
  K. Waterstram-Rich: Some lecturers who are not senior lecturers can have a 2-year contract.
  T. Engstrom: Would these multi-year lecturers be able to serve on FEAD committees?
  K. Waterstram-Rich: This policy does not allow multiple year lecturers to serve on FEAD committees.

Motion to approve the revisions to E7.0 Annual Review and Development of Faculty as proposed by the Faculty Affairs Committee passes with 17 in favor, 1 opposed and 1 abstention.

Policy E10.0 will be coming to senate in the future this spring.

Adjournment: 1:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Richmond, Communications Officer
Vivian Gifford, AS Senior Staff Assistant