

## **Minutes for College of Science Faculty Council Meeting (12/11/2024)**

In attendance: Ross Buchan, Paul Goodman, Aneta Kielar, Bryan Black, Christopher Hamilton, Shankar Venkataramani, Xiquan Dong, Jessica Kapp, Jeffrey Pyun, Cynthia Anhalt, Tynan Lazarus, Florian Hafner

Not in attendance: Carlos Vargas, Alex Burant, Todd Proebsting, Scott Saleska, Haijian Cai, Sam Gralla, Heidi Hamann, Brenda Frye, Nicole Leitner

### **Quick recap**

The Faculty Council discussed the aims of various subcommittees, including the Workload & Transparency Committee, the DEI committee, the Salary & Compensation committee and Faculty Career Development committee. Items discussed included generating guidelines for course equivalency documentation within departments, making service commitments public within departments, and establishing an initial “mixer” and subsequent meeting series for departmental DEI committees. They also explored the feasibility of salary savings accounts and standardized pay scales, the need for more detailed salary data, and the importance of a structured mentoring system for faculty. Lastly, they acknowledged the need for better onboarding for new faculty, improved understanding of promotion and tenure mechanisms, and equal access to resources and support for both new and existing faculty.

### **Next steps**

- Workload & Transparency Committee to work on guidelines for departmental course equivalency recommendations
- Salary & Compensation Committee to explore the feasibility of salary savings accounts and standardized pay scales. Dean Garizone also looking into the former.
- Faculty Career Development Committee to create a comprehensive onboarding guide/checklist for new faculty.
- Faculty Career Development Committee to work on ideas for improving transparency and guidance on promotion and tenure mechanisms.
- DEI committee to re-engage with the University DEI office and report back to the Faculty Council in the New Year on their potential to serve
- College administration to provide more detailed breakdown of faculty salary data by department.
- Faculty Career Development Committee to investigate current mentoring practices across departments and recommend improvements.

---

### **Summary**

## **Opening Announcements**

Minutes from last meeting approved (Tynan, Aneta)

Jessica Kapp joins the FC as the Geosciences Departmental representative following her election

Work on the Faculty Workload Guidelines is now complete – thanks to the Workload & Transparency committee (particularly Tynan) and FC members for their input, and Brad Story for integrating FC feedback well into the final document.

Spring schedule FC meetings to be finalized once all schedule details of FC members sent to Susan Bridgewater

## **Workload & Transparency Committee Discussion**

Course equivalency guidelines: The first aim is to develop guidelines for departments to recommend course equivalencies based on factors like course size, modality, and instructor experience with the course (1<sup>st</sup> time, new course/redevelopment etc). The goal is to improve equity and transparency in teaching distribution. Christopher raised a concern about the applicability of these guidelines to non-traditional online courses. The FC acknowledged this issue and suggested starting with the most commonly taught classes.

Transparency on service: The FC discussed the need for increased transparency regarding service commitments within the department and the university. They agreed that there is value in reporting service commitments to improve transparency within departments, and to provide context to help younger faculty understand expectations at different promotion steps. However, they also agreed that quantifying service as relates to effort is likely an impossible task, and are wary of the potential for reporting it to be burdensome; relatively pain-free ways of reporting/posting such data will be explored as annual performance reviews no longer collect such data (now only in CVs). The idea of having a peer mentoring review committee to compare notes and share accomplishments to guide younger faculty was suggested. The FC also discussed the possibility of sharing 3-year reviews and tenure/promotion packets within departments to provide perspective on what faculty should aim to achieve. The consensus was that transparency is valuable, but it should not lead to unproductive comparison or competition.

## **DEI Committee Discussion**

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee plans to engage departmental DEI departmental committees across the college. They propose conducting a Qualtrics survey to identify new pressing departmental DEI issues. Hosting a COS mixer event in Spring 2025 for departmental DEI representatives to share ideas and establish better communication is also proposed, which hopefully will lead to a recurring meeting series and symposium event by Fall 2025. Ross informed the FC that discretionary funding to support the initial mixer event has been verbally agreed to by the Dean. The FC DEI committee will also continue to advocate for strengthening diversity hiring programs (e.g.,

SPFI), and for a COS DEI specialist to support departments on DEI issues, training etc. There are concerns about the university's central DEI office being ineffective or hostile in the past to departmental DEI requests. The FC DEI committee also plans to engage with the Office of Native American Advancement and potentially invite them and the university DEI committee to future meetings, the mixer etc.

### **Salary and Compensation Committee Discussion**

Nicole Leitner and Bryan Black have agreed to serve as co-chairs.

Salary Savings Accounts: The meeting focused on exploring the feasibility of salary savings accounts and standardized pay scales. The idea of salary savings accounts, utilized at other institutions, involves shifting a certain amount of base salary onto grants (accompanied by FTE adjustments); a portion or all of these funds can then be used by faculty for discretionary purposes (supplementary salary, research spending etc.). However, the feasibility of this mechanism within the COS remains to be determined (Dean Garizone and the committee will investigate further).

Payscale/Salary data: The discussion also touched on the potential of exploring standardized pay scales (similar to the UC system), which could provide more transparency and clarity in salary expectations. However, concerns were raised about the potential impact on salaries, with Christopher emphasizing the need for a long-term plan to balance salaries with peer institutions. The Dean's 4-year salary adjustment plan was discussed, with the 4th year now approved following a delay due to the financial crisis at UA. Ross has made a request to COS admin for more detailed faculty salary data, broken down by department and rank. COS-aggregated salary data presented by Dean Garizone at the previous FC meeting will be shared shortly.

Instructor personal expenses: A final point of significant concern was teaching faculty (particularly CT) paying for instructional materials (e.g., supplies for in-class activities, software licenses etc) out of their own personal funds; this was reported by Nicole to Ross. Ways to advocate/implement small discretionary funding for such items will be explored.

### **Faculty Career Development Committee discussion**

This committee has collectively agreed to serve as co-chairs (Brenda, Flo, Shankar, Aneta)

Faculty onboarding: The FC discussed the need for better onboarding for new faculty, including a more comprehensive orientation and a checklist of expectations to be shared with new faculty across departments. Ross has asked COS admin about attendance at onboarding workshops and visibility of existing COS materials, which the Faculty Career Development Committee will review. Anecdotally, not all faculty appear aware of existing resources after arrival at UA. Lastly, the committee discussed the need for equal access to resources and support for both new and existing faculty, particularly including teaching resources (e.g., software guidance, training, instructional best practices).

Promotion and tenure: There was also a discussion about improving understanding of promotion and tenure mechanisms. The committee discussed the need for a more structured mentoring system for

faculty, particularly in relation to promotion and tenure. They acknowledged that the current mentoring and review system is variable and often ineffective, leading to wasted departmental resources and potential loss of valuable faculty members. The committee agreed that a more formalized system, possibly involving multiple mentors, could be beneficial. They also discussed the importance of providing clear feedback and guidance to junior faculty members to help them succeed in their careers. The committee decided to explore existing mentoring practices across different departments and colleges, and to consider implementing a more standardized approach.