

## Faculty Welfare Committee

Minutes of Meeting on Monday October 14, 1:30 p.m. -2:40 p.m. in Science Center 207

Members Present: Emily Grundstad-Hall, Mirari Elcoro (Chair), Brenda Logan, Linda Tuck, Gracia Roldan, Caroline Hopkinson (Sec).

Absent: Richard Wallace, Jane Blackwell.

Guests: John Kraft, David Wheeler

The agenda for this meeting included three items: (1) discussion of AFE addendum, (2) finalizing the Domestic Partners Benefits Bill (draft 4) to be presented at the next Senate meeting (Oct., 21, 2013) and (3) discussion on the proposal for committee consolidation.

### 1. AFE Addendum:

- a. Dr. Kraft provided a background on the proposal for amending the Annual Faculty Evaluation (AFE) form. Basically the idea is to include a checklist in this form (Appendix 1, shows the proposed form, pp. 3-4) as the one below:
- b.

**IF ON TENURE TRACK** please indicate progress below. For categories other than "Satisfactory," **please address areas**

**where improvement is needed, including a plan for correction** on a separate sheet.

Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Improvement	Unsatisfactory
_____	_____ w/Recommendations	_____ Needed	_____

"The motivation for prompting these categorical responses was to better inform faculty on tenure-track through clear communication from the dept head and dean. In most cases, administrator narratives are sufficient to properly inform faculty, but every once in a while we run into cases where administrators claim that proper notice was given in AFEs, but the faculty didn't see it that way. In cases that lead to separation from the university everyone is unhappy -- especially the faculty member. In part, I think the discrepancies are due to administrators trying to be supportive and encouraging of those who are not performing well enough and faculty see those comments as evidence of satisfactory progress.

The categorical responses are an attempt to communicate progress more clearly" (Dr. Kraft's email communication, Sept. 24, 2013)

- c. This was presented at the Academic Affairs Council and now it has been charged from the Faculty Senate to Faculty Welfare
- d. Dr. Wheeler expressed his position on this addendum and highlighted that the proposed change is more along a change in policy. He raised the following concerns such as the fact that progress toward tenure is a cumulative process, thus it cannot be placed in the AFE, which contains an annual evaluation. Also, the progress toward tenure is not solely evaluated by the Chair (who would be required to fill this checklist), but by a group of people. Alternatives to the checklist could be to make the narrative that accompanies the AFE clear and include a reflection about progress toward tenure. Also, to improve the clarity of this narrative, training in this particular aspect of the narrative could be offered to department heads

- e. Other members of the committee brought up concerns and questions from their departments. An additional concern was that the checklist could be used as a “shortcut” that may compromise the evaluation process. Also, some raised the issue that the categories may not be quite clear (e.g., what is the difference between categories? In the discussion it felt like sometimes the categories were not mutually exclusive). Dr. Kraft replied that the categories are meant to be a continuum. The possibility of revising the categories was brought up.
- f. The committee agrees with the motivation for improving clarity and protecting faculty members and the university as a whole, and also to improve communication between faculty and administrators, but maybe the checklist may not be a solution for this due to the concerns (cons) listed above. There are pros and cons for making this change.
- g. Dr. Kraft encouraged the committee/the Senate to suggest other modifications that would more effectively accomplish the goal, which is to make faculty members as clear as possible about their progress toward tenure.
- h. Dr. Kraft, Dr. Wheeler, and Dr. Roldan left the meeting after the discussion of this first item was concluded.

## **2. Domestic Partners Bill**

- a. The fourth draft of the bill was shared with the committee. The Chair updated the committee on the meeting with the Director of Human Resources (HR), Rebecca Carroll on October 3, 2013 at 11:30 a.m. about the current situation of Domestic Partners Benefits in the USG. In this meeting the Chair learned that as of January 1, 2014 all universities and colleges of the USG will extend voluntary benefits to domestic partners. The bill was adjusted to include this. Also, HR supports the bill and is seeking collaborations in this and other matters with Faculty Welfare Committee. The committee will continue to communicate and collaborate with HR and will seek contact with the Office of Advancement and the Staff Advisory Council to further discuss the possibility of extending health benefits to domestic partners. The idea is to pursue extending health benefits to domestic partners without the use of State funds.
- b. The bill was slightly edited (Appendix 2, Draft V, p. 5) and the committee agreed to present it during the next Faculty Senate meeting (Oct. 21, 2014)

## **3. Committee Consolidation Proposal**

- a. The time to discuss this item was considerably shorter than what was dedicated to the previous two items, so it will continue to be discussed during our next meeting
- b. In general, the committee agrees with the proposal, but still would like to have more clarity about the responsibilities of each committee, in particular the Faculty Welfare Committee
- c. Prior to this meeting there were a few electronic communications between the Chair of this committee and the President of the Senate with specific questions about this proposal. The answers to these questions were discussed in the meeting (see Appendix 3 for email communications and questions from the committee, p. 6)

We discussed meeting again in early November at a date to be determined and adjourned at about 2:30 p.m.

Appendix 1. Proposed AFE form.

## Armstrong Atlantic State University Annual Faculty Evaluation

<b>Faculty Member's Name:</b>	_____	
<b>Faculty Member's Rank:</b>	_____	<b>Years at Rank as of December:</b> _____
<b>Department:</b>	_____	
<b>Evaluation Period from:</b>	_____	<b>to:</b> _____
<b>IF ON TENURE TRACK:</b>	<b>Years on track as of December:</b>	<b>Probationary credits toward tenure:</b>

<p><b>To the Faculty Member:</b></p> <p>This evaluation will be filed in your official record and you will be given a copy. You may provide a written response to be filed with this evaluation. You have access to your official records upon request. <b>NOTE: An updated copy of your CV must be attached to this document each year.</b></p> <p>I acknowledge that I am aware of the contents of this evaluation.</p> <p>Faculty Signature: _____ Date: _____</p>
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**To the Department Head:**

Please attach to this form your evaluation of the professor whose name appears on the front of the form. This evaluation should be based on the information contained in the attached APAR, must be in narrative form, and should cover teaching performance, scholarship, and service. If the performance is rated either "outstanding" or "unsatisfactory," this narrative should clearly indicate such. **Please address areas where improvement is needed, including a plan for correction.**

In evaluating teaching performance, the department head should address whatever categories of teaching performance are appropriate to the professor's discipline.

**IF ON TENURE TRACK** please indicate progress below. For categories other than "Satisfactory," **please address areas where improvement is needed, including a plan for correction** on a separate sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory w/Recommendations \_\_\_\_\_ Improvement Needed \_\_\_\_\_ Unsatisfactory

\_\_\_\_\_ Date copy provided to faculty member.

Dept. Head's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**To the Dean:** This area is for your comments. Attach additional sheet(s), if necessary.

**IF ON TENURE TRACK** please indicate progress below. For categories other than "Satisfactory," **please address areas where improvement is needed, including a plan for correction** on a separate sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory w/Recommendations \_\_\_\_\_ Improvement Needed \_\_\_\_\_ Unsatisfactory

\_\_\_\_\_ Date copy provided to faculty member.

Dean's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 2. Draft V October 15, 2013 by Faculty Welfare Committee

Domestic Partners Benefits Bill

Whereas Armstrong Atlantic State University embraces the values of inclusion and diversity: "we value and respect an environment of mutual trust and collegiality that builds an inclusive as well as a diverse community"<sup>1</sup>, and

Whereas the administration of Armstrong recently highlighted the importance of the value of diversity during the Convocation of Fall 2013, and

Whereas the University System of Georgia Faculty Council resolved on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012 that, "In the interest of equity and in order to attract and retain all of the best qualified faculty and staff, the USGFC recommends that university system benefits be extended to domestic partners,"<sup>2</sup> and

Whereas as of January 1, 2014 all colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia will extend voluntary benefits such as vision, dental, and optional additional life insurance to domestic partners of employees who are benefits eligible<sup>3</sup> and recently (February 15, 2013) the University of Georgia Council approved the Proposal for Implementation of Full Domestic Partner Benefits <sup>4,5</sup>, and

Whereas full medical benefits are still not extended to domestic partners of employees of colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia because current State of Georgia law and policy prevent the use of state funds for persons not recognized as dependents,

The Faculty Senate requests that Armstrong Atlantic State University petitions to the University System of Georgia to allow institutional policy to include that corresponding employee portions be paid with foundation funds.

<sup>1</sup>Armstrong Atlantic State University Catalog 2013-2014. Retrieved from:

[http://www.armstrong.edu/images/academic\\_affairs/current\\_undergraduate\\_catalog.pdf](http://www.armstrong.edu/images/academic_affairs/current_undergraduate_catalog.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>University System of Georgia Faculty Council Meeting, February 25, 2012. Retrieved from:

[http://www.usg.edu/faculty\\_council/documents/resolutions/USGFC\\_Resolutions\\_-\\_Feb\\_25.pdf](http://www.usg.edu/faculty_council/documents/resolutions/USGFC_Resolutions_-_Feb_25.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>University of Georgia, Proposal for Implementation of Full Domestic Partner Benefits August 2012, Retrieved from:

<https://apps.reg.uga.edu/UniversityCouncil/publicCommitteeMeeting/showAgenda/105>

<sup>4</sup>UGA Council Approves domestic partner benefits for employees, The Red and Black. Retrieved from:

[http://m.redandblack.com/news/uga-council-approves-domestic-partner-benefits-for-employees/article\\_726d9efa-08e5-11e2-b0b5-001a4bcf6878.html?mode=jqm](http://m.redandblack.com/news/uga-council-approves-domestic-partner-benefits-for-employees/article_726d9efa-08e5-11e2-b0b5-001a4bcf6878.html?mode=jqm)

<sup>5</sup>UGA committee approves domestic partner benefits. The GA Voice. Retrieved from:

<http://www.thegavoice.com/news/georgia-news/5200-uga-committee-approves-domestic-partner-benefits-next-vote-set-for-sept-27>

Appendix 3. Email Communications from October 3, 2013.

**Bill,**

I have reviewed the document that outlines the committee changes and I have also shared that document with the members of the Faculty Welfare Committee. Below are some compiled comments and questions from the committee.

Overall there seems to be an agreement with the need for consolidation. There are though some concerns about adding responsibilities to the Faculty Welfare Committee. There are a few related questions below:

1. What duties of Research and Scholarship, exactly, will be added to Faculty Welfare?
2. To clarify: two members of Faculty Welfare will also serve on Faculty Development's committee? Is the rationale is to improve communications between the committees? Any other reasons?
3. Will Faculty Welfare have more committee members in this new arrangement? Should it have more members, if there is some increase in workload?
4. Who will choose members of Committees that are moved outside the Senate?

Thank you,

Mirari

Hi Mirari,

All of your questions are up for debate, really. For #4, I believe the director of the relevant program would choose the faculty members on the committee (i.e., Johnathan Roberts for Honors, Deborah Reese for Writing, etc.). I think the exception to that would be the two faculty welfare members that would be sent to the faculty development committee which would otherwise be chosen by Teresa Winterhalter. I think that would be for both improved communication and to maintain faculty involvement in that committee.

Of the ones we've discussed moving, Faculty Development is probably the one that I'd have some reservations about, just because the others don't necessarily impact the entire faculty but FD does.

I think a smaller number of larger committees would help get the work done; obviously, we wouldn't want to have the same total number of people as we do now, since part of this is to reduce the body count.

I'm not sure about your first question, so I'm copying Leigh on this to see if she has any additional insight. As I said, though, it's all negotiable at this point, and it's not an all-or-nothing choice.

Thanks,

**Bill**