Fixed Term Faculty Committee
12/11/09
2:00 pm
MINUTES

Present: Binotti, DeSaix, Irons, Melamut, Renner, Whisnant
Absent: Bickford, Gilliland, Toews
Guests: Joe Ferrell (Secretary of the Faculty), Suzanne Gulledge (Chair of Fixed-Term Faculty Committee, 2007-09)

History and Current Structure of the Fixed-Term Faculty Committee (Joe Ferrell)

Joe Ferrell’s attendance was in response to a request from the committee to review details of the history of the creation of this committee and the decision to make it appointive instead of elective. He said that the Committee on University Government had recommended against another elected committee; it had been paring down the number of committees just before this one was created. He also mentioned that the elections process sometimes results in good candidates for various positions being “wasted,” when they are put up for election on committees, are not elected, but are then out of the running for that year for appointed committees where they might well be valuable members. He described how some of the appointive committees are appointed by the chancellor and others by the Chair of the Faculty. Chancellor Hardin started the practice of asking the Faculty Nominating Committee for lists of faculty members for the appointive committees because he did not know the faculty very well. These lists are provided to Brenda Kirby in the chancellor’s office, who handles confirming committee appointments. This has since become the standard practice, and it gives the chairs of the appointive committees a large role in identifying interested candidates.

Ferrell described the anomalous practice of having members of the Fixed-Term Faculty Committee be appointed from among the sitting members of the Faculty Council -- “an experiment” that has not worked very well.

Ferrell described the process by which the committee could be converted from a subcommittee of Faculty Council to a free-standing chancellor-appointed committee, an arrangement that would have the advantage of assuring that the committee will always be constituted (because it would be unconstitutional for the chancellor to refuse to appoint members to a standing committee of the faculty; Ferrell said the chancellor would not fail to appoint members as long as names were sent to him/her by the Nominating Committee). Ferrell noted that committees set to be appointed by the Chair of the Faculty are more subject to waxing and waning with the interests and priorities of particular chairs. Being a free-standing committee would also confer the advantage of independence from the Faculty Council, to which the committee would simply report annually. It might contain some members who were also members of Faculty Council, but would not have to (typically most members of the faculty standing committees are not also on Faculty Council).

To initiate the process of changing the way the committee is constituted, the Fixed-Term Committee could submit a resolution to Faculty Council asking the Committee on University Government to develop a proposal for the General Faculty to establish the Fixed-Term Faculty Committee as appointed by the
chancellor. The resolution could suggest a number of members (including whether they should be certain proportion fixed-term, tenure-track, etc.) and suggest a committee charge. Ferrell said it is usually not good to be too specific about what parts of the university to draw committee members from; this makes selection more difficult. Some committee members did feel some general guidelines to assure balance between academic affairs and health affairs might be warranted. Ferrell noted that, normally, members of chancellor-appointed standing committees of the General Faculty serve three-year terms with no term limits. The terms are usually staggered so as to provide continuity.

Ferrell explained that free-standing committees can always bring issues to Faculty Council, either through their annual reports or via resolutions presented at any time by sending them to the Agenda Committee, who will place them on the Faculty Council agenda. He noted that the Office of Faculty Governance can provide whatever support the committee needs.

In discussion, the question arose as to what happens after Faculty Council passes a resolution. Ferrell noted that the interaction between the administration and Faculty Council is a “stately dance,” in which getting resolutions implemented may require careful and persistent follow-up. But he noted that the administration does not like to have to say no to Faculty Council, and Council does not like to put the administration in a position where they have to say no.

Committee members agreed that they would like to talk with Chair of the Faculty McKay Coble about how to proceed in restructuring the committee.

**Past Work of the Fixed-Term Faculty Committee (Suzanne Gulledge)**

Previous committee chair Suzanne Gulledge gave an overview of the committee’s past work. She joined the committee originally when Judith Wegner was Chair of the Faculty and chaired the committee. After Joe Templeton became Chair of the Faculty, the committee went a year without being reactivated; he eventually appointed new members and asked Gulledge to chair. She emphasized how important committee continuity was, as many past resolutions regarding fixed-term faculty had been passed and seemingly forgotten. She also stressed the importance of having a university-wide committee on fixed-term faculty issues, in addition to the active committee within the College that is working on related matters there.

In response to DeSaix’s question about matters left over from the previous year’s work that the committee should follow up on, Gulledge mentioned asking that the Provost’s Office remind deans (through the Deans Council) of the goal of making fixed-term faculty work an attractive career option, and the need for each unit to have policies on fixed-term faculty appointments.

DeSaix noted the progress that has been made in creating networks for communication and advocacy among and for fixed-term faculty, including the new Fixed-Term Faculty Association. The value of these networks was recently demonstrated by the association’s ability to join in efforts to persuade Dean Karen Gil to revise reappointment guidelines for fixed-term faculty in the College.
Whisnant will place a link to Gil’s revised policy memo of 12/9/09 ([http://www.unc.edu/faculty/faccoun/reports/2009-10/speechrepts/20091209GiltoDeptChairsFTFAppts.pdf](http://www.unc.edu/faculty/faccoun/reports/2009-10/speechrepts/20091209GiltoDeptChairsFTFAppts.pdf)) on the Fixed-Term Faculty Committee page on the Faculty Governance website ([http://www.unc.edu/faculty/faccoun/committees/FXTMain.shtml](http://www.unc.edu/faculty/faccoun/committees/FXTMain.shtml)).

**Gathering Policies on Fixed-Term Faculty**

In response to Faculty Chair Coble’s charge to collect fixed term faculty policies, committee members divided tasks for gathering every possible policy from around campus relating to fixed-term appointments, reappointments, and renewals. Information will be gathered from published policies including websites, by talking to administrators if no published policies can be found, and possibly by talking with fixed term faculty to confirm that the published policies are those actually operating in the unit.

**Tasks by Person**

- Bickford: Education, Journalism
- Binotti: Arts and Sciences
- Gilliland: Public Health, Social Work
- Irons: Arts and Sciences, Business
- Melamut: Government, Information and Library Science, Law
- Renner: Dentistry, Medicine
- Toews: Nursing, Pharmacy

**Tasks by School**

- Arts & Sciences: Binotti, Irons
- Business: Irons
- Dentistry: Renner
- Education: Bickford
- Government: Melamut
- Information and Library Science: Melamut
- Journalism: Bickford
- Law: Melamut
- Medicine: Renner
- Nursing: Toews
- Pharmacy: Toews
- Public Health: Gilliland
- Social Work: Gilliland

Collected information will be reviewed at the January meeting.

Notes by Whisnant, edited DeSaix.