Fixed Term Faculty Committee
1/29/2010
2:00 pm
Stone Center 215
Next meeting: Feb 19 (note date change) at 2pm, Stone Center 215.

Members Present: Binnotti, DeSaix, Gilliland, Irons, Melamut, Renner, Toews
Others Present: Whisnant (Faculty Governance), Steven Norton, Daily Tar Heel
Members Absent: Bickford

Policy Gathering Project

Each member gave updates on their work gathering policies on fixed-term faculty appointments and promotions from various campus units. Some points raised during this discussion included:

- We do not yet have the policies from Pharmacy and Nursing. Pharmacy reports they are presently revising their policy and requests that we check back at the end of February. Nursing does have a clear policy; this should be forthcoming.
- The School of Medicine has a general overarching APT policy with a section on fixed-term faculty; each department in Medicine is also free to elaborate on the general policy.
- Titling continues to be very confusing across the university:
  - In the School of Medicine, where nearly half of the faculty are off the tenure track, titles can be confusing. There have been policy directives in the School of Medicine that request people not use the terms “Clinical” or “Research” in their public titles; the idea was to reduce the sense of a class system among various ranks; often it is, as a result, difficult to recognize who is fixed term. Departments often do have different rules about what positions can be held by fixed-term faculty, however.
  - In the College, there is no “teaching” prefix to identify fixed-term faculty for whom teaching is a primary role (though there is a “research” prefix). And unlike in the School of Medicine and other areas, the College does not seem to have tiers of Assistant, Associate, and Full for fixed-term teaching faculty even when the prefix is “research” although there are such titles indicating promotion for research faculty.
  - The College’s term for many full-time fixed-term faculty, “lecturer,” would have an entirely different meaning in the School of Medicine, where it would signify someone who was part-time.
  - Similarly, “adjunct” carries very different meanings from one department/school to another.
  - In the Law School, “clinical” faculty have very specific duties to teach skills, while tenured/tenure-track faculty teach elements of the law; tenured faculty would likely want to keep the “clinical” faculty title separate. Even there, however, there are some vagaries to the definition of what makes someone a “clinical” faculty member.
- Attempts to contact departments throughout the College for their policies have met with varying success. Asian Studies has a very clear policy, while other departments provided their information with the caveat that it might need revising. Others seemed to stall in responding to the committee’s request.
• There is a widespread sense in the College that departments are waiting for the College-wide fixed-term policy currently under consideration by Dean Karen Gil to be issued. Promotions of fixed-term faculty to Senior Lecturer positions in some departments (English and Comparative Literature, for instance), seem to be on hold awaiting the College-wide policy to be issued.

• One question that has arisen in the College during the discussions about obtaining policies is what the university’s role in assisting fixed-term faculty who are foreign nationals in getting green cards is. If these faculty members are not classified as permanent employees, this may hinder them from getting green cards. Employee sponsorship is often a necessary part of getting a green card, and it was reported that many departments will only do this for tenure-track faculty.

• The School of Public Health has seven departments; we have six of the policies (waiting on Nutrition). It appears that two departments are revising policies now. Epidemiology’s policy was held up as a model that other SPH departments used in writing/revising their policies. SPH has a “research” set of titles (assistant, associate, full) as well as a “clinical” set of titles, in addition to the tenure-track titles. SPH maintains three pathways, in other words, not two. Sometimes the distinction between “research” and tenure-track faculty has to do with level of independence (tenure-track would be running their own programs; non-tenure-track would not) and source of funding (“research” track sometimes on soft money). In these cases, the “research” (non-tenure track) faculty might be very dependent on the tenure-track faculty member running the program to identify those fixed-term faculty members who might be eligible for promotion.

• Computer Science had a document that delineated a complicated, but helpful, rubric for differentiating between tenure-track and fixed-term based on autonomy, source of funding, and other matters. It was unclear what the status of this document is.

• It was agreed that even the process of requesting the policies was raising awareness of the need to revise or develop good policies.

Next Steps

• Collect remainder of policies.

• Arts & Sciences: look at all websites and collect as many policies as possible.

• See if we can verify titles – each person come up with a list of the fixed-term titles. [Whisnant can do a printout of all titles from HR Data Warehouse spreadsheet].

• Look into question of fixed-term faculty voting rights in departments.

• Check to see if we can allow the Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Chair of the A&S fixed-term committee (Bill Andrews) access to our materials. [Whisnant note: Andrews has been given access.]

Next Meeting

Coble will be with us next time to discuss the structure of committee and explore the possibility of amending the Faculty Code to convert this committee to a chancellor-appointed committee, which will help prevent it from lapsing and ensure that continuity is possible over time.

The next meeting was set for February 26th (later moved to February 19; February 26 is canceled).