P & T Review Task Force Minutes

3/14/2014

Members Present

Trish Kelly, Mitzi Efurd, Catherine Smith, Richard Zraick, Erna Boone, Tonya Cook, & Danny Bercher

The committee members all brought examples of guidelines from UT Memphis, U. So. Alabama, Mercer U., LSU Medical Center, U of Miss., Georgia Health Sciences, U of Kentucky, UT San Antonio, UAMS COM, and UALR.

The committee members agreed that for the most part, the ranks and criteria for the institutions were very similar. The committee members then asked the question of what were the problems with existing guidelines and what were the results of the faculty survey. It was clear in the CHP faculty survey that there was unhappiness with the existing P & T guidelines. The Task Force is suspecting that due to the fact that the P & T guidelines seem to be very similar to other institutions, that it may be that certain processes should be improved.

The problems with existing P & T guidelines identified were:

1. New faculty members hired in may not have been made clearly aware of the job descriptions and expectations with respect to teaching and scholarship.
2. Faculty members have not received clear and consistent communication about existing P & T guidelines from chairmen particularly at the annual evaluations.
3. Departmental planning has often been inconsistent with faculty and college needs for scholarship.
4. The actual supply of qualified scholarly candidates may be limited for many disciplines.
5. P&T Committee records are not passed to the new Chair each year, making consistent recommendations difficult.

After a 45 minute period of open discussion, a few consistent themes emerged.

1. Letters of initial appointment need to be carefully written to match program needs with faculty career needs.
2. Annual reviews must be consistent with the respective faculty member’s goals in the promotion and tenure process.
3. A formalized mentorship system needs to be in place.
4. Full professors might need to review candidates for full professor rank
5. Should there be recognition for an administrative emphasis?
6. Mercer University offers four levels of performance? (adequate, good, excellent, distinguished) in each of the three areas of scholarship, service, and teaching. This might provide more flexibility for faculty while potentially building strength in the credentials.
7. The existing guidelines do not allow for realistic promotion to associate professor for nontenure track faculty members. Thus, there should be a major redesign of the existing nontenure tracks.

8. Danny: We haven’t discussed this recently, but the criteria for promotion for Instructor to Assistant Professor on the tenure track is also not realistic. No junior faculty could achieve the “leadership” examples eluded to in our document to earn “excellence” in teaching, for example.

9. The committee continues to view two tracks as the only routes for the new promotion and tenure.
   a. The Tenure Track would be similar to the existing Post Baccalaureate/Graduate Tenure Track. There would be no point system or credit hours as an option to this track.
   b. The NonTenure Track would be for individuals with a heavy teaching and/or clinical practice/teaching load. Full professor could be achieved without a doctoral degree. This system would retain the four levels of expertise but lots of options for point system and credit hours could be accumulated for promotion.

10. Collegiality needs to be a significant element in the annual review and promotion and tenure guidelines.

11. Boyer’s Model of Scholarship should be included in the guidelines.
    We might consider increasing university service as one moves up in rank.

Danny Bercher agreed to begin the rewrite of a very rough draft document. He said that he would attempt to provide this very rough draft to committee members before the next meeting.

The next meeting was tentatively set for April 3, 2014 at 1:30pm. Please note: there were conflicts with the Friday 1:30-3pm format on April 4, 11, & 18.