Biological Sciences

Teaching Focused Faculty Meeting

November 2, 2017

12 p.m., Stephens Room

Jerry greets group. Informs the group that, not surprisingly, the call for meeting items returned a lot of response regarding the same thing – College guidelines for teaching. He praises the group for their proactiveness and productivity since the meetings have started. Reiterates process for scheduling meetings—if we receive items we’ll meet, if not, we won’t.

College Guidelines for teaching: College, in response to provost’s concerns, completed a workload analysis in the hopes of getting standardization. COS wants to meet a minimum standard with respect to teaching in line with UNC standards. Not dictating, just establishing guidelines/foundations, used to take into account with regard to everything else teaching faculty are doing (service, scholarship, mentoring, etc).

Faculty member states she heard this came about with a focus research faculty (tenure-track) more so than teaching faculty.

Jerry notes 2 classes per year minimum if research-active. Max for NTT teaching is 8.

Faculty member raises question as to where that number comes from. Has heard 6 previously, or equivalent. 2+2 plus advising.

Discussion of teaching, advising, service, scholarly activity. This means you cannot teach 4 classes a semester and be expected to uphold these other areas.

Discussion of previous teaching loads. Jerry notes the college team wanted to keep it simple, and the heads returned with more details and scenarios. And after a few weeks, the intended short description was 2 pages, and still going, so they decided to keep it as basic as possible for the sake of creating the minimum guideline for the college, stating that the department determines work loads for their faculty. Dean has reiterated that he wants all faculty teaching. They can buy-out one course, but not two.

Faculty member notes the danger of listing 24 credit hours to constitute a class in the guidelines…new leadership could take this firmly and not be willing to work with faculty as current leadership does.

Jerry reassures he has no intention of terminating anyone’s contracts. Understands the uncertainty some may have, and if there is anything anyone is concerned about that we can help with, shoot him an email. Notes Dean’s emphasis on increasing the ratio of TT to NTT—for Jerry that does not mean x-ing NTT, but simply increasing TT. The idea has been raised to transfer some NTT to TT. Looking into the process.

FM states if the college is going to put this in writing, they need to do so in a way that’s clear and cannot be used by a department head who wants to use it as a hammer. Stats faculty are already looking for jobs because the SMEs they signed are being thrown out. This should be used to protect them, not bludgeon them. Others confirm they see it happening and it’s not an unwarranted concern.

Jerry asks for email outlining this without naming names. FM notes a document is being drafting to combat this occurrence, and that she will forward it to Jerry once complete.

Faculty member raises the point that tenured faculty who are no longer doing research get 3 and 3, but NTT teaching get 4 and 4. Jerry notes if tenured, and research goes down the drain, then they would be required to teach 3 and 3, with the expectation they had roles for service to the dept, and if not upheld they would be hammered on their post tenure review.

FM notes this information should be in the faculty SME.

FM asks about job security, and what would happen if someone did not meet expectations? What is the procedure? Jerry replies that circumstances would in part dictate that---but if poor performance, the faculty member would be informed and coached. If it were an issue of not needing the individual anymore, enrollment goes down, not enough students, etc. then it could be as abrupt as terminating the contract. Jerry advises he has only had to do this once, and chose to do it by informing the faculty member at the end of the semester before the renewal that was going to come up, and that was done out of concern for the students that were being taught. Heads’ consensus is that all faculty deserve a year’s notice if one’s contract is not going to be renewed.

FM asks if Jerry can commit to that. Jerry replies he cannot formally commit, but that is how is should be handled.

Faculty member inquires if renewing contracts a year before they expire is possible. Discussion of when contracts are renewed. Kathleen Wilson advises per COS HR, the maximum advance for contract renewals is 2 months due to workload. [Since meeting, after raising issue with COS HR, they have recognized unease with not having a new contract any sooner than 2 months before current contract expires, and have approved submission of new contracts further in advance. That said, if you are a faculty member whose contract expires in May, Kathleen will be initiating these with the college over the next few weeks as the college transitions under new leadership. If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact Kathleen.]

Discussion of amount of courses to teach and whether this is enough for current faculty body. Faculty note this may be an opportunity to reduce class size. Another faculty member states that’s not always the message from the Dean’s office—COS Average student credit hours per class=128.

Jerry notes he’s not sure where we should go with the document, he is not sure what the college plans to do with it. Jerry notes the EON group prepared document on teaching units, passed it to the heads, who also loved it, but never caught on.

Faculty member raises concern about faculty members who don’t want to be teaching being forced to teach. Potential concern for students. Jerry notes he also raised this concern to the dean, and the dean said you just have to be vigilant, and if you suspect someone is not doing justice to his or her students, you or someone needs to be in the classroom to determine that, then head needs to be handling that. And if the faculty member does not come around, it reflects in their review.

Faculty member states there should be a way to blur the lines between research and teaching faculty and get the groups talking about the best way to serve students.

The suggestion of seminars, 20 min workshops for faculty is raised.

FM voices appreciation for conducting meetings specifically with teaching faculty.

Another suggestion is with peer reviews, to pick one research active in the area, and one that is teaching faculty, as it will be a good way to engage research active faculty that may take something away from the review.

Jerry moves on to Strategic plan agenda item. Reiterates this is not an exercise we’re just going to file away, but instead use as a roadmap for the dept. Recaps that Strategic Plan Committee members made presentations at the faculty retreat to inform others on goals/progress, and moving forward we will dedicate 15 min during faculty meetings where committee meeting reps will inform the group about further progress in their respective committees so we can see things actually moving. He notes the need for a complete list of committee members. Kathleen will send out what we have as of yet.

Faculty news:

Mellissa Ramirez and Claire Gordy have submitted a proposal for a University Diversity mini-grant and should hear back soon.

Reminder for Feed the Pack—Flyer sent out via email and weekly newsletter. Melissa acting as rep for BioSci, with collection bin outside her office door (Thomas, 1567A). BioSci has been assigned condiments, so things like peanut butter, ketchup, etc. are appreciated. Melissa has info on monetary donations, as well, if desired (mvramire@ncsu.edu).

Meeting closes at 1:03 p.m.