

Faculty Life Committee –St. Olaf College

Minutes of the meeting of March 31, 2009

Members present: Brian Borovsky, Beth Christensen, Eric Cole (Chair), Dona Freeman, Mary Griep, Anne Groton, Jim May, Alan Norton, Arnie Ostebee, Xun Pomponio, Corliss Swain

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. in Dittmann Center 204.

1. Minutes for the meeting of March 10, 2009 were approved.
2. Report by Alan Norton on tuition benefit for faculty and staff. The current tuition benefit for dependents of faculty and staff is calculated at 65% of the comprehensive fee. Norton recommends a change to the benefit calculated at 80% of tuition, effective fall 2009. The dollar amount of the benefit to faculty and staff will remain virtually the same, but this change brings St. Olaf's policy into line with other institutions. The committee has 30 days to respond to this suggested change.
3. Arnie Ostebee presented an update from the Registrar's Office to the Tuition Allowance for Employee and Employee Spouse or Same Sex Domestic Partner. Current policy does not allow the benefit to be used for summer school. The updated draft policy presented would allow summer school courses in certain limited cases. The committee questioned the rationale for a 50% charge for these courses. The question was referred to Katherine Baker, Registrar's Office for clarification. No vote was taken on the matter.
4. New business:
 - a. Suggestions from a former Associate Dean to the committee: Possible name change From Associate Dean to Dean. More flexibility in second term. Possible full year sabbatical at full pay following 2 terms as Associate Dean. All tabled for future consideration.
 - b. Announcement of session *Mentoring Faculty, the Role of the Chair*, April 9, 2009 at 11:30. Faculty Life Committee members Cole, Christensen, and Swain will attend.
 - c. Cole presented a list of concerns from non-tenured faculty for future consideration.
5. Summer Grants report will be given at April Faculty Meeting by Swain.
6. Review of the results of the survey of faculty concerning the allocation of faculty development money. 134 responses. There was much discussion of how to interpret the results. There was consensus that Model #4 - All release time grants was the least favored and it was removed from consideration. Model #3 - All small grants was viewed as the most polarizing choice and was similarly removed from consideration leaving *Model 1* (50% release time 50% expanded access small grants) and *Model 2* (25% release time and 75% expanded access smaller grants) on the table. It was suggested that committee members revisit the survey to reread comments before deciding on which model to pursue.

The committee decided to de-couple the discussion of pre-tenure leaves from the allocation of faculty development money.

7. Discussion of a Pre-tenure Leave program. There was a wide-ranging discussion of a possible Pre-tenure Leave as an option for new hires. Discussion included consideration of feedback from non-tenured and recently tenured faculty gathered by Borovsky. The program would be optional for tenure-track appointments and will be written in such a way to insure that it has a cost neutral effect on the budget. The leave would be for one semester and exercising the option would reset the tenure clock to six years following the leave. The committee voted to recommend a Pre-Tenure Leave. The Issues subcommittee will meet to draft the recommendation.
8. Committee practices in meeting with outside groups were discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary M. Griep

Action Items:

1. The Issues Group will draft language for Pre-Tenure Leaves.
2. The Action Group will review NEH Summer Grant Proposals and Mellby Lecture nominations.