

Faculty Life Committee - St. Olaf College

Minutes for meeting of 9 September 2008

Present:

Eric Cole, chair
Brian Borovsky
Beth Christensen
Dona Freeman
Mary Griep
Anne Groton
Xun Pomponio

Judy Stromayer
Corliss Swain
Irina Walter

Alan Norton, ex-officio
Arnie Ostebee, ex-officio

The meeting was convened at 3:35 pm in Dittman 204.

1. **Approval of minutes/Discussion of future minutes.** Minutes of the September 2 meeting were universally praised and unanimously approved (after two small spelling corrections were made). Brian will provide electronic copies for Pam Dresow and Eric Cole. After a brief discussion about future minutes for the committee, we decided that we would 1) share the responsibility for taking minutes in alphabetical order, and 2) keep the minutes as brief as possible. The author of the minutes will be responsible for providing both Pam and Eric with electronic copies of the approved minutes.

2. **Review of the committee structure.** Eric reiterated the basic structure for our committee's work. The ten elected committee members will create two teams (with one representative from each faculty on each team). The two teams will divide their activities by semester, with the fall team actively involved with the evaluation of fall applications (proposals for FaCE grants, released time grants, and sabbatical leaves), while the other five members will have primary responsibility for more long-range plans for the committee. In turn, the spring semester will reverse the duties of the two groups, allowing the spring team to review applications for summer grants, teaching & curriculum development grants, and NEH summer stipends while their five "fall" counterparts take the lead on more wide-ranging discussions within the committee.

3. **"Small task" duties.** The committee divided tasks that could be assigned to one or two people; responsibilities were determined for duties such as publicizing and organizing the logistics for Mellby lectures and nominations, website information, honorary degrees, grant-writing workshops, and the Benefits Committee. Kathryn Ananda-Owens and Steve O'Neill will join us next week to talk about their experiences working with Honorary Degrees and the Benefits Committee, respectively.

4. **General committee activities.** It was agreed that discussions about salary recommendations, reports from the Tenure and Promotion and Faculty Review Committees, and final decisions about Mellby lecturers would be brought before the entire committee.

5. **Larger conversations.** During the fall semester the "spring team" will begin to address larger issues relating to faculty life. In an effort to provide all faculty with the chance for input on the agenda, Eric will send an e-mail soliciting ideas. The committee briefly discussed a May, 2007, document from the Faculty Development Committee which recommended a review of faculty development at St. Olaf. Arnie reminded us of the recent implementation of IPAT accounts and noted that they had significantly changed the landscape of faculty development at the college. He suggested that IPATs be allowed to operate for another year before a thorough review of faculty development is considered.

6. General discussion of faculty development grants: Discussion ensued about some of the strengths and challenges inherent in our current faculty development grant system. The committee agreed that it was too late to make any changes in grant procedures due this semester, and the group will decide at a later time whether any changes in the guidelines for summer grants would be prudent during this academic year. This led to a broad-ranging conversation about mentoring faculty throughout their professional life cycles as well as taking an inventory of the resources we currently offer on campus.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Action Items

- 1) Eric Cole will send an e-mail to the faculty soliciting ideas for larger agenda items and will forward them to the “spring” team.
- 2) The “spring” team will begin to prioritize the above list of ideas.
- 3) Eric Cole will forward to the committee a list of URLs for web pages associated with grant applications; we should review them before next week.