

Faculty Affairs Policy Committee (FAPC) Report

Given to the University Senate on 29 November 2010

Submitted by Craig Turner

At the 5 Nov 2010 meeting,

1. update on “Academic Year Faculty Availability in the Summer.”

Alex Blazer attended the meeting of the University Chairs Council on Wednesday 27 October 2010 to present the summary survey information on summer service activities for academic year faculty and encourage chairs to have conversations at the department/unit level as appropriate and necessary. In response, the University Chairs Council suggested that faculty should see the letters that the Registrar gives to transfer students during the summer so that we can know what the Registrar is telling students to expect from them during the summer. The Provost indicated that she will be reviewing letters drafted by Enrollment Management prior to their distribution to students with respect to the inclusion of matters involving summer faculty service work [such as advising, availability at orientations, summer accessibility of faculty to students, etc.]. After further discussion, it was suggested that the Provost consider requesting that deans coordinate with department chairs to ensure that letters from departments and academic units to students undergo a similar review at the unit or department level. The Provost concurred.

2. information on Student Opinion Surveys calculation discrepancy concern

A concern, emerging from an email sent to the committee chair, regarding discrepancies in the computations of average ratings for the on-line archive of the paper-and-pencil student opinion surveys was shared as an information item at the 17 Sep 2010 meeting of the Standing Committee Chairs with the Executive Committee AND also at the 1 Oct 2010 FAPC meeting. At each of these meetings, it was noted that appropriate campus officials were aware of these discrepancies and that resolution was in progress. The Provost provided an update at the 18 Oct 2010 meeting of Standing Committee Chairs with the Executive Committee to indicate that the discrepancies had been completely resolved. This update from the Provost was shared with the members of this committee both via email prior to this meeting and formally at this meeting. The original email expressing the concern also requested that this committee consider ensuring that the communication of these discrepancies and their resolution was consistent across the academic units of the university. The committee members present unanimously recommended that this information be distributed to appropriate parties to include faculty, department chairs, and deans. The Provost concurred and agreed that she would ensure that all university faculty receive an appropriate update on this matter.

3. update on Faculty Awards

The 2009-10 Faculty Affairs Policy Committee (FAPC) brought to completion a review of the Faculty Awards language in the GCSU Academic Affairs Handbook that emerged as a concern at the 1 Feb 2008 FAPC meeting. At its 5 March 2010 meeting, the committee endorsed a final draft of the proposed revisions. Dr. Lee Digiovanni, 2009-10 FAPC Chair, forwarded this final draft to Provost Jordan as FAPC exercised its advisory role to the academic administration. As a follow-up to this work, the Provost emailed the current committee chair indicating that the 5 March 2010 document submitted by FAPC had been reviewed by two current committees that review faculty award nominations and had undergone some content modifications. The most substantive content modification was a streamlining of the language for the GCSU Excellence in Scholarly Activity Award(s). In addition, for each of those faculty awards where the recipient would receive a nomination for a corresponding Regents' award, there was a sentence added to allow for appropriate deadlines to be set at the local level to allow the portfolios to be submitted in compliance with the Regents' award deadlines. The Provost expressed her appreciation to the committee members who had participated in the preparation of the draft. She also indicated that the fact that the draft had received only minor modifications upon review by two faculty award committees was a testament to its quality. Finally the Provost indicated that she would ensure the revised draft language on faculty awards was placed in the Academic Affairs Handbook, noting that a transition of existing on-line handbooks to a more conveniently searchable environment was in progress.

4. update on summer pay tax withholdings concern

A concern was voiced at the 1 Oct 2010 committee meeting to indicate that for some faculty, summer tax withholdings were distorted (extra large tax withholdings) with combined pay for teaching multiple sections. As this concern was shared at the 15 Oct 2010 joint meeting of Standing Committee Chairs with the Executive Committee, it was broadened to include instances of extra compensation during the regular academic year. This issue is primarily a communication issue and appropriate university officials are now aware of the matter and considering ways to improve the communication. Consideration of this matter will be informed by a new ruling regarding extra compensation recently received by all the Chief Academic Officers of institutions in the

University System of Georgia. Presently, clarification on the interpretation of this new ruling and its implementation are being sought.

5. update on “Faculty Evaluation, Triggering Reviews of Department Chairs”

This issue arose from a concern about the current faculty evaluation process and from an interest in exploring the options available to faculty for informing the evaluation of a department chair or immediate supervisor. Given university-wide reconsideration of the faculty evaluation process at the department level, the work group has deferred indefinitely any investigation of faculty evaluation. At the previous committee meeting, the conversation on triggered reviews of department chairs concluded that a mechanism for faculty to inform a department chair review is desirable. This resulted in the committee asking the work group to review the existing mechanism, called the Part IV Academic Administrator Evaluation Form, and provide an update and its recommendations (if any) at this committee meeting. The work group reported that its primary recommendation is to provide a mechanism by which faculty can inform the review of their department chair with an emphasis on professional development. This perspective resonated with the committee members that were present and the committee requested that the work group continue its deliberation and report back at the next committee meeting.

6. update on “Post-Tenure Review”

This issue arose from a concern about the post-tenure review appeal process and was discussed at the April 2010 meeting of the 2009-2010 FAPC and passed to this year’s committee for further deliberation. At the September meeting, the committee unanimously recommended that the post-tenure review work group be expanded to include at least one representative from each academic unit (colleges and library) and that the work group review the post-tenure review language in the GCSU Academic Affairs Handbook ensuring clarity and a careful review of the appeal process. Since that time this work group has been expanded and is now populated by Martha Colvin (CoHS), Nancy Davis Bray (Library), Lee Digiovanni (CoE), Ken Farr (CoB), Mike Rose (CoAS), and Craig Turner (CoAS). This work group has had two meetings: an organizational meeting 4 October 2010 and a second meeting 25 October 2010. It is premature to provide detailed information on the particular recommendations as they are still in development and none of the proposed recommendations under consideration have received a formal endorsement from members of the work group. The work group will report on its progress at the next committee meeting.

7. Student Opinion Surveys - Concern Student Participation Rate

A committee member observed that many university faculty are concerned about the fact that the participation rate on Student Opinion Surveys has significantly plummeted since the conversion to the current on-line collection system and asked if mechanisms were in place to attempt to increase the participation rate. The Provost provided a response indicating (1) it is typical to see a short-term dip in Student Opinion Survey participation rates following conversion to an on-line collection system, (2) best practices for increasing student participation are scheduled to be implemented in the Spring 2011 semester and (3) the student opinion survey instrument is under review. The committee members present indicated a perception that this information is not widely known by university faculty and unanimously recommended that this information be distributed to appropriate parties to include faculty, department chairs, and deans. The Provost concurred and agreed that she would ensure that all university faculty receive an appropriate update on this matter.

Tentative Agenda for 3 Dec 2010 meeting (12:30-1:45 in Arts & Sciences 1-15)

1. Faculty Evaluation, Triggering Reviews of Department Chairs (work group update)
2. Post-Tenure Review (work group update)
3. Informational (Faculty Availability, Faculty Awards, Student Opinion Surveys, Tax Withholdings)