

Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee Minutes  
March 31, 2015

Attendance:

Laurie Kirsch, Seth Weinberg, Carey Balaban, Barry Gold, Rose Constantino, Michael Spring, Hasim Al Hassan, Bill Federspiel, John Mendeloff, Willa Dosell, Nick Mance, John Kirkwood, Marika Kovacs, Marianne Novy

The meeting was called to order by Barry Gold at 1:07.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Old Business:

1. Barry and Marika have met with the Provost about the issue of salary reductions for tenured faculty. They are trying to get policies from different schools. They have set up meetings with the law school, nursing, and GSPIA, and are in contact with medicine, engineering, and public health. Everyone has said they don't have a policy. The provost said that there wasn't an official policy but that in some schools in her area after several years of unsatisfactory reports, salaries have been cut. Carey and Rose said they don't remember grievances about this from elsewhere than the school of medicine. John said that probably outside the medical school salaries are reduced for bad teaching or service and faculty are more reluctant to call attention to these issues. We are trying to get a sense of the magnitude of the issue. The Senate Budget Policies Committee also wanted to get a count of people who had salary reductions.

2. On the topic of the language for the phased retirement letter, Marika said the provost is speaking to the general counsel.

3. The subcommittee on electronic media has been working on a site about best practices and has not yet received from this committee a response to the draft that was sent March 16. The subcommittee has asked the provost to reaffirm the university's position that academic freedom extends to electronic media.

New Business:

Marika says that there have been complaints about the university's use of Academic Analytics through De Jong's office. This company uses metrics to make comparisons among faculty at different universities. They leave out NTS faculty, don't count some journals they should, and have other problems. What is this "service" being used for? What are the plans? Might this be used for deciding the fate of a department? Can the Faculty Assembly deal with this? We might invite De Jong to speak with us and maybe then to the assembly.

There was a discussion of whether staff and student committee members should be required to leave when personnel cases are considered. They are full voting members of the committee otherwise with equal access according to the by-laws but the question is whether the needs of confidentiality for personnel matters overrides this. What are the precedents? Is admitting them comparable to letting students, staff and faculty of a lower rank vote on a tenure case of someone of higher rank, which we do not do?

The staff and student members and the pro tem members from the administration left and the committee went into executive session and discussed a continuing case.

The case of wrongful termination and alleged nepotism from the department of pathology in the school of medicine was discussed. The committee is going to send a letter to the person who was terminated and there was a discussion of the need to get letterhead stationery so no intermediary is necessary to mail it.

The meeting ended at 2:30.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marianne Novy  
TAF secretary