

**Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)
Meeting**

**December 8, 2009
3:00-5:00 p.m.
Corporation Room, University Hall**

Minutes

Present: Susan Allen, Cynthia Garcia Coll, James Dreier, Lina Fruzzetti, Philip Rosen, Chung-I Tan, Thomas Lewis

Guests: Katherine Bergeron, Sheila Blumstein, Tom Doeppner, Nancy Dunbar, William Heindel, Martin Maxey, Kathleen McSharry, Bob Pelcovits, Michael Pickett, Richard Stratt, John Styer, Terri-Lynn Thayer, Jan Tullis, William Warren

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. Minutes of the November 24 meeting were approved. Professor Tan welcomed Prof. Maxey who will be joining the FEC in second semester.

Prof. Tan was pleased to report that in the spirit of making business practices more efficient, Provost Kertzer and VP Beppie Huidekoper have issued a draft memo for positive changes to the University's travel policy. The FEC had recently voiced concern to the Controller about the use of per diem rates for domestic travel being disallowed as of August 2009. This practice will be reinstated as of January 1, 2010. The FEC was strongly in favor of the draft travel policy revisions as stated in the memo.

Prof. Dreier gave a brief report on the Committee on Faculty Equity and Diversity (CFED) meetings. The CFED recently met with the Provost's ad hoc Committee on Tenure and Faculty Development Policies and raised relevant issues with them. At a recent CFED meeting, quorum rules were discussed, an issue for the Committee last summer when reviewing tenure denials. Prof. Dreier is a member of the CFED subcommittee that is looking at retirement. They will be submitting recommendations to the Provost for a new policy in about a week. The main obstacle with the retirement policy is provision for a health plan. The CFED plans to discuss salary issues once Dean Doherty provides them with information regarding tenure rates and other breakdowns of salaries at Brown. Prof. Dreier will have more to report on CFED in January.

The President's Executive Committee meeting for this month was cancelled. Professors Tan and Dreier discussed the Organizational Review Committee's (ORC) work with President Simmons, focusing on the decision-making process and how to make it more flexible w/ less bureaucracy. Comments from FEC's meetings with junior faculty have been forwarded to the ad hoc Committee on Tenure and Faculty Development Policies. The Clinical Tenure proposal has been revised and posted to the Provost's web site.

The FEC discussed Dr. Gruppuso's request to streamline the process for changing graduation requirements in the medical school currently in the Faculty Rules and Regulations. Before making any recommendation, it was decided to review the historical records to understand the reasons for the processes imposed on the medical school. It will also be useful to compare the current procedures for changes in graduation requirements of other university units. Professors Allen and Rosen were appointed to report back to the committee on both of these. Cheryl Moreau will assist with providing the subcommittee with pertinent historical records housed in the Faculty Governance office, and current procedures for other university units.

Deans Bergeron and McSharry were invited to discuss the new on-line teaching evaluation form. The review process for teaching evaluations dates back to 2006 at which time revision to course evaluation forms was deemed necessary in order to assess teaching and learning more effectively. Several drafts have been produced since then after consulting with students, faculty and departments in an effort to create a standardized form. The Task Force for Undergraduate Education's report of 2008 encouraged the University to develop a flexible, on-line course evaluation tool that would be available to all departments and designed so that departments could modify them. This would encourage students to provide more extensive feedback on their learning experiences. The Dean's office conducted a pilot program for the on-line version last year, 300-500 students being surveyed about the first draft of the on-line form and feedback solicited from the Faculty. Many recommendations were made for revisions to the form, especially from Prof. Jan Tullis who offered valuable feedback. NEASC picked up on evidence that a new on-line version of the course evaluation form was in the works and recommended the University continue to pursue it. The form has since been reconstructed in such a way that a department can add any amount of questions they would like to build into it. Prof. Tan suggested the form be modified to allow a department to add questions of their choice at the top of the page instead of the bottom, so that what is important to the individual department in the evaluation would stand out. The most recent draft of the form is the screen shot that was distributed to the FEC for this meeting. Dean Bergeron noted there has been a 95% return rate for people who have a grade block. Faculty allowing for early evaluation by students would make for better, more thoughtful assessments. The FEC noted that some of the main concerns voiced by Faculty were that the form does not provide for feedback about TA's or multiple instructors and that it needs to be more flexible. Dean McSharry noted that a feedback mechanism has been up on the web site right along, available only to those who are supposed to be using the form. The Deans would like to make the form available on-line to the entire Brown Community. The FEC suggested the Deans wait until they can discuss this further before making the form available to the entire Brown Community. The FEC will be discussing teaching evaluations with concerned faculty members later during this afternoon's meeting.

Professors Blumstein, Heindel and Warren joined the FEC for discussion about a proposal to merge the departments of Psychology and Cognitive/Linguistic Sciences into one department of Cognitive, Linguistic and Psychological Sciences (CLPS).

The creation of CLPS is part of a larger strategy for Brown's Plan for Academic Enrichment, to strengthen the department and encourage interdisciplinary studies in mind, brain, behavior and language. There's been little to no negative feedback and the proposal has been approved by the APC. Internally, there was some concern expressed about merging to a larger unit. The departments have worked together well over the past two years to establish a plan for merging the two departments into one, an internationally prominent department that will support teaching and training of outstanding undergrad and grad students that will be engaged in cutting-edge research. Meetings have been productive and searches have been very constructive, so they do not anticipate problems with doing searches as a group. They have fallen short in the number of faculty members in their departments for many years and currently have 22-24 faculty members that may increase to 30. They will be adhering to their current staffing plan so will not need additional money. There was some discussion about the Ph.D. programs in linguistic and cognitive sciences tracks. The proposal will go to the February faculty meeting for recommendation and approval by the Faculty.

Professors Tullis and Stratt were invited to share their views about teaching evaluation with the FEC, representing a concerned group of physical science faculty who had been meeting regularly to discuss teaching by working with the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning. Jan Tullis conveyed the group's immediate concerns about the teaching evaluation form to Dean Bergeron and edits were made to the form. However, the current version is still not particularly useful in the sciences, and the Dean has not contacted her again for additional feedback. The on-line version of the form is too long; it must be manageable or students will lose interest in completing the form. It does not allow for proper feedback that resulted in a 30% rate of return in the Geological Sciences department last year, which was very disappointing. Physical science Faculty believe strongly that course evaluation should be for individual departments to undertake and that a "one size fits all" form is unlikely to be desirable. Grade blocks may get a 95% return, but what is the "quality" of the returns? Distributing the evaluation form during reading period when most students are still here could result in an 80% "quality" return. The FEC agreed that the "one size fits all" question should be addressed and suggested that various groups of faculty from across the disciplines convene to discuss teaching and course evaluations including Professors Tullis, Stratt and Nancy Jacobs from History, who was not able to come to today's FEC meeting. Prof. Tan will convey their concerns and suggestions to the Dean and get back to Professor Tullis and Stratt with her reply.

The FEC invited VP Michael Picket, Terri-Lynn Thayer, and Professors Pelcovits and Doepfner from the IT ORC Review Group to discuss how their review process is progressing, especially with IT functions that affect Faculty. The group has a broad charge covering Administrative/Academic IT functions. \$1M must be cut in this area out of \$14M and they must figure out how to do this with minimal damage. There are currently 325 IT positions in the University. They have been thinking about how the IT people do their work and provide support. Seventeen departments do not have any desktop support while eighteen get support through CIS. They have looked at models at other universities, and recommend a shared desktop model. French Studies is on it now and Prof. Seifert, a member of this IT ORC Review group, said it's working well. The

group has been thinking about ways that departments can be provided with CIS support when their IT person is absent or has left their position. To make shared services work, they are recommending bringing up some desktop software help, standard software that will be put onto all desktops. Desktop management training software will also be provided which the group feels is a worthwhile investment. Some faculty who are using the desktop model said it is working for them. Going Green with less printing will cut printing costs in half (\$30 down to \$15) resulting in \$80,000 savings in operational costs. Students are very aware of wasteful printing, so they expect students will respond favorably to this. How can we do things differently? The group is looking at outsourcing, reorganizing and restructuring IT services. Cutbacks are coming at a time when there is a demand for their services so this is not an easy task. It is expected that all cuts will be coming out of the administration. The group is exploring a model that would not be universal, a shared server which will result in electricity savings, and will be going to departments to see if they are willing to buy into this. Desktop management will save approximately \$100,000/yr. in electricity. Another consideration is sharing systems administrators and a pilot program is being considered for this. They are also working with other ORC teams whose recommendations will affect the IT area.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Moreau
Secretary