Pathways to Success Study Team

February 17, 2012 Meeting Minutes

9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.; CIT 3150


Discussion
Provost Moore has asked the Study Team to consider two additional items in its work:

- utilization of faculty graduate status, and
- recommendation of when the criteria used for promotion from associate professor to professor should be set.

In response, it was suggested that the Team develop by next week a master list of items to consider and then prioritize those items.

A question was asked concerning what the Study Team’s ultimate product should be. The Provost has requested that a white paper be submitted in early May setting forth recommendations which would then be taken to Faculty Senate and the colleges for consideration/implementation.

A recommendation was made to divide the Study Team into subcommittees tasked with reviewing portions of the charge and drafting the appropriate sections of the white paper. One of the items noted for consideration with the implementation of non-resident faculty tracks. In CIT, non-resident faculty tracks are non-tenure track positions. In COBA, they can be tenure-track positions. There was a lengthy discussion on how to design these tracks to ensure equity and fairness in workload and evaluation. How can we leverage different faculty pathways to enhance the institution’s competitiveness? How does collegiality factor into non-resident faculty tracks? Does the Team need to consider fixed term contracts?

It was noted that the Board of Regents limits contracts to an annual basis. The question was raised concerning how the Board views faculty tracks. The Board is silent on this issue, suggesting that it is at the institution’s discretion.

Also discussed was the issue of what criteria should apply to faculty undergoing evaluation for promotion from associate professor to professor. Assistant professors are evaluated under the criteria in place at the time of hire; therefore, it may make sense to recommend that the criteria for promotion to full professor be the same as the criteria in place at the time the individual was promoted to associate professor. A caution was noted on how this recommendation might impact faculty where a considerable interval of time has lapsed between promotion from associate professor to full. How would transitions between tracks impact the promotion and tenure criteria? Would the criteria ‘clock’ be reset? The consensus of the Team was that faculty could be hired into a track as well as transition from one track to another throughout their career; however, once on a track, faculty should make a three-year commitment.

Of note, movement between tracks should be a negotiation between the faculty member and the department chair (preferably with input from a departmental faculty advisory committee). A faculty member should never be assigned a track (suggesting a punitive action), but rather be rewarded for past stellar performance in that area. If a faculty member was hired into a research track but opted to move to a teaching track at the time of pre-tenure review, the faculty member would be evaluated for both tracks when considered for tenure. In other words, the faculty member’s performance in the research track as compared against the departmental criteria for the research track would be considered along with their performance in the teaching track. Success in both tracks would need to be demonstrated to be recommended for tenure.
The idea was also put forward of viewing the tracks as the exception rather than the rule. For example, the normal expectation might be that currently in effect; however, stellar faculty could be rewarded for their teaching excellence by given a lower research expectation and allowed to teach more.

There could also be various inflection points for transition to different pathways. Pathway transitions could be considered every three years, or at major evaluation points (e.g., post-tenure review).

A point was made that all faculty in a department should be aware of which faculty are on what track and what criteria apply to each track. These pathway decisions need to be transparent and inclusive as what one faculty member does can impact the entire department. While it is important to consider faculty involvement, the Team may not wish to mandate it as that may not be the best approach for every department. Would it be sufficient to recommend that these decisions be made collaboratively?

The question was asked whether we need to define the different tracks. For instance, what behaviors/attributes constitute a teaching track? It was agreed that different committee members would explore different tracks and definitions of tracks and report back at the next meeting in two weeks.

**Action Items**
Mark volunteered to explore different tracks used in the United Kingdom system.
Tom will investigate the idea of a three-year cycle for transitioning to different pathways.
Chuck will compile some potential teaching track definitions.
Debbie will pull Duke University’s implementation of the track system.

Each person should be prepared to present an overview of what they were able to learn.

Meeting adjourned 10:45 a.m.

**Next Meeting: Friday, March 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., CIT 3150**