

SIUE FACULTY SENATE WELFARE COUNCIL-03/17/2011

Meeting called to order at 2:30 P.M. by Edmund Hershberger.

Present: Edmund Hershberger; Mark Hildebrandt; Christienne Hinz; Steve Kerber; Flo Maätita; Ken Moffett; Chris Pearson; Walter Siganga; Tianlong Yu

Excused: Rhonda Comrie; Susan Yager

Announcements

Hershberger announced that he would serve as acting chair for the Welfare Council meeting due to the absence of the Susan Yager, who was attending a conference.

Hershberger distributed notes from the meeting of the faculty friend policy working group.

Agenda Items

Item 1: All-Employee Handbook

The forced absence of Julie Hopwood and Sherrie Senkfor compelled tabling further discussions about the All-Employee Handbook and its implications for faculty.

Item 2: Consideration of Minutes from February Meeting

There was consideration of the need to specify the person who proposed removing the language of “lecturers and instructors” from 2 comments. Consensus was that no specification of the person was required. It was also noted that the minutes did not reflect the time the meeting adjourned. A change was made to reflect a 4:30PM adjournment; Hildebrandt moved the minutes be accepted as amended; Moffett seconded, and the amended minutes were approved unanimously.

Standing Committee Reports

1. Faculty Status Committee

No report or announcements—Rhonda Comrie was absent

2. Faculty Benefits and Facilities Committee

Christienne Hinz reporting. Hinz sought to update the Welfare Council on the progress of the faculty friendly policy working group. Hinz began with a broad description of the make-up and aims of the working group. She also noted that, due to a health concern, she was absent from the meeting of the working group on 3/16/2011. According to the document distributed by Hershberger, Welfare Council members who attended the working group meeting on 3/16 included: Tianlong Yu; Chris Pearson; Edmund Hershberger; and Ken Moffett. Guests included: Julie Hopwood (Office of the Provost), Sherrie Senkfor (Office of Human Resources); Phyleccia Reed Cole (General Council).

Hershberger proceeded to outline the 3/16 meeting. He began by pointing out that each of the guests of the working group voiced concerns about the language for many of the

policy proposals in the original faculty friendly policy; moreover, he characterized the concerns of administration as distinct from that of faculty as one of “outliers” versus “normal”—that, the administration must concern themselves with the way in which the language of the policy permits abuse or neglects to address exceptional cases versus the faculty’s aim to write the policy for routine circumstances. Moffett confirmed Hershberger’s general description of start of the 3/16 meeting.

Hinz and Moffett exchanged ideas about the hope of faculty versus administration in succeeding in finalizing a revised document by the end of the academic year.

Hinz and Hershberger exchanged ideas about whether there was interest on the part of the administration to commit to a firm timeline for the policy’s completion. Yu agreed that there should be worry about the effects of the administration’s demands implying unnecessary delays in finalizing the policy, but that a firm timeline should be secondary to constructing a policy that best serves the faculty. Hershberger voiced his view that administration’s suggestions for integrating more research findings about other university practices (etc) was simply to strengthen the case for such a policy both at the administration level and beyond and that any additional research need not prove overly burdensome. Hinz stated that it is important to structure the procedure for finalizing the policy proposal in a way that guarded against “drag” and delay.

Hershberger commented that the feedback from administrative, human resources, and legal representatives at the working group made evident the need for Welfare Council to revise and clarify the intent of many policy proposals therein. Various issues were considered (outlined by Hershberger):

How does the Provost’s departure impact the working group’s efforts to finalize a policy? Discussions within the working group, and including the representative from the Provost’s office revealed a prevailing attitude that the work to revise the proposed policy in light of concerns from the Provost’s office, human resources, and legal could proceed with the expectation that any interim or newly hired Provost would need to address the issue.

The Provost’s office voiced concerns to the working group that the faculty members in the working group were satisfied with devising a merely idealistic versus practical policy. Members of the working group clarified that the intent of largely setting aside financial concerns was to head-off dismissals of a faculty family policy in light of present budgetary constraints. There was recognition that we are in a negotiating phase and that the faculty were indeed seeking a policy that would be practical.

Given some decision-making capacities for Deans, there was a proposal to let the Deans review the policy. The working group encouraged the Provost’s office to arrange for the Deans council to review the policy, but Hershberger also expressed some concern about why that was necessary. Hinz and Moffett both wanted to make explicit that the role for the Deans was limited to commentary in light of their decision-making capacity and not to provide final approval for the policy.

Julie Hopwood from the Provost’s office wanted cooperation with Denise Cobb and her research group (STEM) investigating the status of women faculty in the

sciences especially. The question was raised regarding the value of such research given the original policy was accompanied by years worth of research. The consensus was that the research may provide some useful information, and Hershberger suggested that Welfare Council invite Denise Cobb to a Benefits and Facilities committee meeting to investigate the possibility of gaining relevant information.

The Provost's office requested that the report include findings about faculty friendly policies at "true peer" institutions. Moffett noted, which was echoed by others, that there is value to looking at institutions to which SIUE aspires to model. Pearson pointed out that the representative of SIUE's legal department at the working group stated that "What are our real peers doing?" is an inevitable question that will need to be answered with this kind of policy proposal. Hershberger explained that Senkfor from human resources told the working group that she was working on a summary of peer institutional practices, and there was consensus that that should continue and that the working group make use of that data.

As stated, the policy for family leave time is, in a sense, unlimited. Hershberger proposed that following FMLA rules, the limit could be that one needs to return to work for a time equal to leave time. Concerns were raised about the specific measure of time (e.g. Weeks? Semester? Year?) The proposal considered allowed up to one year leave, but required one to return to work for 1 year prior to taking additional leave time. Moffett re-wrote the policy document accordingly. Hildebrandt asked whether the limits were necessary since administration will have to approve leave time. In light of Moffett's comment, Hinz explained that it is possible to have closely timed life changing events, which may demand taking leave longer than 1 year. The idea of 5 iterations of 1 year leave was considered. Kerber worried that such practices will promote 1 year teaching positions. Consensus emerged that a reasonable policy would allow a 3 year limit. Hershberger noted that the policy also addresses part reduction of responsibilities for part pay and that similar concerns apply. There was agreement that the 3 year limit would apply to part reduction part pay as well. Moffett indicated that he would again rewrite the policy with these changes and distribute the reworked document.

The Provost's office wanted the policy also to make explicit that leave time is not compensation for faculty to be used at one's discretion. Instead, leave time is to be understood as being used in order to deal with life changing events as they occur. Pearson noted that the real underlying issue is not making clear that leave time is not compensation but rather making explicit the circumstances under which a faculty member is eligible to take leave (i.e. to define the extension of "life changing event"). Kerber asked if the Welfare Council needed to construct an exhaustive list, to which members of the working group responded, yes (Hershberger did note, however, that the Provost's office and legal both signaled that language such as "events similar to" those listed would be acceptable). Discussion ensued regarding potential candidates for the list: birth of a child; adoption, foster, or custody of a child; care for a sick family member. Hildebrandt noted leave for issues that related to ADA, which members of the working group responded would be covered under a different policy. Hinz suggested we consider judiciary/legal affairs. Pearson pointed out that care for a

sick family member might be too limiting, as there are instances of care for elderly parents, for example, though they may not be sick. There was agreement that Welfare Council should circulate further ideas about the meaning of “life changing event”. Hershberger asked that Moffett distribute his reworked policy document in light of the meeting’s discussions.

Hershberger noted that there was need for Welfare Council to attend to the upcoming salary equity efforts announced by Chancellor Vandergraft at the last senate meeting. Hershberger and Pearson pointed out that according to operating papers Welfare Council is supposed to have a liaison on the salary equity task force. Steve Kerber agreed to serve as that liaison.

Adjourn 4:47 PM

Respectfully submitted by:
Christopher H. Pearson