

Faculty Benefits Meeting

December 2, 2015

SU 108 3:15 PM

Members in Attendance: Abdullah Al-Bahrani, Patricia Sunderhaus, Debbie Patten, Kimberly Allen-Kattus, Emily Shifley, John Farrar, Andrea Gazzaniga, Kajsa Larson, Deb Engel Chilcote, Matthew Zacate, Melissa Moon, Vanessa Hunn, Joan Ferrante, Perry Bratcher

Call to order –

Adoption of the Agenda

Approval of Minutes November 4 Meeting

Old Business

Prioritizing goals for this year

New Business:

Prospective business for Spring 2016 semester

1. Advancing feedback on Faculty Development Award proposals

The short time line for the review is the main issue with this initiative.

Discussion:

Resolution: Matthew suggested that by moving Benefits meetings to the third Wednesday of each month it would solve the time issue. The Provost would support this change.

2. Improve Faculty Award Application and Review process.

This process is largely a matter of tweaking. One example of a point to be addressed is the fact that the form does not ask the applicant to address the issue of “urgency,” yet that is one of the criteria for the review.

Discussion: one committee member that it was not necessary to change this on the form as all applicants did address urgency in their respective applications made the point.

Issue: Some members feel that the word “urgency” should be replaced with another that might acknowledge more clearly disciplinary differences.

Resolution:

Matthew volunteered drafting some small changes with a continuing discussion of the word “urgency.”

3. Other changes in the format of the documents suggested: possibly specifying where bibliography and documentation should go.

4. Recommend requiring commitment letters from any collaborators mentioned in the project application.

5. Spell out parameter by which activities are approved or unapproved.
(Perhaps by explaining how it exemplifies the applicant's programs goals)
6. Clarify how some requested information is used to evaluate applications.
For example, why is it relevant if applicant has or has not obtained external funding?
7. Address issue with criterion N that addresses the quality of the proposal.
There are 5 characteristics of a high quality proposal. Are these the best characteristics or are there better, that is, more quantifiable characteristics that we should adopt?
8. Address issue with criterion d. Does it disadvantage, because it stresses "value of the project to applicant's teaching responsibilities and students, non-teaching faculty?

Resolution: Change the wording since Librarians, for example, do have parallel responsibilities but described differently

9. Revisit evaluation score sheets. It was noted that a subcommittee developed these through a long process and this might not be a profitable way to use our time.
10. Should we consider transferring funds from Summer Fellowship to Project grants? (so that faculty would not face double taxation if they failed to obtain a grant and used Fellowship money to purchase necessary research supplies meaning they would be paying both income and sales tax.

Matthew provided research on this question. Generally it seemed that there was only a fraction of applicants who received Summer Fellowships but did not receive Project grants. 2, or 4 were the most. Does this issue concern anyone enough to attempt to change the situation? No comment

11. Should we adopt a new policy to restrict Project award grants to once every third year?

Matthew again provided the research by examining the number of repeat rewards since 2012. It was agreed that it was a rare occurrence that probably didn't have an enormous impact on Project Grant applicant's chancing of obtaining a grant. Did not require a policy change.

12. Should we levy to expand the tuition waiver program? This question has come up in the past.

Discussion:

One committee member it might be economically feasible to increase tuition waiver credit hours if faculty and staff could accrue or bank the

tuition credits over time like the University of Cincinnati. The advantage to this would be that it would prevent employees from joining the university just for the express purpose of reaping the reward of tuition credits only to quit once their children had graduated.

Resolution: It was resolved that a subcommittee would be formed to research this item. Prospective subcommittee members: Melissa Moon, Jackie Wroughton, Kimberly Kattus, and Abdullah Al-Bahrani

13. Request more funds from the Provost for Faculty Development Awards. Matthew has spoken to the Provost and believes she is supportive of this initiative. It was resolved that Matthew would begin to create a proposal requesting more money for Faculty Development awards and possibly for Summer Fellowships also.

14. Finally the questions was raised as to specifically what role did the Benefits committee have in the discussion of Health Benefits. It was determined that the Benefits committee was the loci for any and all questions or issues with Health Benefits.

The next question put on the table was from Faculty Senate. Faculty were concerned about increases in costs of Health Insurance and other benefits. Matthew researched this and produced several charts that ultimately indicated that while some increases had occurred over time, these were not unreasonable in context with increases elsewhere.

Unfinished Business:

Time did not permit a vote on which of these issues to tackle so it was decided that the Benefits committee would peruse this list of issues and submit their preferred priorities to the Chair before the next meeting in February.

Thanks to the Chair for the extensive research he produced for this meeting.

Meeting adjourned

Next meeting: 3:15 p.m. February 3, 2016, SU 108

Respectfully Submitted

Kim Kattus