

Faculty Benefits Meeting – Minutes

September 2, 2020

Zoom; 3:15pm

Members present: Seth Adjei, Alyssa Appelman, Jay Avenido, Paige Byam Soliday, Charlisa Daniels, Mike DiCicco, Rebecca Elkins, Suk-Hee Kim, JeeEun Lee, Boni Li, Zeel Maheshwari, Vincent Owoso, Debbie Patten, Ausbra McFarland, Kalif Vaughn, Darrin Wilson, Xiaoni Zhang, Jennifer Kinsley, Sharon Vance-Eliany, (Grace Hiles)

Call to Order

Agenda – The agenda was amended to include the time of the meeting and an additional item to New Business (Discussion of repeat sabbaticals). The agenda was adopted by majority.

Minutes from April 1, 2020 meeting approved by majority

Introductions – All members present introduced themselves by name, department, and years of service on Benefits Committee. Changes/additions to the membership roster were acknowledged.

Benefits Committee Charge: Chair Charlisa Daniels reviewed the charge given to the Benefits Committee from the Faculty Senate Handbook:

1. Review, evaluate, and make recommendations concerning those policies, procedures, and programs related to faculty benefits
2. Process applications of and make recommendations on candidates for Faculty Sabbatical leaves, faculty Project Grants, Faculty Summer Fellowships, and other programs assigned by the Faculty Senate such as the Faculty Senate Scholarships

Selection of Secretary- A Zoom poll was conducted. Seth Adjei volunteered to serve as secretary of the committee

Faculty Development Workshops Announcement Charlisa announced the following workshops for faculty; faculty are allowed to go to any or all of the four sessions:

1. Overview of Faculty Development Awards to go over the types of awards, including requirements and conditions, the application process and timeline, and how the applications are reviewed

September 8th 10-11a via live Zoom (recorded for website)

September 9th 2-3p via live Zoom

2. Format of Faculty Development Award Proposals to go over the application format and review criteria in detail including frequently asked questions and common pitfalls

September 15^h 10-11a via live Zoom (recorded for website)

September 16th 2-3p via live Zoom

The presentation slides and video will be uploaded to the Benefits Committee website.

Brief overview of Faculty Development Award Process- Charlisa reviewed the FDAs granted in AY 19-20 and announced the number available for this year; see current year's budget

Faculty Development Awards granted in 2019-2020

Fellowships: 25 applications; 17 funded (out of 15 available)

Project Grants: 17 applications; 14 Funded (\$69,389 recommended budget)

Sabbaticals: 24 applications; 23 funded (out of 23 available)

Faculty Senate Scholarships: 7 applications; 2 tuition awards and 2 book awards funded

Current year's budget for 2020-2021 awards

Fellowships: 16 summer fellowships (\$6000 each -> \$96,000 total)

Project Grants: 11 full project grants (\$66,000 total)

Sabbaticals: 23 sabbaticals available

Timetable for Faculty Development Application Process : Charlisa identified the following important dates and timeline for FDA application:

October 6th at 4:30pm –Applications due to Grace Hiles, Chair [and Dean, if applying for a Sabbatical]

October 13th -Chair [and Dean] forms are due to Grace Hiles

November 4th -Subcommittee reports due to Full Committee

November 8th -Benefits committee finalizes recommendation

November 11th -Additional Benefits committee meeting to finalize recommendations (if needed)

December 1st -Full committee report to Provost

December 24th -Provost notification to applicants

Confidentiality of Sub-Committee Membership and Sign-up: Charlisa conducted a Zoom poll which asked members to sign up for first preference of the three FDA subcommittees as well as any they could not serve on due to conflicts of interest. Due to the poll only recording single answers for each question, Charlisa asked for emails addressing committee membership if the poll wasn't thorough enough. She reminded them of the confidentiality of the subcommittee membership and process.

Old Business

Paid Parental Leave Policy: Charlisa updated the committee on the events of the May Faculty Senate meeting where the policy was presented and discussed. As a result of the discussion, more data regarding the number of faculty and staff that request parental leave and cost of covering faculty and staff for a 16-week leave needs to be mined. It was mentioned that both (VP of Administration/Finance) Mike Hales and the Faculty Benefits Budget Committee should be consulted. The policy will still only concern parental leave; expansion to family leave (concerning loved ones of any age) can be considered and addressed after the piloting of the parental leave has built a foundation of expectation from both the faculty/staff membership and the administration. Once that is done, the proposal will return to the Faculty Senate. Due to the work surrounding the FDAs, that won't be until later this semester at the earliest (maybe November).

New Business

Discussion about full/part time faculty access to Faculty Development Awards: Charlisa presented a case of a faculty member on phased retirement who is classified as part-time. However, according to section 1.5.2 of the Faculty Handbook:

Faculty members on part-time appointments, whether term or permanent, **retain all rights and responsibilities attendant to their appointment as a tenured faculty member.**

This language can be interpreted as circular and warranted a discussion concerning the FDAs in relation to part-time faculty. The committee seemed to agree that this stream of revenue should be focused on the development of tenure-track faculty. There were some members who felt like sabbaticals were an award that may be amenable to phased retirement members of the community, due to the stipulation that a person on sabbatical must return for a full year. Other members thought that it might be fine to open the awards up, if the committee is very upfront about the prioritizing of full-time tenure/tenure-track faculty. It was also pointed out that colleges may have Professional Development Funds that are accessible to part-time and non-tenure track full time faculty and staff; as such, we may want to encourage applications to those programs when similar queries arise in the future.

Discussion about repeat sabbaticals: Charlisa presented a case in which a sabbatical had been awarded and then postponed for several years and the application for a repeat sabbatical had come before the 7th year gap has lapsed from the time of *completion, not granting of the award*. Section 11.1.2 of the Faculty Handbook (in part) states:

Accrual of time toward eligibility begins at the date of initial tenure-track appointment at the University, or July 1, 1970, whichever occurred later. After twelve (12) semesters of employment at the University, excluding summer terms, faculty are eligible to receive a sabbatical leave of one semester at full salary or two semesters at sixty-five (65) percent salary. **Twelve semesters after the year or semester for which the sabbatical leave was awarded, a faculty member is again eligible for a sabbatical leave.**

Eligibility for subsequent leaves accrues in the same fashion. A sabbatical leave may be postponed when the number of sabbatical applications recommended by the Benefits Committee exceeds the University's funding capabilities. The decision to postpone a leave will be reached in consultation with the applicant, chair/director and provost. If sabbaticals are postponed, the provost will make every effort to increase the total number of awards the following year by the number of awards postponed. **If a sabbatical leave is postponed by the administration, by the department/school, or by the faculty member, the faculty member may elect to take the sabbatical leave when he/she chooses, in consultation with the chair/director; however, eligibility for a subsequent leave shall be calculated on the basis of the semester/year for which the leave was awarded, not when it was completed.**

Charlisa wanted to discuss if the committee wanted to address this part of the Faculty Handbook and take a stand on whether the eligibility should concern the awarding or completion of the sabbatical. The suggestion was made that if we are deciding based on the completion of the sabbatical, we need to undergo the procedure necessary to take that change in language to the Faculty Senate and amend the Handbook. Others thought that a simple change to the application form, asking for last awarded and completion dates, be considered; such a change would not need to be approved by Faculty Senate. However, many thought the most transparent option was a change to the Faculty Handbook.

This is subject for future discussion and may be a discussion and voting item on the October agenda.

FDA alternate plans regarding COVID: A member brought up the thought about whether the FDAs needed to consider alternate plans regarding restricted operations in the next award period due to the global pandemic. Members were generally supportive of a communication being released to the community requesting a plan B (if their plan A cannot be executed in restricted conditions) in their

applications this year. A member thought that instead of requesting a plan B, we should highlight the pathway taken to request postponement of the FDAs. Another member cautioned against liberally advertising such a route, as that may affect the budget allotments in future years.

Future Meetings

October 7

October 21 [at chair's discretion]*

November 4

November 11[at chair's discretion]*

December 2

January 13

February 3

March 3

April 7

Motion to adjourn approved by majority vote. Meeting ended approximately 4:47pm.