Governance and Personnel Policy Committee of Faculty Senate
Tuesday, January 30, 2018
Faculty Collaborative Conference Room, D.H. Hill

Attendees: Ron Sederoff, Kerry Havner, Doug Pearce, Marina Bykova, Karen Bullock, Paul Huffman, Donna Carver, Phil Sannes
Guests: Dr. Linda M. Smith, Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity, Zach Lewis, Student Senate, and James Withrow, Student Senate

Discussion: Faculty Diversity and Student Senate

- The previous meeting's topic was revisited with invited guests from Institutional Equity and Diversity and Student Senate, who were welcomed to join us in a discussion focused on student input into university diversity issues and faculty recruitment. Student Senate was again commended for seeking to be involved in these important issues and promoting action that addresses them.

- The goals are to attract, recruit and retain the best and most diverse faculty possible. Representation challenges in each unit of the University is unique and different and further varies among disciplines. How does broad diversity training fit with these "micro cultures" – who know what they do best?

- The suggestion was made that getting out of one's comfort zone was an essential part of the process of understanding and promoting diversity. If this doesn't happen, the conversation becomes repetitive and self-fulfilling. The future will be more brown and gray, and most of us are not prepared. Inclusiveness is essential, and will lead to a more welcoming and diverse culture at all levels. Economic diversity and shared experience/stories are an important part of the process, too.

- There was agreement that a suggested common university website on the diversity issue is a good idea, and would lead to greater transparency and more accurate supportive statistics. Students, faculty, and administration working together on any common cause is always the best approach for moving forward.

- Discussion also touched on the challenges inherent in the recruitment process – competition for variable, sometimes limited pools of candidates, and how to develop a "best-foot-forward" environment that is attractive and welcoming. This is particularly difficult when the search involves under represented minorities and/or internationals whose experience and expectations are hard to anticipate. Characteristics of the best environments included the evidence for mutual respect and an intellectual community of shared values. This can be particularly difficult in an unsupportive political climate that does not recognize the development of a diverse university community. What are the economic consequences of not having diversity?

- Students clearly want to work with faculty and administration to make a logical, accurate proposal that can make a difference and promote relationships that lead to developing an atmosphere of mutual respect. Doors and minds must remain open.