

Governance and Personnel Policy Committee of Faculty Senate
Tuesday, October 2, 2018
Faculty Collaborative Conference Room, D.H. Hill

Attendees: Barbara Kirby, P.K. Lim, Jane Lubischer, Donna Carver, Steven Vincent, Marina Bykova, Phil Sannes

Guests: Katharine Stewart, Professor & Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Jeffrey Braden, Dean and Professor of Psychology, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Discussion: Non-tenure Track (NTT) and part-time (PT) faculty at NCSU

- Prior to the arrival of our guests the committee continued our previous discussion on NTT faculty. It was noted that the College of Engineering will be partnering with the College of Education to offer a PhD and Masters in engineering education. It will be funded by NSF. There was some interest about its eventual if not immediate impact on hiring practices in relation to the tenure vs non-tenure track paths. This will be interesting to follow.
- The NTT discussion resumed with a focus on what should be the minimum formula for compensation for teaching. At the last meeting it was mentioned that the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) recently established postdoctoral minimum salary is \$47,500/year or \$38,863 / 9 mos, and a surprising number of NTT faculty at NCSU were below that level. It was generally agreed that this figure was low, and didn't take into account levels of experience, or the demands of the subject being taught. There was discussion about what constitutes a real living wage, and whether postdoctoral compensation was even relevant in this context. It was noted that universities have defaulted to the business model of what the market will bear – or what they can get away with. Two important points were made. The first was how to possibly incentivize the conversion of NTT/PT faculty positions to full time, and the second was to propose development of a new strategic plan for better defining and compensating teaching and research career paths at NCSU.
- A recurring theme was the importance of a change in culture and climate to ultimately address NTT/PT faculty issues. This seems quite different among the various colleges and departments. This raised the question of exactly what might be achievable? Is the business model so ingrained in the university system that it's become a serious barrier to achieving an appropriate level of equity among faculty when it comes to compensation? Is uniformity among the colleges and departments even possible given the inherent need for flexibility in hiring to meet the sometimes shifting needs of students?
- Drs. Stewart and Braden joined the discussion. The issues of pay and length of contracts, if they were fixed term were discussed in the context of culture and defined career path. The latter is sorely lacking among NTT/PT faculty. The actual terminology of titles is also a problem among the colleges, as are the standards for promotion. It stated that we must avoid the practice of defining a

group of faculty by what they are “not”. It was also suggested that the term NTT be replaced by “Fixed Term”. Qualifications for hiring are well defined, but how they translate into promotional advancement are not. Dr. Braden indicated he has instructed all of his departments to develop departmental rules regarding the promotion of faculty not on the tenure track.

- What are the key factors moving forward? How to increase multiyear contracts to balance the need for flexibility with the fear/reality of unpredictable budgets? Also involved are possible pullbacks in benefits, and security vs. salary issues.
- The data for the “floor” on starting salaries is not very good. It’s difficult to back check on “course value”, and the comparisons for teaching faculty nationally varies widely as do the titles they represent. Senate support for establishing and raising the level of a basic floor could be a step in the right direction. Benefits eligibility is also an important consideration, the threshold for which is at .75 FTE. But pushback from some TT faculty is possible, as they could interpret this as a threat to tenure.
- Four items for consideration by the Senate were proposed for NTT faculty:
 1. A clearly stated path to promotion --> College and departmental rules regarding promotion for “all” faculty (not just TT).
 2. Fixed terms of employment with benefits (or the option for?) --> ? Encouraging a move toward full time with benefits where possible.
 3. Minimum compensation (wage)
 4. Establish / clarify a universal minimum for per capita vs course compensation

We closed with a brief discussion of the promotion process, and how to involve NTT involvement in the decision making process within their peer group. That may take some time and much further discussion.