University of Arkansas Libraries Faculty Personnel Document Task Force

Combined minutes for the March 31st and April 2nd meetings of the task force with the faculty

In attendance: Amy Allen, Tess Gibson, Jason Dean, Donna Daniels, Mary Gilbertson, Deb Kulczak, Patricia Kirkwood, Elizabeth McKee, Necia Parker-Gibson, Mikey King, Tim Zou, Beth Juhl, Jozef Laincz, and (at both sessions) Janet Parsch.

Meetings started promptly at 11AM on Tuesday, March 31, and at 10AM on Thursday, April 2, 2015.

A wide variety of queries, suggested changes to the document, or other changes in library practices were presented and discussed.

- What is the legality of having a new faculty member sign on under one set of job requirements and deadlines, and then have one or both of these changed without their consultation or agreement?

- There was very strong assent to the idea that the Statement of Duties and Goals for the coming year, should NOT come before annual performance reviews. The underlying issue is: How can a faculty member describe further duties and set future goals without knowing how their previous performance of duties and assessment of goals attained, were rated by their supervisors?

- Does the Post-Tenure Committee have a role in triggering or recommending an Improvement Development Plan?

- Would it not be more beneficial if the Faculty Review Checklists of all faculty were posted in Alexandria or a similarly secure file to which our faculty has access, so that all could see what their colleagues were up to, and perhaps open up opportunities to collaborate, coordinate, and to develop a long view of the faculty member’s potential for tenure and promotion?

- Should we not formalize absentee voting procedures for Tenure & Promotion? The current practice is not well documented, and actual practices are inconsistent. We should spell out a consistently followed statement for absentee voting under the following instances: Out sick; On vacation; Traveling on university business.

- It was suggested that we, as a faculty, should consider what our view ought to be of the Library Human Resources Office. Do they have the right to attend faculty meetings? And on a related matter: Should Directors be in attendance at faculty meetings? Attendance by either group might be construed as suppressing the free and confidential flow of ideas among colleagues.

- It was suggested that we ought to consider an expanded and clearly codified role for the faculty as a whole in choosing search committees, and in deciding which candidates gets invited on campus, which get hired, and at what ranks. In particular, it was suggested that all of the
members of the department into which the successful candidate will migrate, ought to have significantly more time with the candidate, than is possible in our current post-presentation refreshment break and/or the afternoon meeting where the candidate fields questions from over 20 of us. Furthermore, it was suggested that any faculty members who are willing to pay their own lunch and/or dinner tab, should be able to go to the candidate’s “interview meals.” Wider exposure of the candidate to us, and greater familiarity of the candidate with us as potential colleagues, would likely to improve decision-making on the part of both parties.

- It was suggested that we should write a preamble to the revised document stating what the intent of our revisions are.

- It was suggested that we make a decision on whether or not we will specifically cite memoranda from the Provost’s Office on what is recommended practice, particularly in the matter on who gets to decide which external reviewers ought to be nominated or chosen. Right now, it appears we are not in conformity with the Provost’s wishes, some of which are not covered in the official documents.

- It was suggested that the following are items that we should probably handle via addenda which can be revised as needed, as opposed to the formal language built into the Personnel document itself, which requires the approval of the Provost.
  
  - The hiring and promotion of the so-called: “contingent faculty.” i.e. Non-tenure track, visiting, or clinical faculty.
  - The appointment of faculty mentors: Who makes them, and what their duties are?
  - The faculty orientation process ought to be better documented and actually executed with new faculty in a more timely and consistent manner.

- The meetings closed promptly on the hour after their beginning.

Tony Stankus, FSLA, Life Sciences Librarian & Distinguished Professor, & Secretary of this Committee