

Faculty Council  
Meeting Minutes  
April 6, 2007

**Present:** Julio de Paula, Dean of the College; Jane Hunter, Associate Dean; Cliff Bekar, Associate Professor of Economics; Dinah Dodds, Professor of German; Deborah Heath, Associate Professor of Anthropology; Elizabeth Safran, Associate Professor of Geological Sciences; Mervyn Brockett, Assistant to the President; and Kara Thieleman, Administrative Assistant and recorder.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. The council decided to rearrange items on the agenda due to limited time. The most important item is to provide talking points for a discussion of the academic staffing strategy at the all-chairs meeting.

**Gender Studies Position**

Associate Dean Hunter distributed the revised Gender Studies position description. Professor Heath explained that the director they are seeking would provide support for both the Gender Studies and Multi-Cultural symposia. The position description needs to indicate that the scope of the Multi-Cultural symposium is more delimited than that of the Gender Studies symposium. Associate Dean Hunter said that part of the Multi-Cultural symposium is supported by student funds, and students may have their own ideas about what can be sustained. Recently the event has gone from very modest to very ambitious very quickly. She spoke with the student head of the Multi-Cultural Planning Committee, who was very receptive to the idea of a more contained event with more sustainable growth. The goal is to make the position description as clear as possible, given the ambiguity due to student funding. This will ensure that the position does not interfere with the work done by Ethnic Student Services. The issue of student funding adds vitality to the event, but on the other hand increases the complexities of dealing with resource management and the budget. The matter needs to be discussed further with Student Leadership.

**Talking points for non-tenure staffing strategy discussion**

Dean de Paula said the discussion of the College's strategy for staffing its academic program needs to be grounded in principles of the College's academic mission. The Faculty Council discussed talking points for the chairs meeting. The following comments and points were made:

- Having well-defined limits will minimize the risk that an individual will feel personally attacked when a contract is not renewed.
- In the faculty handbook, there is an instructor designation meant for those without a terminal degree. The lecturer position is for those with terminal degrees who are not on a tenure track. Some colleges establish a limit of a certain number of years for those with the terminal degree.
- If one motivation is to establish a dependable cadre to teach the Core, then a six-year limit results in the College constantly training new people to teach in the Core. It could also send the message that the Core is less important than other

departments. However, Reed College hires very accomplished people who teach for six years, so it does not necessarily send a negative message.

- The designation of lecturer is used differently by various departments. In the art department, each lecturer is in charge of a program, so the designation carries other responsibilities besides teaching. Music does this as well. Expectations are placed on these lecturers that make them equivalent to tenure-line faculty but without the respect of a tenure-line position. The faculty handbook is clear that only senior lecturers are expected to carry additional administrative duties. Lecturers are two-year appointments and senior lecturers are five-year appointments, both of which are renewable so long as the need exists.
- The Graduate School allows the rank of assistant or associate professor without tenure. It could be worthwhile to look at practices across the institution. If there is a six-year rule, why is it not used at the Graduate School?
- The six-year rule may be intended to give someone a probationary period, after which she or he either earns or is denied tenure. If the person is retained without tenure beyond six years, this might be perceived as an implicit agreement to keep them on board. It is not realistic to think that the College can create long-term contracts and have the flexibility to easily terminate them. It may not be *de facto* tenure, but it is very difficult to sever the tie, especially if the lecturer is doing well.
- There is no legal prohibition on successive appointments beyond a six-year maximum, though continuous appointments can create arguments for common-law tenure. However, this can be minimized through proper documentation. The College may want to give serious consideration to its obligation to a visitor who has been giving up other appointments for a long time.
- The Law School appoints clinical faculty to successive three-year contracts without regard to how many times a contract is renewed. Clinical professors have historically been treated in this manner, rather than as tenure-track faculty. However, the American Bar Association has been advocating for tenure.
- The College needs to be mindful of what it is doing at each stage of the process and of the potential consequences. If the need disappears, you may be asking someone to leave after 20 years. While it is legal to do so, the effect on people in those positions must be considered.
- There was a question as to whether there are other programs, beside the Core, for which broad support for a cadre of lecturers could be imagined. There is one lecturer in foreign languages as well as some instructors.
- Part of the resistance to teaching in the Core may be related to departments not wanting to give up other courses in order to do so. Perhaps the problem should be addressed in the Core, rather than in the departments.
- Perhaps a different title could be used to distinguish new hires from those already in senior lecturer positions. Adjuncts tend to be used only in emergency situations. Reed uses the designation of visitor for those on a non-renewable, six-year contract. The art department is moving away from the designation of senior lecturer. The focus in this case is not on the art department, it is on the Core.

- If the issue of Core were to be the item that tips the scale in favor of establishing more lecturer positions, the Core needs to be revisited and brought back to the faculty. It would be a policy change regarding staffing, not just teaching.
- If the College is anticipating a number of years of budgetary constraint where only one tenure line can be established per year, the longer term aim of improving the student-faculty ratio would be put on hold. It would also mean that the need for non-tenure track faculty will continue.

The Faculty Council decided on the following talking points for the chairs meeting:

- More lecturer and senior lecturer positions could allow the Core program to be more reliably staffed.
- Doing so would impair the College's ability to convert visitors into tenure lines.
- Visitors and lecturers are not required to do scholarship, though some do. Scholarship is a vital component of the College.
- Flexibility needs to be preserved so that sudden and pressing needs in particular curricular areas can be addressed. It is difficult to sever relations with long-term, non-tenured faculty. There are concerns regarding "common-law" tenure.
- Long-term commitments to non-tenure track faculty could limit the ability of the College to be strategic in hiring a diverse tenure-track faculty.
- Creating a cadre of lecturers on renewable, multi-year contracts could help staff the Core program more reliably, considering that departments are not required to contribute tenure-track faculty to the program. However, the College could also achieve a significant degree of stability and maximize quality by offering terminal five-year contracts to staff dedicated to the Core.

Dean de Paula said he will send the talking points out in an email before the all-chairs meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.