Minutes for Parsons Faculty Council meeting: November 10, 2010: 8 to 9 AM.  
Taken by Greg Newton

Attendance:
David Lewis (liaison from UFS to PFC)
Tamara Albu
Seth Nagelberg
Heico Wesselius
Anezka Sebek
David Brody
Sarah Lichtman
James Merdolia
David Carroll
Cynthia Lawson
Craig Bernecker
Simone Douglas
Adam Brent
Greg Newton

Note: This is the last Parsons Faculty Council (PFC) meeting of 2010 and next week’s Parsons Faculty Assembly (PFA) meeting on November 16th will be the last PFA meeting of 2010.

Topic 1:
Addressing President Kerry’s Nov. 8th announcement of change in health insurance provider from Aetna to Oxford to take effect in January 2011

- The language used in the letter suggested that employees overused the health care plan, and that this led to increases.

- Why were the predictions of employee usage of the plan so far off? This is not a minor shift. Premiums will change significantly. Who makes this estimate?

- Might the rise in usage have to do with spouses losing jobs?

- It’s also possible that the recent change in insurance plans led people to increase use of the plan. That is, the change may have led employees to examine the benefits available to them.

- Suggestion that at the PFA meeting on Nov. 16th the Council should ask all full-time faculty (FTF) to calculate the increase in employee contributions with the shift to the Oxford plan. FTF should send their calculations to the Council so that the Council can assess what this change will cost FTF.

- Remember: Aetna benefits do not expire until 12/31/10, so FTF should make use of the plan before it expires.
• We need to consider what roles the Senate and PFC will play in addressing the change in plans.

**Topic 2: Workload Committee Research**

• Cynthia Lawson gave an update on the University-wide Faculty Handbook Committee. The Handbook Committee includes faculty from all university divisions, mostly tenured faculty. Cynthia, Peter Wheelwright, and Ken Stevens represent Parsons on this committee.

• The Provost has charged each division with drafting a workload policy and a divisional charter. Parsons is the only division to have completed these two tasks. There is still a question as to whether each division will have its own workload policy.

• The Parsons Leadership Council is no longer working on workload.

• Are the School Deans using the workload policy that was presented in fall 2009?
  
  o ADHT: yes.
  o Fashion: no.
  o AMT: very tentatively.
  o SDS: Dean announced that if there is no university-wide policy in place by fall 2011 then he will use the Parsons policy.
  o SCE: An attempt is being made to use policy.

• The policy still leaves a number of questions: for example, the policy’s implications for Renewable Term Appointments (RTA). We should pursue this question next semester. RTAs need confirmation of the policy’s implications.

• In the PFC’s first spring meeting we should set goals for the semester.

**Report from Workload Committee**

• We’ve revised the survey to make it less time-consuming. (Note: PFC members received the new survey prior to this meeting). This will be a one-time survey. We would like to present the survey to the PFA at the meeting on 11/16/10.

• The new survey is a response to the fact that very few FTF filled out last semester’s survey.

• Disappointment was expressed regarding the PFA meeting on 10/19/10. PFC was not united. Some PFC members seemed to be unaware of the Workload Committee’s research. We need to make an effort to stay informed of all PFC committee work.

• By focusing on fall it should be easier to gain compliance. Now we will ask each all FTF to fill out. PFC members and Deans should encourage others to fill out.
We need to establish a timeline for completing the survey and assessing the data. It was suggested that FTF complete the survey between Nov. 22nd and Dec. 13th. The Workload Committee can then compile and present data by end of fall semester.

We should assess the data in relation to the workload policy and make recommendations before sending it to Parsons Dean.

Four main issues addressed:
1. The breakdown of the three categories of FTF activities: Teaching, Service, and Research, Scholarship, and Creative Practice (RSCP).
2. The issue of confidentiality.
3. The scope of the survey in terms of the calendar year.
4. The need for additional questions.

1. Breakdown of FTF activities

- Recommendation made that the RSCP category be parsed in a similar fashion to Teaching and Service.
- We should refer to definitions of RSCP in workload policy.
- Suggestion: break down RSCP into three categories: Planning, Execution, Dissemination.
- The point of using the term RSCP was to include a variety of practices that traditionally fall under research.
- Where should we include the time used for preparing dossiers? Soo Chon (former Director of FTF) did ask faculty who submitted dossiers how many hours they spent preparing. Maybe Nadine Bourgeois has this information.
- Preparing the dossier should be included under Service. Preparing for promotion evaluation should likewise be included under Service, as well as service to profession.
- Re: Teaching: we should have a space to indicate course release.
- Curriculum development falls under Service. Course preparation falls under Teaching.
- FTF should include course preparation for spring 2011 semester under Teaching in the survey for fall 2010.

2. The issue of confidentiality.

- Concerns voiced about requiring FTF to include names. Paranoia regarding reviews is common.
- It was pointed out that even if we don’t include names it will be easy to determine who the faculty members are by looking at the names of courses taught, committee memberships, etc.
- Response: including names gives the survey credibility.
- Suggestion to use N-numbers.
- The introductory language should inspire confidence that the information submitted will not present risks to faculty.
- Can names be confidential?
• Agreement that names will only be disclosed to PFC. Any data released to others will not include names.

3. The scope of the survey in terms of the calendar year.

• All summer preparation for fall semester should be included. We could include two weeks before the fall semester begins and one week after it ends.
• FTF should refer to dates for all the information they include.
• We’ll get much more accuracy if we focus on a snapshot as opposed to broadening the survey’s scope.
• Another problem is that we work a nine month calendar in name only. Should we add a question as to whether FTF think the workload policy calendar is accurate?
• Should we make it clear that this is one of a series of snapshots, to be followed by surveys of winter break, spring semester, and summer break?
• We should include a link to the fall 2009 FTF Workload Policy and the policy should guide timeframe.
• Do we have time to do more surveys? Tim Marshall said that we’re moving quickly on workload policy for the FTF Handbook.
• The other divisions haven’t even submitted workload policies, so we have time.

4. The need for additional questions.

• In SCE we have construction studio managers—what category do these fall under in terms of role?
• We could lump studio managers and coordinators together.
• No. We should add studio managers as a separate category.
• The category of Director needs to include specifics: e.g., Program Director.

Other Suggestions:

• Once we’ve finalized our analysis of the data should we send it to Senate Faculty Affairs committee?
• The head of the Faculty Affairs Committee is also on the FTF Handbook Committee, so the information will be shared.

Additional suggestions for the FTF workload survey should be sent to the Workload Committee asap so that revisions can be made before PFA Meeting on 11/16/10.

Meeting adjourned.