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Faculty Roles and Rewards Task Force Report

Submitted by Linda Bleicken

10/4/2004

Discussion:

Following extensive campus discussion of the Faculty Roles and Rewards Task Force Report, the report is submitted to the Faculty Senate for information and comment.

Rationale:

The Faculty Roles and Rewards Task Force has submitted its report which is the result of two years of effort. During the two years of its development, the report has benefitted from input from both faculty and administrators. Most recently, feedback was solicited through two faculty forums held in August and September, 2004. The Faculty Welfare Committee also provided feedback during its meeting of September 24, 2004. The report being forwarded to the Faculty Senate reflects input from both forums and from the Faculty Welfare Committee.

Response:

Request for Comments by Provost Linda Bleicken, "Faculty Roles and Rewards Task Force Report":

Jeanette Rice Jenkins (COST, Senate Moderator) called on Linda Bleicken (Provost) to introduce, for Senate comment, the Faculty Roles and Rewards (FRR) Task Force Report. Bleicken noted that the FRR had been at work on the document for the past two years. She went on to say that a version ready for comments had been presented in faculty forums held in August and September of this year and that FRR Chair Denise Battles had met with the Faculty Welfare Committee for further input which she then took back to the FRR Task Force. The document as it now stands is offered to the Senate for comment.

Richard Flynn stated that, at one of the forums, he had asked why could there not be a maximum workload value 50% for scholarship when there was a minimum of 40% for teaching. He noted that the document remained unchanged and wanted to know why. Mary Hazeldine, a member of the FRR, asked that Denise Battles (FRR Chair) answer that question. Battles replied that there had been extensive discussion on this point and that former Provost Vandegrift had said that he did not want a system in which the lowest value for teaching was lower than the highest value for scholarship. Battles said that language was added to the document to say that these numbers should be revisited later on to maintain alignment with the University's Mission and strategic Plan. Battles also noted that Flynn was the only individual to make that comment.

Michael Nielsen (CLASS) wanted to know how Rutgers University managed to appear on the list of Peer and Aspirational Institutions listed in the back of the report and why the lists are such a hodgepodge of institutions. Rice Jenkins called on Bruce Grube (President) to answer. Grube stated that the Board of Regents gave Georgia Southern University a list of "Peer Institutions" at the beginning of strategic planning. It was decided at that point to make another "Aspirational Institution" list of institutions from which we could really learn something and that was the origin of the two lists.

Candy Schille commented that the workload agreement between the faculty member and unit head looked like a contract model. That is, the faculty member and unit head contract for what work will be done during an academic year. She noted that journal articles sometimes take several years to appear and wanted to know how long-term items like this would be evaluated after a "contract" has been set up. Mary Hazeldine said that faculty members could go back to the unit head and go over the "contract" to account for things such as articles that suddenly appear after a long review time or a large, unforeseen service commitment.

Candy Schille further asked if there were any type of appeals process if, for example, you did not get along with your unit head. Linda Bleicken replied that that had not been considered in the FRR document presented to the Senate. Jeanette Rice Jenkins asked Linda Bleicken whether the document could be revised at a later date to which Bleicken replied in the affirmative.

Pat Humphrey (COST) worried that a faculty member might go along fine for a few years under the "contract" model and then be told at tenure/promotion time that he/she doesn't have enough papers or such like. Linda Bleicken replied that it was up to the unit head to let a faculty member know how he/she was progressing toward these long-term goals.

Ming Fang He (COE) asked whether class size would be taken into account when determining workload. Mary Hazeldine replied that such decision would be made within the unit and Denise Battles noted the concept of “workload” was flexible enough to allow departments and colleges to devise equivalencies for teaching hours that account for class size. Debra Sabia noted that there were serious inequities across campus as to teaching classes of different size and that regular-sized classes have grown in recent years, but which faculty members still get same credit for these as in the past. Linda Bleicken agreed with that assessment and said that the FRR Task Force had looked this issue and had also found this to be true.

Ming Fang He worried about the effect of increased teaching load on the evolution of the future vision of Georgia Southern University. Right now, she said, if we want to move beyond a Master’s Tier One University, the workload would be a critical issue. President Grube responded that the Teacher/Scholar model coupled with the “workload hour” concept defined in the FRR Report was a system that accommodates Georgia Southern University’s evolution toward a more research-intensive institution.

Pat Walker (CLASS) asked what would become of the document now. Linda Bleicken replied that it would go to Dean’s Council to be used as a foundation so that the Deans can begin to establish or refine their workload policies within their colleges. Walker asked that this process be made as transparent as possible to which Bleicken concurred.