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Richard Flynn
Georgia Southern University

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Program Directors Language to be included in College Bylaws (at the request of the Provost's Office)

Submitted by Richard Flynn

5/12/2011

Motion:

College bylaws shall include language specifying program directors' qualifications at both the undergraduate and graduate level as well as a description of program directors' duties.

Rationale:

Across colleges there is broad diversity in how program directors/coordinators are utilized as well as trained. It is our hope that colleges will use the opportunity afforded to them by having written bylaws to add clarity and equity to the program director/coordinator function. Specifically, defining the duties for program directors and coordinators (if different) in their respective colleges as well as outlining what the appropriate qualifications would be for the position. Having position descriptions for program directors/coordinators is good educational practice.

SEC Response:

6/8/2011: The Senate Executive Committee, Item B, approved Richard Flynn’s Request for a Motion to include in the College Bylaws language specifying program directors' qualifications at both the undergraduate and graduate levels as well as a description of program directors' duties. That motion appears at item seven on today's agenda. It constitutes an addition to recommendation #three of the Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Governance adopted earlier this year.
Moderator Krug introduced a Request for a Motion that the program directors’ language to be included in the college bylaws. This is in addition to recommendation #3 of these bylaws and the handout reflects the wording as it appears in the Faculty Handbook. Moderator Krug noted that “We adopted that language at the last Faculty Senate meeting.” The motion was read into the record: “College bylaws shall include language specifying program directors' qualifications at both the undergraduate and graduate level as well as a description of program directors' duties.”

Pat Humphrey (COST) wondered “how burdensome this might be for faculty governance committees, or other committees within colleges every time a qualification might change because of SACS requirement or some accreditation by a body of requirement, you’d then have to amend the Bylaws?” Provost Moore responded that “a description of a program directors duties would be somewhat like the tenure and promotion criteria say in a department and if those criteria are changed they live inside the Bylaws, but that part can be changed without changing the entire set of Bylaws.”

Parliamentarian Bob Cook offered some clarification. “The question is whether Bylaws would dictate positions in a college, the qualifications in a college, and the duties of an individual in a college as opposed to committees which bylaws by and large currently identify the committees and the charge to those committees. And even include the qualifications for the chair of a committee. But this would, I think, be an a different category when you are talking an individual position, and I don’t know whether there are other Bylaws of any of the colleges that actually list individual positions and have that kind of detail.”

Pat Humphrey (COST) noted that “the COST Bylaws do not include that.” They simply stated “that program directors need to meet specific qualifications and will have duties assigned by and in coordination with their chair and the dean.”

Moderator Krug noted that this request came from the Provost’s office and asked Kathy Alberston (Provost’s Office) to comment. Alberston (Provost’s Office) responded that the concern arose with respect to a discussion about a program director in the College of Graduate Studies. The concern was over language, just to be sure that workload issues were discussed. Pat Humphrey (COST) stated that for COST, it was her understanding that “the workload, the duties, the remuneration would be agreed upon between the chair, the dean, and the individual and that they did have to meet qualifications as necessary because of accreditation issues.” Dean Bret Danilowicz (COST) explained that “By putting it in the bylaws, the specific responsibilities of a
graduate program chair that might work if all departments and colleges were structured the same, but about half of our departments have assistant chairs, half don’t. [So], we have programs then that have different duties depending on the functioning needed within that department so I think specifying it down to that level within any specific college will make it too restrictive. As Pat pointed out, then each time you revise a specific duty, there’s a huge amendment process which takes about a year in our college and you know if we are trying to be nimble moving ahead over the next ten years, I think the more that we can retain the flexibility while making sure that the workload responsibilities are there, but that workload responsibility comes down to the faculty governance committee within the college. That would be my perspective.”

Dean Mike Smith (CLASS) pointed out that “CLASS is in the process of creating Bylaws. So, we don’t have them yet. We do have a policy, however, that addresses this issue of graduate directors and what the compensation essentially is for a graduate director. I see that as useful information to have in a policy, which is more easily changed and amended than a bylaw, which as Dean Danilowicz just pointed out, there’s a cumbersome process that’s in place to amend bylaws.” Moderator Krug (CLASS) asked Dean Smith (CLASS) to confirm that “these policies do not appear in the bylaws” of CLASS. He agreed and stated that they would appear in the ‘College Policies and Procedures’ that are on the website.”

Dick Diebolt (COGS) noted that given Dr. Patterson’s absence, “we wanted to make these remarks. In the College of Graduate Studies we have over a period of time had significant and robust discussion in our Graduate Program Director’s meeting as well as in the Graduate Committee, regarding roles and responsibilities and also compensation for program directors and coordinators. And that’s been an ongoing process. We do have listed in our Graduate Program Directors Manual, a listing of the roles and responsibilities of Graduate Program Directors trying to define what they broad breadth of those responsibilities can be in the various programs. But one of the key things, of course, that has always been missing is the compensation or remuneration or support, monetary support for these individuals to carry out their responsibilities. So that is always an ongoing issue with respect to what has just been mentioned, with respect to how does one change these if those responsibilities or roles change.”

Provost Moore noted the support for the idea that “basically, it’s a good business practice to have these things codified, but obviously do not want to create additional onerous burden of having to go through the formal ratification process of bylaws every time there is a change.” He suggested that the motion be withdrawn on behalf of the Provost’s Office and that the motion be brought to the floor again after some revisions. Moderator Krug agreed.

Parliamentarian Bob Cook (CIT) noted that “it seems that there might be a gap in that there is no policy on policy manuals. It probably is appropriate to have some guidelines, possibly in the Faculty Handbook or from the Provost’s Office on areas that need policy but would not be part of a bylaw.” He then suggested that the motion be tabled in the
form of a resolution and that the Senate would ask the provost’s Office to recommend policy statements. Provost Moore expressed support for “a set of University policies that live outside of the *Faculty Handbook*.”

Pat Humphrey (COST) moved to table the motion and send it back to the Provost’s office. The motion to table was seconded and approved.