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Changes to the Balance of Faculty Responsibilities in Teaching and Research/Creative Activity

Submitted by: Robert Pirro

2/4/2014

Motion:

The Faculty Senate moves that any administrative initiative at the college level or above to change the current relative balance of research and creative activities vis-a-vis teaching activities in the overall mix of faculty responsibilities be brought before the Senate for discussion and a vote.

Rationale:

During this academic year and apparently in response to the possibility of a budget cut, university administrators have, in various venues articulated views that suggest a retreat from the present understanding that all GSU faculty (with the exception of those involved in fields where teaching and/or service are central components) are to pursue teaching and research/creative activity in a roughly equal balance and are to be assessed on both measures. So, for example, in a meeting of CLASS faculty called last November, the CLASS dean suggested a change in the understanding of the balance of faculty teaching and research/creative activity when he invited junior faculty who considered themselves to be teachers and scholars in roughly equal measure to seek employment elsewhere. In an administration response to an RFI following that meeting, the university president suggested an administratively-driven change to the balance of teaching and research/creative activity may be in the offing when he wrote, "College Deans, working with their respective chairs and faculty, should assess on an ongoing

basis the current teaching loads of faculty to determine if, in cases of reduced load, a proportionate increase in scholarship and/or service has been accomplished. If not, teaching loads will need to be readjusted.”

Retreats from the current understanding of the appropriate mix of faculty commitments to teaching and research/creative activity ought not be undertaken by administrators alone and solely in response to budget prospects that are in flux without a thorough, comprehensive, and collaborative analysis both of the benefits that have accrued to the university and its various stakeholders from the present understanding and of the possible costs of change.

SEC Response:

2/10/2014: The SEC did not approve this item as a motion because it was unclear if the problem as stated affected more than just CLASS. Additionally, the relative balance of teaching and creative/research activity is not well established across colleges and departments, some of which have higher expectations for research/creative activity than others.

Nevertheless, the SEC recognized that the motion, even as written, raises a number of issues of great importance to the university that will profit from being discussed at the next Senate meeting. Therefore the SEC will allow for a discussion of the activities expected of faculty and the relative emphasis placed on those activities at the Senate meeting of 2/14/14.

2/14/2014: The Senate did not discuss due to Dr. Pirro’s absence at the meeting