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Temporary Nature of Increased Workloads Imposed by Current Extraordinary Circumstances

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Senate Executive Committee Motion Request

Approved by the Faculty Senate: 5/21/2019

Not Approved by the Faculty Senate:

Approved by the President:

Approved by the President's Cabinet:

Temporary Nature of Increased Workloads Imposed by Current Extraordinary Circumstances

Submitted by: Marc Cyr

5/4/2019

Motion(s):

That the Provost and/or President provide a policy in writing that states that any increases over stated norms in faculty workloads imposed by current abnormal circumstances will not be permanent, will not set a precedent for future faculty workloads, and will expire as soon as we return to what the Provost calls "normal times" or within one contract year, whichever comes first.

Rationale:

In the CAH spring meeting, the Provost repeatedly noted that the University might, on a temporary basis, need to increase the workloads of some or all faculty. He called this, alternately and several times, either faculty "taking one for the team" or "doing it for the gipper." He said that such increases would be terminated when we return to "normal days." When I asked him to put that termination commitment in writing because my experience has often been that verbal promises or agreements at this University often go unhonored, that only those in writing are dependable, he replied that he had made the same promises at a Faculty Senate meeting and therefore they were recorded in the written minutes of that meeting. There are two

problems with the Provost's position on this, however: First, I do not think that two relatively colloquial statements, even when both have been recorded, are any better than just one such statement, and certainly do not have the same status or concreteness as a written policy statement. Second, verbal statements can be (or can be represented as) inaccurate because delivered "on the go" rather than being the result of considered composition (with definitions) and revision.

Response:

SEC: Approved to move to the floor. Forwarded to VPAA.

Minutes: 5-21-2019

d. *Motion* – Temporary Nature of Workload Increases – Marc Cyr (CAH)

This motion stated that “the Provost and/or President provide a policy in writing that states that any increases over stated norms in faculty workloads imposed by current abnormal circumstances will not be permanent, will not set a precedent for future faculty workloads, and will expire as soon as we return to what the Provost calls "normal times" or within one contract year, whichever comes first.” Dustin Anderson (CAH) made the motion. Richard Fynn (CAH) seconded.

Discussion: Rob Pirro (CBSS) asked what the Provost thinks about this motion. Carl Reiber (Provost) responded that he believes the new workload policy takes care of this issue. Beyond that, if what is being asked of faculty exceeds 100% of workload, a discussion would need to take place. Marc Cyr (CAH) congratulated the Senate for wanting guidelines in writing. He noted that he made this motion before the current workload policy was proposed, but he believes this motion needs to be put in writing to protect non-tenured and other vulnerable faculty as this gives recourse over verbal promises. If one is asked to carry a workload over 100%, there ought to be a limit.

Janice Steirn (CBSS) stated that she likes this motion but we need to be explicit about what ‘normal times’ means. What conditions constitute normal times? Chris Cartright (CAH) expressed support for the motion. He noted that the statements about the impact of the budget on faculty workloads had been interpreted in different ways. Complex matters need to be clarified, especially considering the amount of administrative turnover and recent fluctuations in enrollment. He encouraged the provost’s and president’s offices to have clear communications.

Dustin Anderson (CAH) noted that this motion speaks to the issue of trust, especially in recent times after consolidation. We want a way to feel good about decisions and continuity, and we want to have a clear understanding of expectations. Marc Cyr (CAH) concurred, quoting former President Ronald Reagan "Trust, but verify." Heidi Alman (CBSS) asked about tenure / promotion guidelines which state that faculty cannot be assigned a workload that will impede advancement towards tenure and / or promotion. How does this affect lecturers with a 5/5 load as this load impedes their progress towards promotion? She said that if something were to be put in writing, it would feel better. Dustin Anderson (CAH) agreed and pointed out that the new workload policy states that expectations must be outlined. Michele Haberland (CAH) noted that our new workload policy will not be effective immediately, and our current one is in violation because lecturers are on 5/5 load. This 5/5 load should be documented as a case of extraordinary circumstances, she maintained. Jack Simmons (CAH) noted that every year is a "crisis year." He likes the last clause in the motion which stipulates that "unusual circumstances" leading to increased workload will not exceed beyond one contract year. Dustin Anderson (CAH) noted that the provost wasn't hesitant to put this motion in writing. He suggested that perhaps in the coming year, we could add this motion as an amendment to faculty the workload policy.

Vote: There was no further discussion. The motion passed.