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Approved by the Senate 4/18/2006
Not Approved by the Senate
Approved by the President 4/28/2006
Not Approved by the President

Amendment to the Faculty Development Committee's Procedures

Submitted by Clara Krug

4/2/2006

Motion:

That the Faculty Development Committee amend its procedures to include the following step:

If an applicant asks in writing why his or her proposal was not funded, the committee chair (or a designee) will meet with the applicant to specify the proposal's rank among all proposals and the reason(s) for denying funding.

Rationale:

Faculty in all units should have an opportunity to know why a proposal did not receive funding.

Response:

Adopted by the Faculty Senate, 4-18-2006.

4-10-2006: The SEC has modified this motion to read that "If an applicant asks in writing why his/her proposal was not funded, the committee chair/designee will either meet with the applicant or provide a written explanation to specify the proposal's rank among all proposals and reason(s)for denying funding."

This motion is scheduled for the April 18th Senate Meeting.

Senate Response:

Motion: Amendment of Faculty Development Committee Procedures

Clara Krug, CLASS: This is another follow-up from last month's meeting, and again, I intended to speak with Faculty Senators who had spoken to me about this either at the meeting, or afterward; specifically Godfrey Gibbison, David Alley, Mark Welford, and Jean-Paul Carton. I did speak with Jean-Paul Carton because we reside in the same structure on campus, but I did not get to speak with Godfrey or David, although we do reside in the same structure or Mark Welford until afterward. But basically I agree with the Senate Executive Committee's recast of my request, which is "if an applicant asks in writing why his or her proposal was not funded, the committee chair (or a designee) will either meet with the applicant or provide a written explanation to specify the proposal's rank among all proposals and the reason or reasons for denying funding," and I make that motion.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Is there a second?

The motion was seconded.

Clara Krug (CLASS): This was engendered by a report of the Faculty Development Committee that the Senate received subsequent to a request for information that I filed. I had heard from several colleagues that faculty were uncertain of the procedures followed in awarding funds, and unfortunately, since, especially travel budgets are so diminished compared to what they used to be per person at the department level, it becomes incumbent upon faculty members to seek funding from other sources either internally or externally, and apparently the initial effort is to seek internal funding at the University level, specifically from the Faculty Development Committee. There is a sentence at the end of a letter of rejection which indicates that the Faculty Development Committee hopes that the unsuccessful applicant will submit other applications. I received an email from a colleague indicating that she specifically would have liked to have known why her proposal was not funded. There seemed to be nothing in the procedure that was reported by Chairman Yang on behalf of the Faculty Development Committee that provided for that particular part of a procedure, and David Alley, former chair of the Faculty Research Committee, indicated that the Senate had given a charge to the Faculty Research Committee to provide some option for learning why a proposal had not been funded. That is why I submit this particular item. At discussion at the last Senate meeting, it became clear that colleagues on the Senate did not really find it a good idea to ask that a chair or designee on the Faculty Development Committee indicate what might improve the proposal for another effort to seek funding. That was

seen as taking too much time and as giving false hope. In this proposal I was trying to do what I heard from various Senators at the last meeting, which is simply to indicate the rank among whatever number, and also the reasons for denying funding. This seems to let the person know why not, but does not seem to give any kind of a hope for the future. That did not sound too good, but I think you understand what I mean. It does not promise funding, if you fill in the blanks.

Bill Yang (COBA): First of all, I just want to let the Senate know that the Faculty Development Committee discussed this motion at its last meeting. Let me simply read the paragraph related to this issue from the minutes of our meeting: "The committee has had discussions concerning feedback from the Faculty Senate regarding proposals from applicants which did not receive funding. Given the current request from the Faculty Senator seeking clarification on this matter, there was much discussion concerning how the current blind review process makes it difficult to provide feedback, except for how the application ranked in terms of other applicants. The committee recognized the desire for such feedback, and will attempt to provide the applicants with the overall score from the existing rubric used to evaluate all proposals, as well as an average score from each of the sections of the application that include the description of the project's effect on professional development and scholarship, expected outcomes' significance to department budget, and the budget justification." That summarizes the discussion by the Faculty Development Committee. I want to reply to Dr. Krug's request from the last Faculty Senate Meeting. I was sick, so I could not attend the meeting, but I read the minutes carefully. One request from Dr. Krug was to have the Faculty Development Committee members' names listed somewhere. I just want to point out that the name of all committee members has been listed in the Senate Web Page for the last several years. Now let me address the rationale of this proposal. First of all, I believe the committee supported the idea to increase the transparency of our decision procedure--that is not a problem. The only difficulty is concerning the effectiveness of this proposal. We believe we want to have all faculty improve the quality of their proposals. Any feedback given would be helpful for anyone wanting to write again for the next round, but I would like to share a couple of facts with all the Senators about our procedure. Basically, it is just like grading on the curve. A given number itself does not mean anything. We rank from high to low based on the average of all committee members' scores. Then based on the available rankings, a cut-off point is established, and anything above that is funded, anything below that is not funded. So the number itself is probably not very meaningful. It is the rank that matters--just like grading on a curve. If, on one exam, all the grades fall between 60 and 80, then 70 is the cut off point. The next time if everybody's grades have improved, or for some reason the grading just got easier, and everybody got a 90 and above, you still have only limited

resources. So if the purpose is to try to improve or enhance the number of the proposals funded, I guess I would probably have to say that is impossible. My term in the Senate will be over this summer, and I will not be chair next year, so I am not defending anything. You have asked that the chair write feedback. I think, because the ranking is based on an average score from eight members that is difficult. For example, sometimes I found I might have given a proposal a high score when someone else gave a low score. If you want me to give feedback for that specific proposal as to why it was not funded, I probably would have nothing to say. I would have said it was a pretty good one, from my perspective. Giving feedback would be difficult, but the committee is definitely in support of increasing transparency in an effort to guarantee fairness. But this procedure itself probably cannot improve the number of the proposals funded. Thank you.

Clara Krug (CLASS): The purpose of my proposal was not to enhance the number of proposals funded. That was not the goal. It was to provide feedback to faculty so they would know why their proposals were not funded.

Bill Yang (COBA): If I remember correctly, in the minutes somewhere it was mentioned that since the source of funding has now becomes tighter, faculty might try to search other possibilities of funding. That means a faculty member might want to seek some other source of travel funding, which I understand, but that is not the committee's job.

Clara Krug (CLASS): I used as comparisons other funding agencies in the Humanities which do provide feedback as to why there was not funding. That is what I used; I did not say people would apply to them. I used that as a comparison.

Bill Yang (COBA): I support the idea of giving feedback to each specific faculty member, which might be helpful. However, who is going to write that and whose opinion is that. Let me share another factor with all the Senators here: when I signed a letter, for either acceptance (funding) or rejection, that is the only time I knew the name of the person making the proposal--after the rank or the funding had already been decided. This year two committee members who served last year applied, and only one of them got funded. Considering feedback, they should know best what is expected, because they had served on the committee for two years previously, and their proposals did not both get funded. So it is very hard to see what exactly will get funded, because all committee members have different perspectives. It might also be true that 90% or above of the proposals are very good, high quality, but our funds are limited.

Alice Hall (CHHS): I was also the chair of Faculty Service for two years, so I feel your pain, and it is hard to give feedback. I think that at the last meeting we talked about

making this motion applicable to all three committees. Was that correct?

This motion just says Faculty Development.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: That was a suggestion that did not come forward on this motion, so we might want to amend this motion to include the Service Committee.

Alice Hall (CHHS): I would like to amend this motion to include the Faculty Service Committee, because Research already has one in place, is that correct?

Clara Krug (CLASS): I will accept that as an amendment.

Bob Cook (CIT), Senate Parliamentarian: Parliamentary issue here. The responsibilities of the various committees are listed in the Bylaws, so, for example, responsibilities of the Elections Committee involve conducting apportionment calculations annually in January, so that is pretty specific. I take it that Clara's motion would be an amendment to the Senate Bylaws which is okay because the Bylaws say that subsequent revision must be included as an agenda item, and shall require two-thirds vote. It is an agenda item, and a two-thirds vote would pass it. So the first question, Clara, is whether you intend this as an amendment to the Bylaws, in which case it would be mandatory, I would think, for the committee. If it is not in the Bylaws, then it would be in the form of recommendation to the committee. Did you have an intent one way or the other?

Clara Krug (CLASS): The intent was inline with what David Alley mentioned at the last meeting of the Faculty Senate. David, I think you said that the Senate had charged (Was that the word you used?) the Faculty Research Committee with incorporating some kind of an information delivery system, for lack of a better word, to people who asked you why they had not received funding. So I was interested in a charge; if it is more effective to make it a part of the Bylaws, that would be okay. I was just trying to make it a recommendation and hoping then that the written recommendation of the Senate would be accepted by a Senate standing committee.

Bob Cook (CIT), Senate Parliamentarian: Well, the difference is that if we pass something as just a recommendation of the Senate, then it is potentially not mandatory, since it is only carried forward by word-of-mouth or whatever. If someone is a new chair of a committee, the first thing they are going to do is read the Bylaws to see what their responsibilities are. If it is in the Bylaws, it becomes mandatory. Then there is also the issue of whether you want to extend this motion to the other two committees. It is unclear according to the amendment rules whether that should have been put on the agenda before we vote on it. So, I guess my feeling would be that if we are going to vote on a Bylaws change today, then it would be restricted to the changes with the

Faculty Development Committee.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Just one point of information, or a question for David Alley. The Bylaws do not reflect that the Research Committee has a charge to provide feedback.

David Alley (CLASS): I would ask the current chair of the Research Committee (Gautam Kundu), who has had to implement the charge that was made to the Faculty Research Committee last year to inform us as to how this is being implemented. I support the intention to make this uniform through all the committees.

Gautam Kundu (CLASS): I was not present at the last meeting, but regarding the Faculty Research Committee, we submit on the website a summary of each reader's report on every proposal submitted along with its strengths and weaknesses. Anyone reading these summaries would know why his or her proposal was denied. That is a matter of procedure. We decided to do it, and we implemented that this year.

David Alley (CLASS): And that was, in fact, the charge of the Faculty Senate, I believe a year ago at this meeting in April. So it has been accomplished.

Bob Cook (CIT), Senate Parliamentarian: But it was not voted on as an amendment to the Bylaws.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Correct, it was not an amendment to the Bylaws.

Richard Flynn (CLASS): I was wondering if we could pass this recommendation for all committees.

Bob Cook (CIT), Senate Parliamentarian: In fact, if we were going to amend the Bylaws, it probably would be most appropriate to just change the sentence to say "Review and evaluate and provide feedback..." and then each committee would basically be free to implement new and better ways to provide feedback as time goes by.

Richard Flynn (CLASS): I would just like to point out that if a chair of the committee has a particular opinion that was contrary to the rest of the committee, that does not preclude the chair from summarizing the findings of the entire committee, so if eight people on the committee give low numbers to description, for instance, the reason given can be that the description, in the opinion of the committee was weak, and it does not matter whether the chair agrees or disagrees with that.

David Alley (CLASS): What is then the conclusion of this discussion, and what will be

brought forward in the fall?

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: As I understand it right now, correct me if I am wrong, the motion as we currently have it is that the Faculty Development and Service Committees will amend their procedures to include the following step as a charge from the Faculty Senate, not as a Bylaws change: that if an applicant asks in writing why his or her proposal was not funded, the committee chair or designee would either meet with the applicant or provide a written explanation to specify the proposal's rank among all proposals and reasons for denying funding. We have left for future action the possibility of including the idea that feedback must be granted as a Bylaws change.

David Alley (CLASS): Not to belabor this, but, is the intent to make the procedures consistent between all three Faculty Senate Committees? The Faculty Research Committee, as I understand it from the chair's remarks, does this as normal procedure, not just when the applicant makes the request.

Gautam Kundu (CLASS): We do it as a normal procedure. There is no question of whether someone asks or not, we just routinely do it.

Marc Cyr (CLASS): What David was just talking about in his previous remark was the idea of giving feedback using a specific method. One of the ideas pointed out earlier was to have a charge available without specifying the method. The Research Committee has a method, and the Development Committee may come up with a different method or may follow the Research Committee's suit. However, I think what you were suggesting, and correct me if I am wrong, was that this methodology that is in the current proposal be removed and simply state that the charge be that feedback be made available.

David Alley (CLASS): Yes, in fact, that it be made available as a matter of standard procedure and not subject to the request of the successful or unsuccessful applicant. I think that is my intent.

Richard Flynn (CLASS): Could I request a friendly amendment to the motion?

Clara Krug (CLASS): Sure.

Richard Flynn (CLASS): To...say it again, David. I can not.

Clara Krug (CLASS): Could I try?

Richard Flynn (CLASS) Yes.

Clara Krug (CLASS): “The committee chair or designee will either meet with the applicant or provide a written explanation to specify the proposal’s rank among all proposals and reasons for denying funding.” Is that too specific? I withdraw my amendment to my motion.

Ming Fang He (COE): Yes, could I make it a simpler? If you ask the committee chair to meet with the applicant, that creates a lot of labor for the committee chair. We should just recommend that the committees follow the procedure of the Research Committee.

Clara Krug (CLASS): Is it in writing?

Gautam Kundu (CLASS): Clara, it is already on the web site.

Clara Krug (CLASS): It is on the web site?

Gautam Kundu (CLASS): Right. We have tried to put everything on the web site: Faculty Research/Faculty Research Committee. If you go to our web site, it is there. So information does not have to be solicited, it is already there.

Clara Krug (CLASS): I sort of hate to withdraw the motion completely.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Might I propose the following? That the Faculty Development and Service Committees amend their procedures to routinely provide feedback on every proposal’s ranking and assets and deficiencies?

David Alley (CLASS): Strengths.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Strengths and weaknesses.

Clara Krug (CLASS): Every proposal’s strengths and weaknesses. So if I may repeat: “That the Faculty and Service Committees amend their procedures to provide feedback, on every proposal’s strengths and weaknesses.” Is that correct?

(Call the question.)

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: We have to vote to call the question. The call to question carried. Now we can vote on the motion. Clara, would you please read the revised motion as it currently stands.

Clara Krug (CLASS): The revised motion is “That the Faculty Development and Faculty Service Committees amend their procedures to provide feedback on every proposal’s strengths and weaknesses.”

The motion carried.

President's Response:

4-28-2006-Dr. Grube: Following review of the recommendation adopted by the Faculty Senate at the April 18, 2006, Faculty Senate meeting, as provided in your memo of April 19, 2006, I have approved the motion below presented to the Senate with the deletion of "its relative rank."