

Faculty Affairs Committee
Minutes 11/19/2018

Present: Jak Maier, Dmitry Nicolski, Javier Fochesatto, Anna Berge, Ataur Chowdhury, Maureen Hogan, Josh Greenberg, Mark Herrmann.

Visitor: Jeff Benowitz

The agenda was adopted with two changes:

- Discussion about the new Facilities & Administration (F&A) rate proposed for UAF by UA Statewide was added.
- A request to write a Faculty Senate resolution suggesting a "Tenure-lite" for non-tenure track faculty was moved forward on the agenda.

Discussion on F&A: UA Statewide is proposing to increase the F&A rate on UAF grants from 51% to 63.9% to pay for the completion of the Engineering building and the new coal power plant. A federal formula is used to determine the F&A rate, but the UA administration has discretion in how to implement it. The formula contains expenses in the numerator and income in the denominator. The fact that the Alaska legislature opted to not fully fund the UAF Engineering Building and Power Plant, UA was forced to take on bonds to complete the two projects. The cost of these two entities along with a decline in income has resulted in the significant increase in the F&A rate.

Issues

- Peer institutions have F&A rates between 50-53%. It will be increasingly difficult for UAF to compete for grants against those institutions if our rate is 64%.
- Using 64% of grant monies to pay for lights and administrators rather than research will leave less grant money to pay for graduate students, research, faculty salaries, etc. This will undermine the Chancellor's goal of having UAF become a Tier I Research Institution.
There likely will be fewer PhD students at UAF because of the increase in F&A rather than the increase in PhD students that is needed to become a Tier I Research University.
- Can different size grants have a different F&A rate? Yes. This already happens. Different granting agencies have different rates that they are willing to pay.
- The change in F&A rate was a secret. There was no transparency in the process and the information was leaked to faculty accidentally. There needs to be transparency and a plan to deal with expensive items such as the Engineering building and power plant.
- There doesn't seem to be any coordination between goals /objectives and actions.
- Are there other ways to pay the bills instead of such a drastic increase in the F&A?
- Whereas the statewide administration is hoping to increase the university's income and reduce the debt load by increasing the F&A rate, it may actually result in a decrease in revenue when it becomes harder for faculty to get grants.
- What is the timeline of the decision?

ACTION ITEM: Bring the issue to the Faculty Senate Administrative Committee

Discussion of Tenure-lite: Jeff Benowitz came to discuss the difficulty of being a non-tenure track or temporary faculty.

Issues

- There is a misunderstanding of the academic role of non-tenure track faculty at the University of Alaska.
- Non-tenure track faculty deserve the same protections of freedom of speech and academic freedom that tenure track faculty have.
- Healthcare is perhaps the biggest concern, particularly when the faculty member has a family.

What tenure-lite may look like:

- After 5 years, a non-tenured faculty will no longer be considered "temporary".
- Allow non-tenured faculty to buy in to healthcare.
- Allow them to have access to the proposal office.
- Need to figure out how to maximize the benefits of having research faculty. Given that we want UAF to be an excellent, Tier I research institution, we need to have more solid research positions.
- Would like "tenure-lite" to be in the next CBA.

ACTION ITEM: Determine what is happening with regard to "tenure-lite" at peer institutions.

Consider writing a resolution to move forward to the Faculty Senate.