

Faculty Forum

June 19, 2008

Minutes

Dr. Bona welcomed everyone to the Faculty Forum. Approximately 20 people attended the meeting.

1. Bylaws Revision, Appendix B, Section I.F., “Changing Professional Category or Track”

Dr. Bona presented the proposed revision to Appendix B, Section I.F., regarding timeframe in which change of professional category may occur. Currently, the Bylaws state, “No change in professional category is allowed for Assistant Professors after nine years.” The proposed revision states that Assistant Professors may transfer into the Medical Educator professional category only through the end of their eighth year, and may transfer into professional categories with a promotion clock only through the end of the sixth year. This revision clarifies the intent of the Bylaws. The revision will be voted on by the faculty within the next several weeks.

2. Proposed Promotion/Tenure Criteria for Collaborative Investigators

Dr. Setlow explained that Dr. Jacob asked the Oversight Committee to appoint a subcommittee charged with developing criteria for promotion and tenure of individuals whose major activities are as research collaborators, but who also show some independence and standing in their own field. Under the current promotion and tenure guidelines, these individuals do not qualify for promotion. The committee considered the possibility of creating a new professional category, but decided to modify the existing criteria for the Investigator and Clinician-Investigator categories to accommodate these individuals. Dr. Setlow then reviewed the revisions and shared comments received from each of the Councils, members of the Senior Appointments and Promotions Committee, and individual faculty members (proposed revisions and all comments may be found at http://medicine.uchc.edu/faculty_staff/forums/index.html). He explained that the committee did not want to apply specific numbers when describing the frequency of activities and, therefore, used the terms “sustained,” “periodically,” and “occasional.” He noted that the relative magnitudes these words are meant to denote are “sustained > periodically > occasional.”

One of the requirements added throughout the document is that these individuals must contribute to the work of “at least several principal investigators on multiple projects primarily or exclusively at the University of Connecticut.” Some of the Councils, and a number of faculty at today’s meeting, objected to the requirement of “at least several principal investigators” and “primarily or exclusively at the University of Connecticut.” Dr. Setlow explained that when the committee developed the criteria, they had in mind individuals with unique skill sets, such as statisticians, modelers, and engineers, who

could bring this skill to multiple projects. It was also the intent of the committee that work being done by an affiliated faculty member at another hospital satisfied the criteria. However, many faculty thought it should extend to other institutions as well, particularly if the individual's work is sustained and of high quality, and funding is durable. Some also thought this rule could be viewed as an abridgement of academic freedom. Following discussion, it was agreed to revise "several principal investigators" to "multiple investigators" and to eliminate "primarily or exclusively at the University of Connecticut."

Another concern had to do with the terms sustained, periodically, and occasional. Some felt they do not adequately describe the frequency of a particular activity. Dr. Oliver agreed to draft alternate terminology for the committee's consideration.

Some felt the revisions to the Clinician-Investigator category were not helpful to people in that category in terms of attaining promotion. It was explained that these criteria do not apply to all clinician-investigators. The revisions are intended for those individuals who, by virtue of the collaborative nature of their work, are not able to be promoted under the current system. The proposed criteria could be helpful by allowing clinician-investigators to be more productive in the time they have to conduct research without the pressure of securing their own funding and yet be rewarded by promotion.

In summary, the subcommittee will meet to incorporate the suggested revisions into the document, which will then be shared with the Councils and ultimately presented at another Faculty Forum.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Donatelli