

Liaison Committee Minutes

July 22, 2019

9:00 – 10:30 AM

AGH 311

In Attendance: Joel Cramer, Jenny Keshwani, Maria De Guzman, Ron Lewis, Stephen Wegulo, Associate Vice Chancellor Bischoff, and Anna Lowe (recorder)

Zoomed in: Aaron Nygren, Carlos Urrea Florez

Main Discussion Points:

Committee Member Introductions

- Jenny Keshwani: Biological Systems Engineering; 20% CASNR/80% Extension
- Ron Lewis: Animal Science – focus on quantitative genetics 40% CASNR/60% ARD
- Joel Cramer: Nutrition and Health Sciences – human exercise physiology is research focus. 50% Academic Affairs/50% ARD
- Carlos Urrea Florez: Agronomy & Horticulture, located in Scottsbluff, 75% ARD/25% Extension
- Aaron Nygren: Extension Educator in Colfax County – focus on crops and water
- Maria de Guzman: Child, Youth, and Family Studies, focus on adolescent development, 75% Extension/25% ARD
- Stephen Wegulo: plant pathology – focus on wheat, 60% Extension/40% ARD

Role and Purpose of the Liaison Committee (Bischoff)

- The committee members represent a cross section of the IANR faculty. The members of the committee are not assigned to represent any particular group of faculty. The members span across various units and appointments representing those areas perspectives.
- Jenny will be the point person for the committee.
- Service terms of the Liaison Committee members:
 - Joel, Jenny, and Aaron – this academic year is their last term (2020)
 - Carlos and Maria – two-year term (2021)
 - Ron, Stephen – three-year term (2022)
- The committee is designed to provide feedback to the IANR Vice Chancellor, Mike Boehm on issues related to faculty. The committee also serves as a sounding board for the Vice Chancellor as he is thinking about the direction of the Institute and potential key issues/initiatives before they are rolled out.
- Other duties include overseeing other committees within the Institute (per our bylaws this is the only standing committee).
- The committee will at minimum meet quarterly and more frequently if there are issues that are germane to the functioning of the faculty which need to be elevated to the Vice Chancellor's office. The committee will meet once a semester with VC Boehm.
- Associate Vice Chancellor Bischoff's role with the committee is to organize and shepherd the other work and functioning of the committee. He is also involved since one of the agenda items the Liaison Committee is currently involved with is the Institute-

wide promotion and tenure committee. Anna Lowe will assist with providing administrative support for the committee.

- How to address an issue or concern brought up by a faculty member to a Liaison Committee Member(s)?
 - Respond to the faculty member: Thank them for the information and ask if it would be okay to share with the rest of the committee?
 - If so, share with the committee and Jenny will coordinate the conversation determining how quickly the issue needs to be elevated to the Vice Chancellor's office.

What items should be on the committee's agenda?

- Health insurance costs for graduate students (Lewis)
- Institute-wide P&T Committee (Bischoff)

Health Insurance Costs for Graduate students (Discussion)

- This is also part of a bigger concern: how are we taking care of our graduate students?
- The email sent out to graduate students surprised everyone. This was a system-wide decision.
- Dr. Tim Carr, Dean of Graduate Studies, was not aware of the announcement until someone forwarded the email to him. He is working on figuring out next steps since the one year solution is only a stop gap.
- Insurance plan for graduate students is currently not competitive and creates a hardship with retaining and recruiting students.
- Decision: The Liaison Committee will write a letter representing faculty concerns. The committee will send letter to VC Boehm to convey to the Chancellor and President on the committee's/faculty's behalf.

Institute-wide P&T committee (Discussion)

- The vote in March for the Institute-wide P&T committee was 10 votes shy of reaching a 67% majority. The bylaws state that any changes require a two-thirds super majority of the faculty.
- About half of the faculty (extension educators and foresters) would not have promotion materials reviewed by the Institute-wide P&T committee. Extension is currently looking at doing something similar with a state-wide committee.
- Since the vote was so close, it appears that faculty are generally either interested in or not opposed to the committee. Bischoff proposed the following timeline for putting the bylaws revision for faculty vote:
 - October –Faculty Vote
 - November – If a favorable vote is obtained, go before the Faculty Senate executive committee
 - December – With Senate Executive Committee approval, go before faculty senate for ratification
 - Spring semester 2020 – implement plans for the Institute-wide committee to begin functioning for the 2020-2021 promotion & tenure cycle
- Flow of promotion and/or tenure file with institute-wide P&T committee
 - Department P&T committee

- Department head/chair
- College committee (if applicable – CEHS and BSE) and Institute-wide P&T committee simultaneously. Everyone who has an IANR appointment (no matter what the percentage), except extension educators and foresters, will go through the Institute-wide P&T committee.
- Deans' review
- Vice Chancellor: If greater than 50% IANR appointment, file goes to VC Boehm. If 50% or more Academic Affairs appointment, file goes to EVC. If 50/50 split – file will go to EVC. We are no longer hiring with a 50/50 split.
- Reminder that the VC or the EVC makes the final decision if a faculty member is promoted and/or tenured. Every step of the process before then is a recommendation. At no point can a prior step be overturned. The Institute-wide P&T committee has no more power over the decision than anyone else in the chain. The Institute-wide committee can ensure that faculty members are being treated fairly at the unit level.
- Purpose for the institute-wide P&T committee: emerged out of importance for faculty governance in promotion and tenure decisions. A few places where faculty can exercise faculty governance is with who IANR hire's and who we retain and promote. Currently we have a process where disciplinary peers can weigh in on promotion and tenure but there is no vehicle for non-disciplinary peers to do so.
- The Liaison Committee is in favor of bringing the Institute-wide P&T committee proposal up for another faculty vote. Members of the committee agreed with several important aspects of the proposal:
 - Ensuring that faculty are treated fairly at unit level
 - Allows for another vehicle in which faculty can receive feedback and ensure that faculty have a fair hearing at the unit level
 - Committee will assist with providing continuity across departments since each department will need to have clear guidelines and standards for promotion and tenure to provide to the Institute-wide committee
- Reviewed and discussed some of the concerns/objections raised from faculty:
 - *Concern:* Workload for those who served on the institute-wide P&T committee
 - *This is something that we will need to address. Bischoff thinks that there are procedures in place that manage the workload for committee members, but it is unclear how well these are known by the faculty who are expressing these concerns. We can address this directly in open forums and communications about the committee.*
 - *Concern:* Why are we trying to fix something that works well (adding another layer of bureaucracy)
 - *Response:* We aren't adding a layer. Instead we are replacing the IANR Deans Council, which gave the deans an opportunity to weigh in twice.
 - *Concern:* Nobody on committee is there to advocate for me. How can someone from another discipline evaluate my work?
 - *Response:* If trying to solve inclusive excellence, advocacy should be eliminated. The struggle with having someone from each unit represented is that some of the smaller departments already have struggles in filling the departmental P&T committee. The file should be looked at in a

professional/general manner and should be reviewed based on work responsibility, not specific subject matter.

- Discussion of potential/possible changes that can be made to original proposal to address some of the faculty concerns:
 - Allow for professors of practice, research professors, and extension professors to be serve on the committee
 - Ensure that faculty are aware that the vote is truly anonymous
 - The potential of raising the minimum of 20% appointment in the mission area. The concern with raising the percentage is that can potentially eliminate the eligibility of some faculty in some of the CEHS units.
- Liaison Committee next steps:
 - Educate faculty members about the Institute-wide P&T committee
 - August/September – assist with coordinating open forums and ensure that faculty have accurate information regarding the proposal

Meeting adjourned at 10:35 AM

Distributed electronically to the IANR Liaison Committee for review.