Report of the Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity and Equity (SCFDDE)

General Committee Charge

The Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity and Equity (i) identifies and promotes best practices for faculty development, mentoring and work environment to facilitate faculty success at all career levels; (ii) evaluates and advocates processes for faculty recruitment, promotion and retention that promote diversity, equity and work/life balance for the faculty; (iii) monitors the status of faculty development, mentoring, diversity and equity; and (iv) issues periodic reports on the activities and findings of the Committee that make recommendations for implementation.

2015-2016 Specific Charges

1. Finalize proposal for the Faculty Advocate position, in consultation with the Faculty Senate Tri-Chairs, and work towards the implementation of this position.
2. Review the Faculty Climate Survey process.
3. Assess the Action Plan for Faculty Diversity and Excellence and review any final report from the Office of the Provost.
4. Review Penn’s efforts to recruit and retain women and underrepresented minorities to the Penn Faculty.
5. Review the Provost’s Program for Postdoctoral Fellowships for Academic Diversity.

Report of Activities

The Committee met a total of eight times (10/6/15, 10/20/15, 11/3/15, 12/1/15, 1/19/16, 2/2/16, 3/15/16 and 4/5/16). Invited guests included Vice Provost for Faculty Anita Allen, Ombudsman Lynn Lees, Associate Ombudsman Marcia Martinez-Helfman, members of the University Council Committee on Diversity and Equity (UC-CDE), Chair and Professor Ezekiel Dixon-Roman (SP), Professor Herman Beavers (English and African studies), Professor Chenoa Flippin (sociology), graduate PhD student Justine Sefcik (Nursing), junior undergraduate student Juana Granados (urban studies) and freshman undergraduate student Hannah Sweeney (political science).

Report on Charges

Finalize Proposal for a Faculty Advocate Position

Over the course of the year, the Committee refined its proposal for the appointment of a Faculty Advocate as it continued to hold discussions with Ombudsman Lynn Lees and Associate Ombudsman Marcia Martinez-Helfman about the role of the Office of the Ombudsman. The proposal for a Faculty Advocate was primarily a response to the fact that the Office of the Ombudsman had been designated an “agent of notice” and therefore could not have maintained confidentiality in cases in which a faculty member sought supportive resources in connection with violation of policies against sexual violence and sexual harassment. As a result, there was no office staffed by Standing Faculty to which faculty could report such behavior in confidence. In February, the Committee learned of a change in policy; the Office of the Ombudsman will be a confidential resource for the Office of the Ombudsman to assure that it clearly and fully explains the role of the Office of the Ombudsman.

Review Climate Survey Process

Early in the year, the Committee met with Vice Provost Allen about the distribution of the results of the 2011 Faculty Climate Survey. We noted that we did not receive the results for underrepresented minorities until we asked for them and then only received hard copies hand delivered to us. We were told that a new survey would be undertaken before the end of the calendar year and that the results would be distributed more promptly and with greater thoroughness.

At a subsequent meeting with the chairs of several Senate committees, Vice Provost Allen and Stacey Lopez, associate vice president for institutional research and analysis, discussed the data needed by the committees from both the 2011 and 2015 surveys. The data is expected to be disseminated during summer 2016.

Recommendations:

a. The Committee should evaluate the findings of the 2015 Faculty Climate Survey, particularly as they relate to women, minorities, underrepresented minorities and LGBTQTA faculty, and identify areas of concern.
b. The Administration should develop a comprehensive list of recommendations for changes in policies that address concerns identified by the Survey data and consider the need and viability of following up the survey with one-on-one, in-depth interviews and focus groups.

c. The Administration should consider sponsoring a University-wide symposium for the entire Penn community to showcase successful and innovative initiatives of schools in advancing diversity on an ongoing basis.

Review the five-year Action Plan for Faculty Diversity and Excellence 2011-2016

This is the final year of the five-year plan. The results will be finalized in November 2016 and a report issued in February 2017. Vice Provost Allen shared some of the preliminary data compiled as of November 2015. The Committee was interested in details regarding sources of financial support (particularly new sources of funding) and the relationship between expenditures and specific activities and gains in diversity.

The Committee investigated interim reporting of diversity data by conducting an informal survey at the school level. We sought to identify the extent to which schools provided information about their diversity efforts on their websites and/or otherwise shared information about progress in faculty hiring and other diversity initiatives with faculty and students. We found that most schools addressed the issue of diversity online but that the extent of the disclosures varied widely in topics covered and detail.

Recommendations:

a. The Committee should review and evaluate the Final Report of the five-year Action Plan for Faculty Diversity and Excellence.
b. The Administration should promote mechanisms that increase transparency and reporting of school-level initiatives, expenditures and gains regarding diversity on an on-going basis.

c. The Administration should consider sponsoring a University-wide symposium for the entire Penn community to showcase successful and innovative diversity programs at Penn, in order to stimulate a wider range of schools to create similar programs.

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Report of the Senate Committee on the Faculty Development, Diversity and Equity (SCFDDE) (continued from page 7)

Recommendations for 2016-2017
1. The Committee should review the information that is disclosed to potential users of the services of the Office of the Ombudsman to assure that it clearly and fully explains the role of the Office of the Ombudsman.
2. The Committee should evaluate the findings of the 2015 Faculty Climate Survey, particularly as they relate to women, minorities, underrepresented minorities and LGBTQQA faculty, and identify areas of concern.
3. The Committee should review and evaluate the Final Report of the five year Action Plan for Faculty Diversity and Excellence.
4. The Committee should maintain communication between the SCFDDE and UC-CDE and collaborate when possible on issues of mutual concern.
5. The Committee should examine the relationship between the Faculty Senate and the non-Standing Faculty (including the Emeritus Faculty, Associated Faculty and Academic Support Staff) and how these groups might participate in an inclusive model of shared governance within the University.

SCFDDE Membership 2015-2016
Regina Austin, Law School, Chair
Rita Barnard, School of Arts & Sciences/English
Kristen Feemster, PSOM/Pediatrics
Carmen Guerra, PSOM/General Internal Medicine
Lisa Lewis, School of Nursing/Family & Community Health
Mitch Marcus, School of Engineering & Applied Science/Computer & Information Science
Ex officio members:
Laura Perna, GSE, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect
Reed Pyeritz, PSOM/Medicine & Genetics, Faculty Senate Chair

Report of the Senate Committee on the Faculty and the Administration (SCOA)

2015-2016 Specific Charges
Our specific charges this year were to:
1. Review Faculty Handbook conflict of interest (COI) policy in consultation with the Office of the Provost.
SCOA reviewed the COI policies in the Faculty Handbook—there are two, one that generally applies to faculty members, and one that is specific to research conflicts of interest. SCOA met with Vice Provost for Research (VPR) Dawn Bonnell on multiple occasions and recommended changes to the Handbook that would cross-reference the COI policies for clarity.
SCOA did not recommend any substantive changes to the COI policies, though SCOA did recommend that the Faculty Senate be consulted for faculty membership for the Conflict of Interest Standing Committee (CISC), which is charged with reviewing matters that arise under the Handbook’s Conflict of Interest Policy Related to Research. As of spring 2016, the VPR offers the Faculty Senate an annual opportunity to recommend members of the Standing Faculty for consideration of membership on the CISC.
SCOA recommends that annual review of the implementation of the Faculty Handbook Conflict of Interest Policies be charged to future SCOA teams.
2. Review the implementation of recent changes to the Patent Policy and the faculty responses thereto.
SCOA met with VPR Bonnell and Penn Center for Innovation (PCI) Director John Swartley to review the implementation of the Patent Policy, especially in light of the changes recommended by SCOA in 2014-2015. Our review indicated that the policy was working appropriately without major problems to-date and that no additional changes were needed at this time.
SCOA recommends that future annual reviews be charged to SCOA teams, and that PCI provide SCOA with specific data concerning the operation of the patent policy as part of that review.
3. Review University efforts to assist faculty in obtaining external research funding.
SCOA met with several administrators on the question of how and whether support for grant application and administration varies across University units. SCOA’s preliminary investigation revealed a wide variance in the quality and level of front-line grant support, though specific data was hard to come by. SCOA met with Marianne Achenbach, executive director of the Perelman School of Medicine Office of Research Support Services, whose grant support services may serve as a model for cross-school standardization. SCOA believes that this issue needs substantial further study and as a targeted survey or other data collection effort. An effort to develop and distribute “best practices” or “minimal standards of support” documentation should be undertaken to help guide University administrators in allocating resources for grant support.
SCOA recommends that this charge remain for future consideration during 2016-2017.
4. Review the scope and effectiveness of the University Research Foundation’s funding process.
SCOA did not examine this issue during 2015-2016. SCOA recommends that this charge remain for future consideration during 2016-2017.
Additional Proposed Charges for 2016-2017
1. Evaluate the University’s “mass email” policies and recommend whether the Faculty Senate should have the ability to communicate to the Standing Faculty through “mass email” distributions.
2. Review Penn’s standard contracts for Massive Open Online Courses and evaluate faculty satisfaction with these contracts. SCOA should include contracts from individual Penn schools (e.g., Wharton) in its review.
3. Review the way in which development and fundraising offices—both University-wide and in individual schools—work with faculty members to help identify potential funding sources.

SCOA Membership 2015-2016
R. Polk Wagner, Law School, Chair
Ken Drobatz, School of Veterinary Medicine
Irina Marinov, School of Arts & Sciences/Earth & Environmental Science
Pamela Sankar, PSOM/Biomedical Ethics
Talid Sinno, School of Engineering & Applied Science/CBE & MEAM
Santosh Venkatesh, School of Engineering & Applied Science/ESE
Ex officio members:
Laura Perna, GSE, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect
Reed Pyeritz, PSOM/Medicine & Genetics, Faculty Senate Chair