Junior Faculty Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes  

Thursday, October 8th, 2015  
11:00 am – 12:00 pm  
318A JK Williams Administration Building  

PRESENT: Drs. Kathy Banks, N.K. Anand, Jean-Briac le Graverend (AERO), Hung-Jen Wu (CHEN), Jeff Huang (CSCE), Philip Park (CVEN), Alaa Elwany (sub for ISEN), David Staack (MEEN), Xiaofeng Qian (MSEN), Berna Hascakir (PETE).

Agenda Items for Discussion with the Dean:

1. JFAC – “Items of Investigation”. JFAC should address both short and long term strategic issues of Junior faculty. Discussion of how to best approach and work on longer term items. Getting assistance from Dean’s office in investigating certain items. [Staack]

   - Dr. Banks mentioned that some issues asked by JFAC can be done via email. If the group needs clarification, please send an email to Dr. N.K. Anand and he will get the answers. And if the group needs data, Drs. Banks and Anand are happy to provide the data.
   - The topic of mentoring was brought up by Dr. Banks. She recommended mentoring the junior faculty.

2. COE support of increased University infant and child daycare. [Staack]

   - Dr. Staack discussed the issue of University infant and child daycare. An issue more relevant to junior faculty. He mentioned that 50% of new faculty candidates ask the question about childcare. And the honest answer is to sign up as soon you know you are having a baby. There is limited infant daycare in this area. Dr. Staack mentioned that a possible solution could be the University could outsource with a daycare center and guarantee positions for faculty. It was mentioned that there was some talk with the Dean of Faculties last year but nothing has happened.
   - Dr. Banks recommended taking this issue back to Faculty Senate and bringing it up as a topic of discussion with the President.
• Dr. Banks also recommended contacting Dr. Angie Price and ask what is the best way or strategy to go through the Senate.
• Dr. Banks is supportive and agrees that there is nothing has been done on this issue.
• The topic of getting a listserv of the Assistant Professors for their support and communication was suggested.

3. COE support of additional spousal placement and acclimation activities. [Le Graverend]

• Dr. Le Graverend discussed the topic of COE support of additional spousal placement and acclimation activities. He talked about his own experiences and his wife’s difficulties finding a job in this area. He noted that for new faculty, they will need help finding a job for their spouse. Some faculty quit because they cannot find jobs for their spouse. One option noted was transportation to/from Houston.
• Dr. Banks commented that there are lots of jobs on campus. She recommended internship as an option too. An internship is good opportunity for his/her spouse to get involved. She mentioned she would bring up this issue to upper leadership. She also mentioned to also look at other possible positions at TTI, TEEX, and maybe even TCAT.
• Dr. Banks also recommended getting involved with community groups not necessarily religious but find a group you can connect with whether inviting colleagues to dinner or get together with those you play soccer with. Dr. Staack mentioned the community group Mom and Tots. Dr. Banks also recommended getting together with your colleagues. This is needed to build communities outside of work. Other options are book clubs, social events, sporting events, etc. Dr. Staack suggested maybe having a COE Junior Faculty tailgate.
• Dr. Anand mentioned bridge funding but this is only for faculty not staff. It is always better if it comes from bottom up. He recommends to department heads to meet with the other department heads. And then have the candidate meet with the Department Head. This seems to have better success versus coming from top. But Dr. Anand said that we can facilitate the process.
• Dr. Le Graverand asked the question about if the spouse could get his/her own card to go to the Rec Center. He brought the issue with Rec Center membership card for his spouse. He pays for his spouse but she doesn’t have a card, he has to prove Dr. Le Graverand is involved with University. His spouse has to bring a passport or driver’s license to get into the Rec Center. Sometimes, he has to be there to prove she is his wife. Dr. Anand will place a call with Chad Wooton to check on this.
4. Voice of NTT in COE in general and in JFAC in particular. [Park]
   - Dr. Parks states that they are hiring lots of POP …so far, 6 junior NTT faculty/3 are new; JFAC has focused on interesting issues to the tenure track but not to the non-tenure track faculty.
   - Dr. Banks states that EFAC does allow for non-tenure track faculty.
   - Dr. Staack states that the issue is whether NTT will get sufficient focus in forum like this where it is 12 to 1.
   - Dr. Banks said as long as there is representation.
   - But Dr. Banks talked about the new Director of Professors of Practice. They are coming together as a cohesive unit. The POP group will have a voice because they have a Director that will eventually report in EASA. They will still be in the departments but will meet as a group. Mark Johnson is the Director for the Professors of Practice Program.
   - Dr. Anand talks about the 3 ranks- lecturers (junior/senior), POPs, and professors of instruction.
   - Dr. Banks says that there is no difference in the way we classify non-tenured track and tenured track faculty. They all have the same voice. POPS are coming together because they have a common thing- 15 years in industry, etc. And if the NTT would like to have a committee, they can be glad to do it. But they have every right to be on any committee…as long as they are representing the departments. Right now, she states they have the same voice. President of our faculty senate has been a senior lecturer.
   - Dr. Park talks about when he meets with some of the POPs or lecturers in his departments…classify as two groups in one is interest in POP track and other is junior group recently received PhD, lecturer or instructional professor. The conflict is there is no support for them. For example, if they want to make presentation at conference, they pay with their own money.
   - Dr. Banks noted that is not true and said that is up to the department. If the Department Head wanted to send someone to a conference, they can. But if junior faculty/assistant professors spend all of his/her research dollars, they don't have money either. There is not a special pool. There is not going to be special privileges for NTT that she does not give to tenure track. They are treated exactly the same.

5. Journal and conference paper metrics during tenure review. Having agreements / lists on which journals and conferences are highly regarded. [Alaa Elwany]

   - Dr. Anand states that what we are looking for is impact. For example, in CSCE and in certain areas of ECEN, they don’t care about journal papers but they value highly selective conference papers. They are presented at a key note fashion. But at the end of day, what we are looking for is impact.
Dr. Anand notes that the Department Head lists the top venues for publication and it is an agreement with the candidate. But he stated that doesn’t mean the college committee doesn’t look into that and make any decisions based on that but what they look for is the impact.

Dr. Banks commented that she went through this same exercise at Purdue. At Purdue, every journal in every discipline in Civil was on the list because no one could agree on which was more impactful. Impact factor can work in some disciplines but not in others. We can make a list but we would have a 150 or so.

Dr. Anand states that your experts know what journals to use. We sent three sample papers to external reviewers and they read those sample papers very carefully and they commented on them.

Dr. Banks suggested if you had a mentoring program, perhaps your group could come together and give you some advice.

Dr. Anand said that on the College committee he has never seen anybody say since it is not on this list, it will not be considered. For example, if you develop a technique and you are the first one to do that, your departmental committee report says that and 3 to 4 external reviewers says that, the case is closed.

Dr. Elwany made the comment that per status quo in his department, conference papers are almost always unforeseen. He states that the problem is it discourages us. For folks in manufacturing right now, if he doesn’t publish there at a conference, he will get out of the circle. He doesn’t want to waste his ideas on that conference paper because to turn it into a journal paper is not straight forward.

Dr. Anand’s gave his perspective- if it is a rapidly changing field, document and give the acceptance rate. In PETE, they have the same issues. There are very few journals. And several years back, they looked at this. Dr. Anand said that they look at everything. In Dr. Anand’s field, there is no value in conference papers. At the end of the day, the impact comes through the letters. Dr. Anand emphasized that just because it is published, it doesn’t mean it is a high impact paper but is it considered a quality venue?

Anand stated that he has a lot of papers in food mechanics with no impact, they are a mathematical exercise. So there are two different things. In your faculty progress report, there is a section on impact. They are looking for 2-3 sentences…for example, ”my work changed…”. And Dr. Anand noted that each discipline is different and the T&P process is mature enough and able to handle all of these things. Dr. Anand said don’t feel discouraged.

For each T&P case he reviews, Dr. Anand has to write 2-3 sentences of what the impact is and many cases, he cannot find these 2-3 sentences. The impact comes up where 2-3 people state the impact independently. He gave the example of the faculty member who was able to explain the failure of asphalt, he was the first one to explain and 3 other reviewers vouched for his work so the case was closed. As opposed to one saying, I published this amount of journals and this amount of papers, what they are looking for that “your work did…”.
Further discussion:

- The group talked about the different tracks for getting a green card and their experiences. They talked about their issues with the International Faculty & Scholar Services department and that they need more support.
- Action items:
  - Dr. Staack said he would talk with Angie Price about bringing up the issue of the childcare issue to Faculty Senate.
  - The issue of spousal placement will be brought to the Dean of Faculties.
  - Dr. Anand will clarify the Rec Center issue.
  - Issue of building community
  - Listserv for Tenure track/Assistant Professors on campus; could address things like childcare, spousal placement, etc. Follow-up from Dean’s office on developing a listserv.
  - Dr. Staack will work on setting up a web-page for the JFAC.

- Two agenda items for next time:
  - Mentoring- ask what is mentoring in your department?
  - Issues with International Faculty & Scholar Services

Other Agenda Items:

1. Approval of Sept. Minutes

2. New PETE member –

3. Distribution of task among council members.
   a. Webpage
   b. Maintaining JFAC membership list
   c. Maintaining Junior faculty list