

The College of Liberal Arts
Executive Council Meeting
November 29, 2005, 1:30 p.m. 206A Coke

Announcements. Dean Johnson announced that a funeral service for Woodrow Jones is being held in New Mexico and that John Knudson and Ben Crouch are attending. An on-campus service will be held Saturday at All Faiths Chapel, after which the College will host a reception. The College will be talking with the family about an appropriate vehicle for memorializing Dean Jones. Dean Johnson thanked department heads for communicating with faculty about the services.

Discussion of Draft Memorandum on College Budget Policy.

Dean Johnson addressed the draft memo on budget policy, which reflects the general consensus that a retrieval policy based on departures is preferable to a "tax." A retrieval system would pull back 15% (approximate) of each departure once the departure is conclusive, with the acknowledgment that requests can be made for funding to keep new positions competitive. In the year following departures, departments retain 1/2 the remaining 85% of the position (9 month). In the following year, departments recoup the 85% (the percentages might change).

Dean Johnson raised some potential consequences of the retrieval system and addressed them. (1) Allocations of base money will require assessment; commitments already made will be defended. The change could affect future partner placements and other opportunity hires. (2) Dedication of new resources for new programs raises the question, "Are we willing to 'take from our own' to allocate to new, developing programs?" (3) Departments will take on responsibility for funding their essential costs. (4) Assessment mechanisms will be put in place.

The point was raised that faculty may be compromised in P&T decisions and third year review. Departments and the College would have opposite financial incentives for tenuring or not tenuring a candidate. Departments might also be penalized for unsatisfactory third year reviews (i.e., department could vote to keep someone on just to preserve the line), whereas it would be to the College's overall advantage to deny tenure and recoup the 15%. Dean Johnson acknowledged that this policy could potentially affect P&T decisions but expressed his complete confidence in Heads and faculty to be honest about cases rather than be affected by financial considerations.

The case was then made that tenure cases should be exempt. This suggestion generated another lengthy discussion about the potential for pressure on tenure, third year, and annual reviews, including the consideration that junior faculty might be aware that their tenure cases are linked to department budgets. Whether or not financial considerations might actually influence decisions, the retrieval system could be perceived as influencing the P&T process, which in any case (as one head pointed out), would only be an issue in cases of grievance.

Dean Johnson asked if heads could accept applying this policy to tenured faculty, with the caveat that this will affect requests for partner placements, counter offers, and by extension, retention. He reinforced his confidence in faculty and heads to hold themselves to the highest ethical standards, but acknowledged that perception is an issue.

The debate continued and two new issues were raised.

(1) Can there be a policy that *cannot* be spun as having a financial component? The general consensus was, no. Dean Johnson proposed for consideration a policy in which the 15% retrieval did not apply to untenured faculty at any level (rather than make an exception to the retrieval policy itself). This would reduce the overall amount; the percentage of retrieval from senior hires. Dean Johnson reinforced his goal of keeping money in departments.

(2) Reinvestment positions. Does retrieval undermine the ability to hire specific faculty for specific purposes? A department could lose lines in crucial areas. Do we need a policy for reinvestment hires? Dean Johnson pointed out that reinvestment hires are expected to be replaced. Entry level positions will be given special consideration.

Dean Johnson made two observations that are factors in retrieval:

- (1) The number of assistant professors is increasing.
- (2) Salary increases have been substantial at upper levels as well as increase in market value for assistant professors (parity, extraordinary merit).

In response to the discussions, Dean Johnson asked that department heads scrutinize the document for clarity and e-mail him. He would like to bring one more draft back on December 6, talk to the Liberal Arts Council, then get the document out before the winter break.

Discussion of Report on Affiliated Faculty for Interdisciplinary Programs. A memo of November 8 was distributed including General Principles for promoting and tenuring interdisciplinary faculty. In short: the committee recommends a

category called “affiliated faculty,” specifies a clear appointment letter detailing review processes, acknowledges the potential for split decisions. This will be a discussion item for the next Council meeting.

Discussion of Differential Tuition. Dean Johnson noted that the state policy that allows individual campuses to set tuition rates also allows different tuitions to be charged within individual universities. Engineering, business, and architecture at A&M are pressing differential tuition. Liberal Arts may also be interested in charging differential tuition for several reasons. (1) Emphasis on the undergraduate experience means more resources are needed to meet the report’s goals (liberal arts graduates the largest number of majors). (2) The College budget is not tied to the number of students. (3) All of the differential would come to the College; 20% of the money must be set aside for scholarships in Liberal Arts.

How tuition rates are altered can vary considerably. For example, higher tuition may apply to majors, major courses, core curriculum, unilaterally across departments, etc. Ideally, the tuition should be tied to the recommendations in the undergraduate enhancement report. Business is now trying to work out this out.

Some of the questions to ask if Liberal Arts requests differential tuition are: What would change? Who would benefit and how? Who would be charged? What are the comparison groups from which data will be gathered? Does grandfathering apply (can the fee structure change for students already enrolled and paying tuition)? If framed as tuition for a major, how will differential tuition affect enrollments?

Liberal Arts averages \$3.50 per SCH contrasted to fees as high as \$20.00 or \$30.00 in other colleges. About 55% of students estimate their household income to be over \$85,000 (65% of freshman families estimated at \$60,000 or above). Liberal Arts is a low cost college. Future tuition changes may be needed to pay utilities.

The process for obtaining permission for differential tuition is not clear. A presentation must be made before the Tuition Advisory Council for approval, after which the President would make a recommendation to the Board of Regents. The likelihood for implementation in September 2006 is uncertain because of the cap on tuition increases set by the University.

Dean Johnson asked how heads would feel about the College of Liberal Arts requesting differential tuition and received comments:

- It is acceptable if tied to undergraduate enhancement, and necessary to achieve the report’s recommendations.
- Does differential tuition affect fees? We would probably have to reduce fees to raise tuition (which is more flexible than fees).

Dean Johnson also asked if there were serious objections to differential tuition at this time?

- Generally there were no objections, though the point was made that heads don’t have enough information yet (e.g., what are the mine fields UT has encountered?).

Dean Johnson suggested the formation of a student/faculty committee to assess the impact of differential tuition and/or a task force would be formed to study the improvements.

Announcements.

- Heads were asked to let the Dean’s office know if summer 2006 projections of SCHs/WSCHs for summer 2006 are lower than on the spreadsheet distributed.
- Workshop December 9 on WSCHs (see message of Nov. 3).
- Reception for Associate Dean Julia Blackwelder, December 8.
- Winter Staff Social, December 7.
- Heads were asked what issues they would like to see brought up to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee? Has there been a bottleneck in curriculum changes between the Provost’s Office and the Coordinating Board (i.e., after they leave Faculty Senate)?