

Faculty Benefits Committee Meeting - December 15, 2016

9:30-11:00 AM Petit Institute Bldg., Room 1316

Meeting Minutes (Pending Approval)

Attendees: Raquel Lieberman (Chair), Wayne Book (Retiree Rep. Outgoing), Doug Britton (Secretary), Cathy Carpenter, Brittany Drew (Student Rep), Darrell Gray (Staff Council Rep.), David Millard (Retiree Rep. Incoming), Leslie Sharp (Graduate Studies Office), BeNedra Williams (OHR Rep.).

Administrative: The minutes from the November 17, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously. Thanks to Jason Freeman for serving as Secretary.

Committee Business:

Welcome to new members:

- Brittany Joy Drew (Graduate Student Rep.) – Medical Physics graduate program
- David Millard (Retiree Rep. replacing Wayne Book) – Retired from GTRI, previously served on Faculty Benefits Committee

Continuing Business:

Teacher Retirement System (TRS) vs Optional Retirement Plan (ORP)

- It appears that more faculty are now on the ORP instead of TRS. The perception is that faculty on ORP typically wait longer before retiring, which could impact the institutes ability to hire new faculty into tenure track positions.
- BeNedra Williams indicated that OHR had not yet been able to gather the data yet on the actual numbers of enrollees in each of the retirement programs – she anticipates that OHR will be able to supply these numbers by end of January.
- Wayne Book noted that TRS is much larger than just Georgia Tech as it includes the entire USG and all schools systems in the state
- Even though individuals can recover their own contributions to TRS if they withdraw before being vested, TRS gets to keep the earnings on those contributions.
- Raquel Lieberman pointed out that having to make a choice between TRS and ORP as a newly minted faculty can be a challenge given the uncertainty of tenure and promotion at the university. Wayne Book agreed stating that young/new faculty are required to make a TRS/ORP decision when they are not sure if they will be able to make tenure and might risk losing the matching and earnings if they do not obtain tenure. The institute might want to consider providing a one-time buy-in option to allow a faculty who are vested switch from ORP to TRS.
- David Millard indicated that when he started the OHR reps were not able to provide council on which retirement plans to pick.
- BeNedra Williams indicated that OHR has a very detailed orientation program for new faculty, but that it is not well attended. OHR also has a set of online tools to help new employees select appropriate benefits options.

- Leslie Sharp – the OHR information is out there, and there are groups of employees for which TRS may not be the best option (Postdocs, lecturers, etc.), but any help in getting information to the new faculty, it would be most helpful.
- David Millard suggested the development of an “Intelligent System” that could capture individual information and assist individuals in making the appropriate benefits selections.
- Darrell Gray raised an additional concern with TRS - if a faculty member goes out on disability and then passes away, the remainder of the accrued retirement funds do not get passed on to the beneficiary. BeNedra Williams was not sure if this is still the case and would look into this.
- Raquel Lieberman – The nature of this discussion really needs to be from an institutional perspective related to the time in position for tenured faculty enrolled in ORP vs TRS and the implications for hiring and retention.
- A recommendation was made to hold off on further discussion until the committee can review the enrollment numbers.

Information and Guidelines for Transitioning to Retirement (but working)

- In a continuation of the same topic from the previous meeting, Wayne Book suggested that the Faculty Benefits Committee might want to consider producing a document on retiree options and guidelines for faculty approaching retirement. Providing a more formal retirement program for tapering research and teaching efforts would go a long ways toward clarifying what expectations and opportunities exist.
- The various issues facing retiring (but working) faculty include:
 - Compensation and financial arrangements/norms for faculty – these appear to be one-off or individually negotiated arrangements
 - Access to support personnel and materials needed to continue research/teaching efforts
 - Access to lab space, institutional systems (travel, purchasing, etc.), library resources, student information/recruitment, etc.
 - Security clearance issues
- David Millard asked about current/existing guidelines. Leslie Sharp indicated that retired (but working) arrangements are currently negotiated on a case by-case basis with college deans. She thought it would be preferred to have a more formalized plan where faculty can transition into either more/less course work, more/less lab responsibilities, and reduction in time, etc.
- Wayne Book mentioned that he has started drafting a document on information for retirees that outlines many of the potential obstacles that must be overcome in order to navigate the various components of the different retirement options. These include:
 - Identifying successors to ensure projects will be seen to completion
 - Supporting graduate students in the mill as a retired (but working) faculty member
 - Compensation arrangements – teaching pay for retired faculty is dramatically reduced
 - Deciding to transition to non-tenure status
- David Millard asked about the financials for the departments and teaching needs.
- Wayne Book indicated that retired faculty doing research typically need to pay themselves and cover graduate students through sponsored grants and programs, with little financial help from the institution.

- Leslie Sharp – The University of California system has a program that allows faculty to indicate their intention to retire 2 years out. This gives faculty time to ramp down, complete projects or books, wrap up graduate advisement, however there is an agreement to retire. A program like this would need to be available to everyone who was eligible, and done in a dignified way to support faculty to help them know that their contributions to the institution are appreciated.
- Leslie Sharp was involved in drafting a set of guidelines for retiring faculty in the College of Architecture. It outlined various expectations and processes in addition to guidelines for obtaining emeritus status.
- Leslie Sharp stated that there is still a good bit of miscommunication regarding the retirement but working status and what that means.
- It appears that this may be something this committee could take up and produce a “1-page” information document to help guide and direct faculty approaching retirement.
- The initial step would be to focus on institutional level policies and guidelines and pull them together into a common document for clarification.

Child Care at Georgia Tech

- The external review has been completed, and a report has been generated.
- Raquel Lieberman received a copy of the external review report, but indicated that there are still several significant questions regarding the data and conclusions. She would like the committee to review the report and provide input on how best to draft a response.
- Given the limits on time, the committee tabled any further discussion for another meeting,

Active Service Modified Duties (ASMD)

- The suggested modifications are still working their way through the system. No new updates to share at this time.

Summer Camps & Scholarships

- Darrell Gray reported that information on Summer Camp scholarship opportunities will be presented at the Staff Council meetings.

Action Items:

- Wayne Book to send Raquel Lieberman the comments that he has accumulated on the “Transitioning to Retirement” topic, in addition to the draft informational document he has started.
- Leslie Sharp to send the information on the book about retirement to Raquel Lieberman.
- David Millard to check with Jeanne Balsam (Faculty Senate) regarding information on retiree information and guidelines in the GT Faculty handbook.
- BeNedra Williams to look into USG guidelines and policies on retirement and general guidelines that may be included.
- Leslie Sharp to dig up the earlier document generated in the College of Architecture regarding approaching retirement for dissemination to the committee.

New Business

No new business introduced at this meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11AM.