

Minutes, SFA meeting, March 26, 2014
8:30-10:00, Elkins Auditorium

Andy Yuengert opened the meeting at 8:35.

Devotional: Andy Yuengert: Lenten season, Psalm 86

Minutes: A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes from the SFA meeting of 1-29-14. Approved!

Nominations for SFA President, Secretary/Treasurer: A slate of candidates was offered from the nomination committee of the SFA Executive Committee.

SFA President: Karen Martin, Tom Vandergon
Secretary/Treasurer Paul Begin, Darlene Rivas

Nominations from the floor were invited. There were none.

A motion was made to accept nominations, seconded, and the slate was approved.

Andy noted that he would send out an electronic ballot for voting on these offices and also for Executive Committee division representatives (for those divisions with spots opening up); later another ballot will be presented for RTP representatives and for certain university representatives. These will include University Faculty Council, University Tenure Committee, both committees that the faculty will be electing the representative for the first time (rather than these being appointed). The University Grievance Committee will also be on the ballot.

University Athletics Committee: Chris Doran explained the proposal to change the athletics committee from a Seaver committee to a University wide committee had been in development for a while. It is meant to align Pepperdine with standard practices recommended by the NCAA and in place at most universities. The governance model will increase participation from students, staff, and faculty from other schools.

The SFA EXCom voted to remove the current committee from the constitution. There was a question about the timeline for change, and Chris answered that the decisions would be before President Benton this summer, and he expects it will be quick. The new University wide committee will likely be in place by August for the next academic year.

Agenda: Andy explained why he had changed the agenda from what he had first announced. He noted that an ad hoc committee had put together resolutions based on faculty concerns from the Growing Seaver white paper document, and originally we were going to consider them today. Andy decided he should have reported to SFA ExCom first to talk about the proposed resolutions. Also, as he talked to Dean Marrs, he was concerned because the Dean was already planning to bring more

details about the proposal at the next SFA meeting in April, and some of the faculty concerns will be addressed in that new document. It seemed appropriate to consider these details before considering any resolutions.

As a result, he decided to bring discussion of Merit Pay to this meeting and Growing Seaver to April 16, when Dean Marrs will show us how the proposal was developing. He noted it's still not "done, it's just more fleshed out" and he had asked Dean Marrs to address the concerns already raised in those resolutions.

Merit Pay Straw Poll Results: Andy presented the PowerPoint slide show with results of the Merit Pay straw poll. 92 people responded; tenured and full professors represented more than 50%, tenured, associates was about 20%+ and about the same for untenured, and 5% declined to state.

The next question, 2, on the poll regarded merit pay to be decided by dean and division chairs; this had a fairly even distribution, but leaned more toward the disagree than the agree side.

The next question, 3, asked if merit pay should be determined by peer review, and the result was agreement (40%) and strong agreement, totaling up to 64+%.

The next question, 4, asked if the current proposal for peer reviewed merit pay is acceptable. There was a very uniform distribution across all five categories, with most at 25% agree and 25% disagree.

The next set of slides was broken down by rank: On the question if merit pay should be decided by dean and division chairs, Andy noted that the pattern was that full professors disagree with that idea; whereas associates agree, and untenured are uncertain, but lean toward disagree.

On the question, if there is merit pay, it should be determined by peer review as in the proposal, when broken down by rank, full professors leaned heavily toward agree; associates also agree with this; untenured were more likely to agree, but a good number of untenured responses were in the neither or uncertain category.

Andy commented on this noting the SFA Executive Committee discussion; people who've been around longer—full and associates—seem to have more confidence in the peer review system. For all its problems, they prefer to entrust this kind of decision to RTP rather than to division chairs and the dean.

On the question of whether the current proposal for peer-reviewed merit pay is acceptable, when broken down by rank, full professors mostly lean toward agree, but there was a lot of variety; associates were more negative about it; 50% thought it acceptable; among the untenured, there was a high degree of concern, with over 50% saying not acceptable (they disagree that it is acceptable).

On the question 5, of whether faculty approve of merit pay but disapprove of the current proposal, there was a good bit of disagreement (almost 40% plus around 15% in strong disagreement), with around 20% neither agreeing or disagreeing and around 20% agreeing. Andy noted it was hard to interpret because of the wording of the question.

On the question 6, of whether faculty altogether disapprove of merit pay, many disagree and strongly disagree (totaling around 60%), suggesting that many do see merit pay as good, although there were some on other side of the issue.

On the question 7, would faculty be more likely to support the proposal if the salary pool were increased, almost 40% strongly agree, and many agree (approximately 25%).

Andy noted that he also asked for comments, and there were 39 responses. He broke them down by themes he saw. The overwhelmingly theme was about the salary pool, with 15 mentioning that specifically. Other items mentioned were disciplinary differentials (4), some were firmly against merit pay (4), some were concerned about RTP load (3), concern about starting salaries and how they would be determined (3), concern about rubrics or lack of them (3), concern how untenured fare (3), greater frequency of review for full profs (3), some thought chairs and deans should decide, (3).

Discussion on Merit Pay: Andy noted that from talking to division chairs and others he had observed that the main concerns are 1) how the proposal treats untenured professors, said a big concern was that when we looked at how people would be rated, it was noted that at the three year review, people haven't had enough time to do much service. Their ratings would be lower at three-year review. It was normal to have lower service scores at this level, but if salary is determined in the same way as people further along, that doesn't seem fair. So, people are wondering if the rating system penalizes people getting started; 2) people on RTP or who have served on it before are concerned about the proposal. The only additional review it adds is mid-associate review, but because we don't have five-year review committee (despite voting on it) there is concern about RTP workload, an already overburdened committee.

What he suggests coming out of this: (Andy showed a slide on pre-tenure categories). Andy noted that 40% at pretenure end up in category 2, 20% right in middle, with the same pay increase, and a significant number 28% wouldn't get much-projecting forward; He proposes that by combining the middle categories, and instead of six, have just three at pre-tenure review, most people will be in the middle category. And somehow split it out so some people can get a category 1. The idea is that most people at pretenure should get what everybody else gets; they should be able to take risks in classroom or research, might still end up in middle, but not be injured by this.

Comment: It was noted that this is agreeable, and also that if we have rubrics published and in place for that level, that should make this clear. There could be different rubrics for those at higher levels. A brief discussion on programs and rubrics occurred with questions about what happened to those made a few years ago. It was noted they were not implemented, but programs could still develop and use them.

C: There was discussion on the workload issue, and the question was asked, if the proposal went into effect, wouldn't the five year review committee be formed? Isn't that part of the proposal?

Andy: We have to consider, what if it doesn't get created? What happens when you realize we voted to create one and we didn't implement it; what does that say? Ultimately, if we don't develop a five-year review committee, he thinks we would have to drop the mid-associate review, or it could be made conditional on the committee being created.

Q: There was some question as to whether the five-year review committee was part of the proposal. Andy noted that it was part of a proposal before and we still didn't do it. He noted he didn't understand enough about why it didn't, but problems were significant enough that it wasn't created; we would need firm language either to create a five-year review committee, or note that the mid-associate review is conditional on its creation.

C: There was some speculation about why it wasn't created. Some think there was opposition from RTP. There might have been concern about standards and experience on that committee as compared to RTP. It was noted that the Seaver Cabinet level (chairs) stalled it. It was suggested that since the administration level wants merit pay proposal to go through, perhaps there would be more acceptance of this committee.

C: The idea of course reduction for RTP members was brought up. If it's too much work, and if they want consistency, and not two committees, why not get a course reduction?

Andy said he would bring up these issues to the Seaver Cabinet to see if those concerns are still there, especially given support from administration to have this in place in order to have merit pay work.

C: There was some discussion about five year committee workload, with the suggestion that it was more like the University tenure committee, with one meeting a year, not many meetings like RTP. A counter-point was made that it would not be like one meeting, because reading the files is a big burden, and if 8-10 in a year, this would be heavy.

C: RTP experience suggests concerns about consistency as well as workload. What would prevent different readings of a person? One committee might approve merit pay for mid-associate, and then that person get turned down at professor by RTP; there might be different standards; the course reduction idea is good. Also, the point of five-year reviews is more advisory, The Dean has more say or takes more freedom with regard to them than to those of tenure and promotion, so some thought let five year reviews be done by chairs.

Clarification: The five year review committee is only supposed to be doing the five-year reviews in this new proposal (NOT the mid-associate reviews—those aren't assigned to the five-year review committee in the proposal).

Q. Would it be good to have a survey monkey to ask would we prefer two committees or prefer one committee with course release? Would that be good to have more data, would that be a way forward?

C: It was suggested that if this proposal is passed, as written, full professors would not be affected by merit pay, they would just have regular five year reviews, so it's a separate issue, as those are just a pat on the back.

Andy noted it is still a workload issue; we will need the five-year review committee for five-year reviews, and possibly we might need to get rid of the mid-associate review.

C: Both the current five year and proposed review does have an effect. A faculty performance award is attached to how people are rated at full professor level. Full professors would be least affected by the proposal, as in a way we already have merit pay at that level through the faculty performance award; so the current proposal more affects untenured and associate professors; the data shown today suggests people who are already affected by "merit" consider that it works, so they have fewer concerns than those who have not yet been affected by it.

C: Sees the data differently. It doesn't make a difference to full professors, whereas greater uncertainty is at untenured and associate professors. Even if someone hits top scores at the end, but not early, they could be behind. Let's say they stumble at some point, for example. There is an uncertainty of benefit that may make people at these ranks more skeptical.

Andy noted that there was an empirical claim he doesn't agree with; the spread be induced by the system is relatively small. Stakes may be low to professors, but it comes down to whether you are for merit pay or not, not just whether stakes are low.

Q: Can we decouple the disciplinary differential and where people start from the merit pay conversation? This is getting in the way; there are market issues for different disciplines, but we've been avoiding this one about differentials, maybe

because they are separate issues; equity of starting floor for salaries is important, right now, it is possible to know what art, philosophy, history make. These two issues of merit pay and disciplinary differentials should be disaggregated.

C: There was some confusion on the question; Andy sees this as an issue of progress. The Dean is trying to bring more money to Seaver, and it's easier to get when we have merit pay.

C: The salary pool is not determined at the college level, it's a university wide pool and the budget committee is involved. A problem is that other schools are not doing well, and while we might want to be rewarded, it's hard to negotiate with other schools; realistically, you can't increase the pool unless it's across the board of all schools, but merit pay will get more to Seaver College without increasing salary pool. We won't get higher salary pool without merit pay.

Q: This is not a real response to the question about the two issues needing to be disaggregated. If we're going to have a conversation about equity, then we need to have it.

Andy noted that there is a practical challenge on this issue. There are already disciplinary differentials the Dean is acting on, working roughly like stipends. Most will get the same, with some disciplines more market driven to make offers to new faculty in certain disciplines; this is already happening. One concern raised in comments is whether every discipline is going to be different, or are we going to have something like the current base system where most faculty start out at the same level? And some just get more, kind of like current system. In talks with Marrs and Feltner, it seems their intent is something like the current system (most at the same level, with a few disciplines different based on market), but it's worthwhile making sure that gets into the proposal.

C: But this is not about merit. It's about market, not merit. So, we should make a floor in the proposal specifically so we don't have to worry about our arts, history or English faculty colleagues.

Andy: If we accept this, it wouldn't go into effect until 2015-2016. Or we could take another year to split out the two discussions, keep talking and studying. At some point, we should try to come down on something; we should say something to the administration, because they are wondering when we're going to give our input. He is sympathetic to them, because they are trying to leverage this so that they can give us more money. Otherwise, we can just keep having chairs make decisions on 2%.

C: Some think that the current proposal already has a standard base, that there is a basic salary from which the Dean will start; some think more information about this could be added to the proposal.

Q. Should this be in the proposal or not? Does it protect the faculty or not to leave it in the merit pay proposal? (“It” is a reference to a starting base.)

Andy noted that he is thinking of going to Feltner and Marrs about the three-year review and the need for change in categories to reduce variation. This would reduce a lot of concerns and take off stress at three-year review. He would also let them know there is a great deal of concern about workload and the mid-associate review, and that it might either need to go away or spread out additional salary through associate level (if they are happy with that—less merit); and finally, he will try to get more clarity about how initial salaries are determined, and express this concern that had just been raised about equity for many disciplines (even if some are market driven, not all would be).

Gender disparities proposal: Kendra Kilpatrick explained a proposed protocol for gender disparities. She also noted that the committee is hosting a dinner next Wednesday night, honoring D’Esta Love, and all are invited (RSVP).

The committee received comments from faculty on gender disparities and then put together a list of recommendations. The committee wanted to hear what faculty think about it.

She said, without defining what a discrepancy is, let’s assume one is found: what would happen then? These recommendations are designed to give us a plan for what to do in such a case: First, there would be a committee already created, that would have the Dean, Associate Dean, a member of the SFA ExCom, a member of the Committee on Women Faculty, and three appointed faculty (by SFA EXCom). At least three would need to be female. Second, the committee would just look at files in the rank/category where the discrepancy was found. This would narrow the work of the committee. Third, the committee would review all the materials and determine if adjustments needed to be made. The materials would be those that are available electronically. Fourth, if an adjustment to the merit pay was determined necessary, the committee recommended that the candidate should receive back pay.

She noted that this would apply to gender discrimination either way (male or female), or could work for ethnic differences.

Q. Will you find from the Dean if they will give data to determine discrepancies? Kendra answered that it is already in the merit pay proposal that they will provide this; the data will be there.

C. There is a problem with categories with smaller numbers, and if they publish ratings at a small number, you are going to know what people’s ratings are. It would be harder with some categories, where there might be one person or two and that shouldn’t be public information; another concern is language; it is suggested you change the language from “due to gender” to “correlated to gender.”

Q. What about the process? People not on RTP in the new committee will see materials. Currently, peer reviews are only for RTP and Dean's eyes, but with this, that's out the window/blown up, more people will see them.

C. This will likely require a change to RTP handbook; there will need to be an expectation of confidentiality;

C. RTP is an elected committee and this not an elected committee.

Kendra noted that they couldn't use the same committee that allegedly made the discrepancy review it.

C: Perhaps this review committee could be elected, and be a standing committee that just acts if needed; and could require confidentiality of its members.

Kendra noted that there is a reason for putting this procedure in place in advance so it's not a reaction to an event, but a proactive process. It is more collaborative with administration to address issues when/if they arise instead of reacting to them.

Andy noted that we will tell the administration we're working on this, and he agrees it would be good to have something in place.

Q/C. What if RTP did its own study every three years or keep up with their own data, but then, that's more work for them?

Andy noted that this is rolling data that would be provided, not just a report once every three years, but three years of data at a time, with each year adding new data for the latest year plus two previous years.

Andy noted that he needs action items.

C: On initial salaries, there is concern that they (administrators) want ambiguity. They want to get rid of the scale so they can do whatever they want with salaries, maybe not at first, but over time. They will do what they want, and will take a lot of liberty; he thinks we should be explicit on starting salaries.

Andy noted he did not want to speculate on their motives, but it is incumbent on us to ask them to be more specific; to help them to resist whatever pressures they might have in the future, or what they might be.

Ron noted again we are asking for action items. We need to communicate whether we're open to merit pay generally. We also need to communicate what our concerns are about going forward, or that we're not interested in going forward.

Andy noted that his idea is to ask about the pre-tenure level and mid-associate review and starting salaries, and see if/how they are willing to address those. He

then would bring information back to the faculty and then the faculty would vote on it, accept or not.

Ron noted that we don't want to get caught in not doing anything. Won't we still be in the same boat of ambiguity/talking about this even if they make changes?

Andy noted that we need to vote at sometime, for something. He wants a sense of what things in proposal would make this a better proposal, and then we can vote yes or no to it.

Cyndia noted that we don't have a quorum, but we could get a straw poll kind of vote now about how people feel about it. This would not be an official motion.

Andy asked a series of questions and people responded with hand raises. This was an informal straw poll, with most votes not counted.

1. Would you like me to go to the Dean to seek more clarity on how starting salaries will be determined and seek more transparency on that? Overwhelming percentage of hands indicated yes.

2. How many would like me to go to the Associate Dean and communicate a desire that merit pay at pre-tenure categories be collapsed to reduce disparities at that level? General positive response indicated by most raising their hands.

3. How many would like me to ask them to eliminate the mid-associate review? Only a few people responded either yes or no.

4. How many people want the women's committee's proposal brought? Before the vote, some comments were made; the issues of whether the committee would be elected and confidentiality would need to be added to it. It was clarified this would only be showing the proposal as a starting point, not completed proposal. The majority agreed; a few did not. Andy noted he would communicate real concerns brought up here.

5. Should the five-year review committee be enacted? An effort to count was made: Approximately 16 said yes, approximately 14 said no; about the same number said had no opinion.

Comment: The idea of course release for RTP is crucial, and we should bring that up. It was pointed out this needs more discussion.

Comment: We need a larger sample for these votes.

Professor of Practice/Lecturer Proposal: This proposal to address visiting professor issues was on the agenda to be presented by Mike Murrie, but Andy apologized that we didn't get to visiting professor proposal, because we ran out of

time. He apologized for those visiting professors who had made a special effort to come and noted it would be on the agenda in April.

Q. Is there a committee that can receive comments on that? Mike noted that we've been getting comments since summer 2010, but he is willing to receive additional comments.

Q. Should it go on ballot? Andy responded, that no, we need to discuss it, and need visiting faculty to be at a meeting when we do.

Comment: We could meet 15 minutes early next meeting and discuss it first. Andy agreed to this, and noted that we've been talking about this for four years and need to get going.

At 10:00 a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. Adjourned!

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene Rivas
SFA Secretary Treasurer