

University Committee on Women Faculty and Students

Meeting Minutes for November 6, 2013

Members in Attendance: Kasey Buckles, Aedin Clements, Paulette Curtis, Karen Hooge, Sharon Keane, Jennifer McAward Mason, Mary Ann McDowell, Abigail Palko, Catherine Perry, Catherine Pieronek, Ava Preacher, Samantha Salden, Katherine Spiess, Sarah Wake, MacKenzie Warren, Grace Xing

Guest: Prof. Dan Myers, Vice President and Associate Provost

Reporter: Mary Hendriksen, Provost's Office

Prof. Mary Ann McDowell, standing in for the chair, Prof. Laura Carlson, opened the meeting at 11 a.m.

1. October meeting minutes: The minutes of the meeting of October 3, 2013, were approved as presented.

2. Update on Matpothier lunches with Provost Tom Burish: Several years ago, William Mapother established a fund at the University to enhance communication between the faculty and administration—particularly communication that would help women faculty thrive and advance at Notre Dame. The fund underwrites four meetings a year between women faculty and the Provost. Two of the meetings are with untenured faculty, two with tenured faculty.

Prof. McDowell summarized the list of invitees to this year's Matpothier lunches

November 14: Patty Champion, Biological Sciences and Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi, English and Creative Writing

December 16: Roxanna Smarandache, Math and Electrical Engineering and LeAnne Clark, Psychology

February 27: Arezoo Ardekani, Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering and Kristin Valentino, Psychology

April 17: Alison Rice, Romance Languages and Michelle Whaley, Biological Sciences

The women invited have been provided with the link to the Committee's minutes, urged to meet beforehand with their fellow faculty member, and asked to submit a short report to the Committee.

Prof. McDowell affirmed that Special Professional Faculty are invited to participate in the luncheon series.

3. Notre Dame climate survey: At the October meeting, members received copies of the Spring 2013 Notre Dame faculty survey, in which the University partnered with four peer institutions to assess institutional climate, work load, work/life balance, the tenure/promotion process, mentoring, research

and scholarship infrastructure, and benefits. Prof. Dan Myers, Vice President and Associate Provost, was invited to today's meeting to discuss methodology, results, and plans for the survey.

Prof. Myers first noted that peer institutions are all private national research universities. Only one university is religious; the others are all located in large urban areas. There are common questions and institution-specific questions. Only aggregated data were analyzed and results will be reported only for groups large enough to preclude individual identification.

While full completion response rates varied from 40% to 74%, Notre Dame was the institution with the highest response rate. Within Notre Dame, the highest response rate was received from assistant SPF faculty; the lowest from full professors. By college, the rate was in the range of 70% across the board. Response rates were 79% for female faculty; 72% for male; 70% for minority faculty; 72% nonresident alien; and 75% for white faculty. In assessing this response rate, Prof. Myers said that it provides confidence that the data and extrapolations are likely to be accurate.

Prof. Myers said that, bottom line, Notre Dame was markedly ahead of the peers surveyed in satisfaction rates. Overwhelmingly, faculty consider the University a good place to work. Faculty here have higher rates of satisfaction than the peer group on matters of compensation (salary, health benefits, retirement benefits, tuition remission for dependents) and resources (office and lab space, library resources, administrative and clerical support, etc.). They also have higher satisfaction on questions related to tenure and promotion.

While Prof. Myers identified some areas in which faculty were less satisfied than the peer group, he explained that the process going forward is for members of a blue-ribbon committee, all with expertise in data analysis, to work with the survey results and our office of Institutional Research to probe the findings in depth, then publish results and analysis. The first meeting of that committee is December 4—making it likely that results will be revealed to University faculty in the spring term.

Some members commented on potential flaws in any comparison—for instance, that the other institutions surveyed were all in urban areas, and thus faculty there are likely to have different experiences and concerns than faculty at Notre Dame.

Prof. Myers agreed that there are some problems with the comparisons. Certainly every institution is unique. Thus, the percentage of faculty unhappy with the climate at Notre Dame overall or in specific areas is significant wholly apart from a comparison with peer institutions. That is one way he intends to examine the data.

At this point in the process, Prof. Myers concluded, the committee must do its work—and then report to the faculty as a whole, as well as to committees and subgroups interested in particular segments of the faculty and their responses.

Prof. McDowell adjourned the meeting at 12 noon.