**CLAS Faculty Development Committee**

**2012-2013 Annual Report**

**Membership:**

Rachel Anderson Henry Duitman Michael Henshaw Caitlin Horrocks Brian Lakey Ronald Loeffler James McNair\*\*\* Ross Sherman David Stark\* Heather Van Wormer\*\*

\* = chair \*\* = fall \*\*\* = winter

**Ex Officio:** Shaily Menon

The CLAS Faculty Development Committee (FDC) is a faculty advocacy committee that sees its mission as addressing the issues that affect the development of CLAS faculty in the areas of teaching, research, and service. While the committee has numerous duties related to sabbaticals, issues brought to the committee’s attention by CLAS faculty determine much of our agenda. Faculty members with a concern about an issue affecting faculty development are encouraged to contact the FDC chair.

The committee met for 90 minutes every other week, with more frequent and longer meetings during November for review of CLAS sabbaticals.

**Teaching:**

The FDC supervised the review of nominations for teaching awards in the college. In September, we appointed a Teaching Excellence Committee to review these proposals; the faculty representatives on this committee were Matthew Daley (chair), Margaret Dietrich, Bruce Ostrow (all past winners of the award) and three CLAS undergraduates (chosen by faculty recommendation). We greatly appreciate the work of the members of this committee and congratulate the CLAS recipients of teaching awards for the year. A new on-line application process was implemented in the fall, and the FDC worked with the Dean’s office to ensure that the application process worked smoothly.

**Research:**

During the month of October, the FDC reviewed the nominations from CLAS for the Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence research awards (Distinguished Early-Career Scholar Award, Distinguished Undergraduate Mentoring Award, and Distinguished Graduate Mentoring Award). Participation in this awards program has grown since its inception. However, the committee would like to encourage the college to submit more candidates since CLAS can submit up to seven names in each category to the final review process by CSCE.

One of the issues the FDC worked on during the winter semester was finding ways to encourage and support faculty in their scholarly and creative endeavors, especially as they move beyond tenure. The FDC is concerned with the low number of faculty taking sabbaticals. To this end, the FDC met with Deans Fred Antczak, Gary Stark, and Shaily Menon, and Robert Smart (director of the CSCE) as well as the Unit Heads to identify what delays or deters faculty from applying for sabbatical. A series of productive discussions ensued and the FDC is working with the Deans and the CSCE to assist faculty in re-engaging with their scholarly/creative endeavors.

**Sabbaticals:**

The sabbatical is a time of scholarly renewal which is a privilege valued by the academic community. In time of contracting fiscal resources, it is crucial that we clearly communicate the scholarly value of the sabbatical to those outside our community. The FDC takes the position that we want all faculty members to receive their sabbatical, and we work to help faculty propose their work in a way that will reflect favorably on the university. Much of our time and effort is spent in support of faculty who are in the process of proposing a sabbatical.

During the summer and fall of 2012, two potential sabbatical proposals were sent to the committee for a pre-read (a service offered to all CLAS faculty). These proposals were distributed to committee members who provided comments and suggestions to the proposer.

Two times each year, the FDC hosts a sabbatical proposal development workshop: one in the fall and again in the winter semester. These workshops are to provide general information about the proposal process and expectations as well as an opportunity to speak with committee members and representatives from IRB about developing your sabbatical idea into a successful proposal. The first workshop was held Sept. 27, with 26 faculty members in attendance (largest turnout ever). The winter workshop will be held on Thursday, April 11th, from 3:30-5:00pm in PAD 308. All faculty members eligible for sabbatical are encouraged to attend. Feedback on this service has been uniformly positive.

The month of November is devoted to review of sabbatical proposals. Of the 114 sabbatical eligible faculty in CLAS, 45 submitted proposals. A subcommittee of three reviewed each proposal, making sure that no member of a subcommittee belonged to the same unit as the proposer. Subcommittees reported back to the full committee with recommendations and full-group discussion. If there is a lack of affirmative consensus in the subcommittee, the entire FDC read the proposal and discussed it. Our recommendations were then forwarded to Dean Antczak. The overall quality of the proposals was high. At the end of the process, CLAS supported 91% of the sabbatical proposals submitted for the year.

A new on-line application sabbatical process was implemented in the fall, and the FDC worked closely with the Dean’s office and Robert Smart to ensure that the application process worked as smoothly as possible. Though some problems were encountered, we are working to ensure that these are resolved.

Language in the sabbatical application regarding evidence of preparation was clarified, with a new section created for Background and Significance of Project as well as Relevant Preparation. The sabbatical application form was updated to reflect these changes as were the Guidelines for Writing a Successful Sabbatical Proposal. Please make note of these changes.

The FDC proposed changes in the language in the Administrative Manual to counter the perception that a sabbatical requires being away from GVSU rather than simply not participating in service and other activities.

**Other:**

Several faculty members have shared their concerns with the FDC about Grand Valley’s parental leave policy and the unevenness with which it is applied across the university. Following up on this matter, the FDC worked with the FPPC and the Provost’s office in reviewing proposed changes in the language in the Administrative Manual regarding family leave policies. The FDC also worked with the FPPC in reviewing proposed changes in the language in the Administrative Manual regarding reduced load appointments and encourages the administration to pursue these as one possible strategy for recruiting and retaining faculty.