

## **CLAS Committee Reports 2015**

### **CLAS Faculty Council**

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**Ranking of New Faculty Requests:** In the summer of 2014, the council met to rank the unit requests for new faculty lines. Using the unit ranking as a guide, the council worked to balance need with equity to prepare our recommendations. Unit heads are reminded that if you rank a replacement position 4<sup>th</sup>, we must assume that you do not value that replacement as highly as the positions you ranked above it. Our recommendations were passed to the Dean.

As the 2014-15 academic year began, faculty council decided to focus our efforts toward facilitating and expanding faculty participation in shared governance.

**Clarification of CLAS Governance By-Laws and Changes to the Election Timetable.** To address issues in the election process that may hamper participation, we went through the CLAS governance by-laws with an eye toward earlier elections and removing many conflicting statements. These proposed changes will move to each of the 4 CLAS governance committees for comment and improvement. The earlier election cycle was tested this year with good success.

**Elections:** Two elections were held this academic year.

**Fall:** In the fall, a special election to fill 5 key positions was needed due to needed sabbatical replacements being announced at the last minute. All 5 positions were filled. We are actively working to change the communication on newly awarded sabbatical positions so that there is plenty of time to fill these posts. We seek to reduce the number of elections and hence election fatigue.

**Winter:** The full election for all open positions was held in W15. We tried several new approaches to boost the number of nominations including; email to all committee chairs detailing who was up for re-election, direct contact of previous nominees when that position was again available and the creation of a promotional video to boost participation and more. Nominations rose by 20% over previous years, however, nominations tend to remain highest among committees with the lowest workload. The full election filled all but one position. This will be filled by semester's end by using available alternates.

**Out of the Box Series on Sharing Governance:** As a prelude to this years Out of the Box discussions on sharing and valuing governance, we brought in national speaker Prof. Larry Gerber to speak on the topic "Sharing Governance." In addition to the speaking event, faculty council had the talk video taped to make it available to those unable to attend the event. This event was successful, drawing approximately 65-70 attendees and prompted good discussion.

Faculty comments submitted after the talk, helped to frame the two OOTB events held the following week. These discussions involved 30 attendees and focused on several key points arising from the Gerber lecture: How do we value service in a way that encourages participation? How do we make service work more meaningful? How do we broaden the base of participation? The highlights of these discussions will be released as a commentary and list of recommendations on establishing a culture of shared governance.

**Survey on Faculty Attitudes Toward Assessment at GVSU.** As a follow-up to last years Out of the Box events on assessment, faculty council ran a voluntary survey of CLAS faculty designed to poll their attitudes toward assessment. Participation was remarkably high. Participation based on a single announcement was 2/3 of the number of faculty who voted in the Winter election. Several broad conclusions were obvious. Questions that polled faculty attitudes about the general value of assessment were split almost evenly between positive and negative responses. However, in the free response section where the emphasis was on our internal assessment, the responses became more negative. A full report will be released as an advisory document to aid Unit Heads involved in the assessment process by the end of the semester.

**Dean's Advisory Functions:** During the course of the year, faculty council is called upon by the Dean's office to offer input to various reports or policies. This year there were 3 such requests made.

**Feedback on the PEAT Report:** In the fall the PEAT (Principles of Equity in Allocation Taskforce) report was released by it's task force and brought before the unit heads for discussion. Prior to reaching the unit heads, faculty council spent time reviewing and offering our take on the conclusions of the report. This report sought to find an equitable method for distributing CLAS resources across the college. The report supported a more detailed budgeting process that sought to involve more of the unit faculty in looking at how the unit budgets expenses and establishing a series of conversations between the unit head and the Dean's office. These latter conversations were designed to create transparency in the funding process and allow for a more interactive budgeting process between unit heads and the Dean's office. In our report to the Dean, faculty council praised the goal of a transparent budgeting process and fully supports a team approach to the allocation of college resources. We remain concerned that the money up for negotiation is small relative to the overall budgeting process. This total is controlled by the Provost's office. Faculty council sees potential for an increase in work to compete for a fairly small portion of the total budget. Unless the Provost will use the recommended PEAT criteria for the final decisions, faculty council sees the potential for a disconnect in the process. These recommendations were summarized and shared with the Dean. The PEAT report has been presented to the unit heads for comment and has now moved forward into the next stage of development.

**Review of the Generalized Unit Head Evaluation Form:** Within CLAS there is a generic Unit Head evaluation form that can be used by any unit wishing to do so. Faculty council was asked to decide if units should be allow to alter the

document and then to look into updating the document. We agreed that since the unit was free to use its own document, altering a generic model was certainly acceptable. In order to revise the document, we sought data on how the document was not functioning correctly in its current state. When no clear data to demonstrate problem areas, we focused our efforts on reorganizing the form to create greater clarity. The revised document has been returned to the Dean's office.

**Consultation on Developing a Policy for Blanket Emails Across the University:** This year the Provost's office shifted responsibility for deciding which emails should be released to the entire University over to the Dean's office of each college. In an effort to develop an equitable policy that did not fill up faculty mailboxes with tangential email, they asked faculty council for our input. Since each request was so unique, it was difficult to look for central themes. Our recommendations were twofold. First, if a unit could demonstrate, with data, that a significant fraction of their audience lay outside of CLAS, the Dean could choose to release that email. The burden of proof must lie with the unit requesting the email and the final decision would lie with the Dean's office. Second, we recommended an opt-in/opt-out system where faculty would be given a series of topics that they could choose to receive email about. This could be changed at their convenience and would prevent receiving certain emails of lower interest. Currently this second recommendation is more difficult to implement with our current software, but we stand by the idea as part of a desirable eventual solution. These recommendations were passed to the Dean's office for use as they craft the final policy.