

CLAS Faculty Development Committee 2017-2018 Annual Report

Membership:

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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 October for review of CLAS sabbaticals.

Teaching Awards:

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 Ellen Shupe (chair), Andrew Lantz and Mayra Fortex (all past winners of the award) and two 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.

Research and Mentoring Awards:

During October, the FDC reviewed the nominations from CLAS for the Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence research and mentoring awards (Distinguished Early-Career Scholar Award, Distinguished Undergraduate Mentoring Award, and Distinguished Graduate Mentoring Award). Participation in this award 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. These nomination limits are rarely met by CLAS.

Sabbatical proposals:

The sabbatical is a time of scholarly renewal which is a privilege valued by the academic community. In a 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 members who are in the process of writing a sabbatical proposal.

In May and June 2017 the FDC offered two sabbatical writing workshops; approximately 23 faculty members attended, from CLAS and other colleges. Over the remainder of the summer, 12 draft sabbatical proposals were sent to C. Horrocks for a pre-read (a service offered to all CLAS faculty). These proposals were distributed to former committee members who provided comments and suggestions to the proposer.

From October 1 to October 30 the FDC reviewed sabbatical proposals. Of the 157 sabbatical eligible faculty in CLAS, 45 submitted proposals. Subcommittees 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 was 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 with the

designation “Recommend,” “Recommend with Reservations,” or “Do Not Recommend.” The overall quality of the proposals was high. CLAS supported 95% of the submitted proposals for the year as either “Recommend” or “Recommend with Reservations.” For the first time, the committee provided constructive feedback to each author. This feedback was also sent to the faculty member’s unit head. The rationale for this stemmed from interviews FDC carried out with CLAS unit heads regarding the sabbatical review process. The goal of this feedback is to increase transparency of the review process. We also hope that this feedback will be useful to CLAS authors to help strengthen future proposals.

CLAS sabbaticals with the designation of “Recommend” or “Recommend with Reservations” were then forwarded to the University Sabbatical Review Committee (USRC). This group reviewed a sample of proposals from all colleges of the university. The sampling formula for this year was: 50% of those designated “Recommend”, 100% of those designated “Recommend with Reservations”, and 0% of those designated “Do Not Recommend”. Two proposals from CLAS were not recommended by the USRC, with one of these negative decisions being overturned by the Provost, resulting in an overall success rate of 93% for CLAS sabbatical proposals.

The FDC discussed our concerns with and possible improvements to the sabbatical review process. In January 2018, we sent a memo to the Provost outlining our concerns and recommendations. The Provost responded favorably to our memo, and has made some recommendations for changes to the review process for the 2018-19 submission window.

This summer the FDC, in collaboration with USRC, will be offering up to four workshops for faculty members writing sabbatical proposals. The dates of these workshops will be announced soon.

Safety

The first charge our committee worked on during the winter semester stemmed from a request from a CLAS faculty member to outline the safety resources available to faculty and students at GVSU. A subcommittee of three FDC members met with Sgt. William O’Donnell and Daniel Bohle from the GVSU Police Department to gather information on this topic. Currently we are in the process of generating a one-page document with information on safety resources such as SafeWalk, the Guardian App, seminars given by GVSU PD and resources for students. We plan to disseminate this information via e-mail and hard copy to CLAS faculty by August 2018.

Faculty mentorship at GVSU

The second task our committee undertook was a charge from a faculty member regarding the current CLAS document on faculty mentoring, originally authored by FDC about 10 years ago. We started by having conversations with Christine Rener (GVSU FTLC) and Kathleen Underwood (Emeritus GVSU Professor) regarding current faculty mentoring resources available at GVSU and best practices in mentoring. With this information, we will make recommendations to Dean Antczak regarding future improvements to the current faculty mentoring system in CLAS. These recommendations include (but are not limited to) encouraging all mentors to receive training and support through FTLC and having FTLC facilitate an early conversation between faculty mentors and mentees regarding expectations of this experience.

Fostering scholarly collaborations with CLAS faculty

Our third charge for the winter 2018 semester came from our Ex-officio, Donovan Anderson, with regard to finding ways to foster scholarly collaborations involving CLAS faculty. Our committee discussed how to proceed with this task at length, and decided to survey the current state of scholarly collaborations involving CLAS faculty members before moving forward. FDC constructed a simple one-page survey asking for information regarding the number and types of collaborations CLAS faculty members are involved in, as well as barriers to starting/expanding collaborations and resources that would address these barriers. (The survey is attached to this report as the final page.) FDC members then disseminated this 5-10 minute survey to CLAS faculty members at departmental meetings. While the survey results are still coming in, we anticipate analyzing all of the data by the end of the year and disseminating our findings, along with our recommendations for moving forward, to Donovan in time for the unit head retreat in August 2018.