Department of English Meeting Friday, January 26, 2018

Attendance: David Sterling Brown, Stephanie Brown, Alison Deming, Pete Figler, Jeremy Frey, Jean Goodrich, Keith Harms, Sandra Holm, Paul Hurh, Fenton Johnson, Hayriye Kayi-Aydar, Fred Kiefer, Marcia Klotz, Manya Lempert, Kristin Little, Aimee Mapes, Alison McCabe, Maureen McHugh, Lee Medovoi, Stefania Metzger, Ander Monson, Tenney Nathanson, Stephanie Pearmain, Homer Pettey, Natalie Reed, Jon Reinhardt, Shelley Rodrigo, Jeff Schlueter, Emily Jo Schwaller, Aurelie Sheehan, Ann Shivers-McNair, Joel Smith, Ragini Tharoor Srinivasan, Shelley Staples, Chris Tardy

Meeting began at 2:00 pm in ML 410

I. Announcements
   A. Ragini Tharoor Srinivasan—Head Search Voting Options
      a. Ragini discussed our options for the voting members’ vote on candidates: secret ballot in person or Qualtrics vote
   B. Paul Hurh—UGCC
      a. Paul discussed revisions to the English and CW majors and his discussion forum
   C. Results of Vote on Promotion Plan
      a. Department voted (38 y, 8 n) in favor of the Promotion Plan for Career-Track Lecturers proposed by the Task Force. Lecturers voted in support of the Plan as well (27 y, 0 n)

II. Discussion
   A. Nominations for Annual Performance Review Committee
      a. Nomination for 2-year term: Chris Tardy, Meg Lota Brown, Dwight Atkinson. Lee planned to ask the remaining folks if they’d be willing to serve in the 1-year term after determining the 2-year term.
   B. Nominations for Promotion & Tenure Committee
      a. It was discussed that John Melillo was the only person to go up this year for P&T, but later corrected that he’ll be going up the following year
b. Nominations for 3-year term: Jon Reinhardt, Daniel Cooper Alarcón, Susan Briante

c. Nominations for 1-year term to replace Joshua Wilson: Damián Baca, Maritza Cardenas

C. Climate Survey

a. Lee went into detail about some of the major themes that came out of the climate survey: better departmental communication, transparency, mentoring, and more discussions. Lee also mentioned the Academic Program Review as an opportunity to work out some of these issues through the self-reporting process. Lee also noted that he wants to be respectful of the possibility that we should be doing things now to rectify this climate survey.

b. The discussion was opened up to the department. It was noted that the Academic Program Review may be delayed because of the new Head.

c. There was discussion about having an Associate Head and how that could help us tackle the issues in the climate survey.

d. Lee stated that he is glad that the budget meeting is happening as budget literacy for the department is a good thing, and transparent. Lee noted that there should be funding to support an Associate Head if that’s what the new Head chooses to do.

e. There was further discussion about how we are one of the largest academic programs on campus and how difficult it is to already manage both the Department and the Writing Program. More logistical points about the Associate Head were discussed in reference to our own needs.

f. It was noted that 60-70% of Jr. Faculty did not take the climate survey. It was stated that we should have a discussion about ways to increase buy-in from all quarters of the department. There are different reasons why folks didn’t participate. The option of paying an external set of consultants with no tie to the University or supervisory power over anybody was discussed, in hopes of having a completely objective body facilitate a survey. It was also discussed that leadership in all departments across the College, as well as the Dean,
be trained on harassment bias and non-retaliation procedures as a show of good faith.

g. It was mentioned that these ideas all circle back to the endorsement of an Associate Head. Folks brought up how this department felt in the past: non-transparent and a lack of mentoring for Jr. Faculty. It was noted that the burdens of the Head were so great that there was no time to tackle these other issues.

h. There was discussion about creating our own survey and how that would play out, especially with the theme of tackling these transparency and mentorship issues. Willingness to form a task force/committee to form a survey from within was expressed.

i. It was discussed how the anonymous nature of our Qualtrics surveys doesn't allow us to fully understand some of the issues that exist among ranks/programs. This led back to a discussion of unbiased, external groups conducting the survey.

j. Someone mentioned the Ombuds program offered by the University, and how they stress impartiality.

k. It was also noted that it was not made clear how the original climate survey was going to be used in the first place so moving forward, we should set clear guidelines for its intended purposes.

l. There was discussion about the benefits of the Jr. Faculty retreat and how folks enjoyed working with the mediators from HR.

m. It was noted that we should check back in with Caitlan Hendrickson from Ombuds to get some more information.

n. It was also noted that our website needs improvement, and Lee welcomed suggestions on how to make it more transparent and add more resources.

o. Someone asked if we have a formal/informal process in place to protect new faculty from service responsibilities. It was noted that we could have a workshop for mentors to make new faculty feel more at home. Other folks shared experiences with mentorship services at other universities—not just an internal mentor, but also an external mentor outside of the new faculty’s department/college. It was asked
if we can request the College/University to make interdisciplinary mentors a possibility.

p. Someone asked what specific decisions have been made where we would've liked more transparency. It was noted that the relationships between programs could use more transparency. In the past, discussions concerning resource allocation among programs felt stable and harmonious at times, but could've been better at other times.

q. Someone suggested we think of our programs’ missions and departmental vision as all-inclusive within the English Department, and how we can strive for that in discussions. It was noted that we had separate committees in the past to help with these kinds of discussions.

r. Lee mentioned that this would be a good thing for Council to have a conversation on, check in with program constituents, and then come back to Council.

s. It was noted that we’re talking about transparency issues between departmental programs, but we still need to talk about the communication between the College and the Department, and how our departmental climate is located within a bigger climate that also has an impact on us.

t. There was discussion about how SBS is much larger than COH, and that in smaller Colleges we have the opportunity to build closer relationships with the Dean but it’s harder to do that in a larger College. The channel of communication is different.

u. Lee noted that he would seek a firmer commitment from SBS for external mentors, and also see about the Writing Program mentoring folks in its own ranks.

v. Lee also noted some big questions to take away from this discussion: how to facilitate conversation further for climate, specifically, how to use Ombuds and the resources we have here but also the willingness to explore external facilitators for conversations. It was also noted that PDs should report to the whole department to keep us all in the loop about individual programs

The meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.