Department of English Meeting Friday, March 30, 2018

Attendance: Matthew Abraham, Dev Bose, Stephanie Brown, Stacey Cochran, Alison Deming, Jeremy Godfrey, Jean Goodrich, Sandra Holm, Paul Hurh, Fred Kiefer, Kristin Little, Aimee Mapes, Lee Medovoi, Stefania Metzger, Sharonne Meyerson, Susan Miller-Cochran, Tenney Nathanson, Stephanie Pearmain, DR Ransdell, Kara Reed, Richardson, Shelley Rodrigo, Jamey Rogers, Jeff Schlueter, Selisker, Aurelie Sheehan, Ann Shivers-McNair, Maribeth Slagle, Nick Smith, Shelley Staples, Monica Vega, Erin Whittig

Meeting began at 2:06 pm in ML 411

Approval of 1/26/18 minutes (Matthew Abraham added to attendance)

I. Announcements

A. Stacey Cochran—Faculty Senate
   a. Stacey announces himself and Paul Hurh as candidates for Faculty Senate Reps in SBS.

II. Head's Report

A. Head Search
   a. Aurelie is now in conversation with the Dean’s office.

B. Positive Outcome of Lecturer Promotion Plan
   a. The Lecturer promotion plan and codicil went forward to the Dean and was accepted verbatim.

C. Academic Program Review
   a. Happens every 7 years, and we need to assemble a self-study committee. We’ll also have a proposal for nominations for an external member by the end of the semester. We’ll provide two names for the external committee member and then the Dean’s office will pick one.

D. Hiring Efforts
   a. Hiring is difficult at the moment, and we are in a hiring freeze. We are thinking of creative ways to do things that can help the department—SPFY visits is one idea. We’re also in conversation with American
Indian Studies to put forward a partner hire to serve the GIDP in American Indian Studies and English.

b. We also need to address our Shakespeare courses, and may ask for a visiting professor position

c. We’re similarly looking for a visiting professorship in prose writing.

E. Continuing Status

a. Aimee Mapes and Shelley Rodrigo are going up for promotion to Continuing Status. This status has been used in the past, especially for folks in the WP admin positions, such as assistant directors.

F. Budget Cuts

a. SBS is potentially due for as much as $4 million in cuts next year. There has been a significant change in the balance of in vs. out of state students, and the amount allocated for every student credit hour is different. There is some evidence that next year will be better, however.

III. Program Reports

A. Creative Writing

a. 440 applications for MFA, currently taking 12—highly competitive at the moment.

b. Young Arizona Writer’s workshop is a teaching opportunity for grad student sin summer.

c. Field studies program from Haury

B. English Applied Linguistics

a. Folks have returned from major conferences

C. Literature

a. In the middle of recruiting and revising master reading list for MA exam
b. Annual recruit track report—academic and alt-academic placements, doing well in placement: 2008-place 38% tenure, 52% to full-time.

Before recession: 62% tenure, 72% full time—it’s been a different career market since 2008.

c. Lost 3 folks in British Literature as well as many others in different disciplines.

d. There are serious gaps in undergraduate courses as well as grad courses.

D. RCTE

a. Two students on job market.

b. Overhaul of SLOs for RCTE—changes to course sequence, exam process, finishing comps under this new process.

c. Lots of sharing responsibilities—colloquium and all but one RCTE faculty has admin duties.

d. Rethinking admission process (move to GradApp)

e. Two admits now, expect 4-5 in next couple weeks.

f. GradApp not used for notes in other programs.

g. Tom Miller returns in Spring and Cistina Ramirez is back from sabbatical.

E. Undergrad – Update on D2L and UGCC discussions

a. 293 majors in English, 238 in CW, 531 overall. This has been a drop from past year—we’ve lost about 40% from 5 years ago.

b. Good news—this is a similar average for like majors (history, Spanish).

c. English appears to be stabilizing—the last 2 years the number of majors incoming has maintained.

d. CW is different, and Ander has worked to recruit more students.

e. Curriculum Committee updates:
i. Historical distribution requirements; we’re leaning towards keeping this the same 373A, 373B and Shakespeare.

f. 280 elimination and 200 requirement.
   
i. We’re leaning towards leaving 280 as required, and not doing the distribution requirement for 200
   
ii. Using some graduate students to teach 280 to teach their subjects so faculty can teach research interests

2. SCCT requirements
   
i. Not time sensitive at the moment, leaning toward track and offer classes that address cultural breadth (SLO in undergrad major)
   
   ii. Building up repertoire and maybe create a requirement later

3. Reduction of credit hours (39 → 36)
   
i. Trying to create more double majors
      
i. We can make the same amount of money on single vs. double majors.
   
   ii. SCH took a hit due to 1 fewer class that all majors will take.
   
   iii. We’re not sure how many double major students would come in with this reduction.

j. 396A Elimination
   
i. It is up for elimination, but in keeping the credit hours the same this will probably remain. If there needs to be a proposal, it will probably happen at next Dept. meeting.

k. Discussion of concerns with Paul:
   
i. Pima will teach 280—Paul’s meeting with them to make sure it aligns with UA’s version.
      
      1. Bump from CC students who may transfer to UA.
      
   ii. Will phase in cultural breadth requirement.
   
   iii. Literary trivia night—build community.
iv. Create new program (rhetoric?)

v. Convince RCS to schedule M, W regularly scheduled times for Spring ’10.

F. Writing
   a. WP is in the middle of planning instructor scheduling for summer and fall.
   b. Summer offerings are increasing with online offerings.
   c. Last year for first time ever, we scrambled for summer teaching.
   d. This year for the first time, there is a general meeting for summer with emphasis on technology.
   e. Continuing with the cap for 19 students.
   f. Piloting portfolio which will be scored in May.
   g. Outcomes based curricula.
   h. Trying to be more transparent and inclusive.
   i. Invite everyone who is actively teaching in the WP.
   j. 20% of Lecturers and GTAs at CCCC.
   k. 2nd year of systematic study at preceptorship.
   l. 19 course cap study by Nicole Schmidt and Samantha Kirby.
   m. Brown bag where research will be shared (N. Schmidt and M. Rischard).

Quick announcement: Retirement party for Larry Evers, Jerry Hogle, Geta LeSeur and John Warnock at Lee’s place on April 13th. Awards Ceremony Thursday, April 26

IV. Discussion

A. Update and Discussion from the Task Force on Voting
   a. The Task Force has been working on voting and service structure, as outlined in the departmental email on 3/28.
b. After the TF got feedback, on 3/2 they realized that voted needed to be categorized by rank and programs.

c. Theme of participation instead of inclusion:
   i. How does this work for people who teach in 2 programs? FTE?

d. Why CT Lecturers would be excluded from new hires T/TT?
   i. People in supervisory capacities of Lecturers and others.
      ii. It was proposed that Lecturers should have a voice in hiring new faculty that have an impact on the WP. It was also asked if Lecturers could have a voice in WP hires.

e. Another proposed exclusion—CTL would not vote on changing plans for hiring plans.

f. CTL in Dept. Council (amendment): 2/3 → 3/5 majority?

g. New Head hires: record votes for each bloc like they were this year

h. It was noted that constituents were informing members of the TF their recommendations for Lecturer voting rights—not the TF members themselves.

i. A compromise was proposed: advisory vote or bloc vote for Lecturers voting on tenure-eligible hires

j. It was noted, in the spirit of reciprocity, that TE/TT folks may also vote on CTL hires as well

k. It was noted that folks may be hired within multiple programs in regards to the point of participation.

l. Gratitude was expressed for the hard work of the TF.

m. It was noted that all votes should still show the splits in our programs, as it is useful for the Dean’s office to see if TE/TT folks mostly oppose a potential Head candidate, where Lecturers could support said candidate.

n. It was noted that 2/3 could make it very difficult to pass amendments
B. Departmental Retreat: progress and options for end of spring or early fall
   a. Potential dates: April 27, May 4, May 10, May 11—planning for a one day retreat

C. Appropriate use and tone of email among department members, including the following concerns/topics raised by different faculty members. Prepared statement by Head reproduced below.

“I’d like to take some time at the end of this meeting to discuss a topic that several faculty have independently asked me to raise, namely concerns about the communication practices and uses and tone of email in our department.

The first concern is one that Matthew Abraham asked me to offer some specifics about. About half a year ago, after Jerry Hogle had put forward the amendment to align our constitution’s voting rights with that of the university, and we had decided to withdraw that amendment and rethink our approach, Matthew sent a flurry of emails with various procedural concerns to Jerry, to me, to the entire Department Council and even to the staff. Because of the staff pressures and the many confusions these threads created, I requested to Matthew that he cease sending emails and express his concerns in person at the Department Meeting just 72 hours away. Of course, at that meeting we appointed the Task Force on which Matthew sits, and the practical issues are now being worked out with care and attention.

Nevertheless, the concern Mathew has asked me to express, based on these specifics, is that even well meaning communications by department heads telling faculty members to refrain from communicating with other department members can be inconsistent with the academic freedom of the recipients.

It can. Whether it did in this instance, obviously Matthew and I disagree on that question, and that’s fine. My concern is as follows. We are living thru an era where email has become a common substitute for speaking with our colleagues. It’s very efficient, it is conveniently asynchronous and for that reason largely unavoidable. At the same time, email is a deeply flawed medium when it comes to the emotional and social aspect of communication. I suspect you know everything there is to say about this subject. It’s partly that it is hard to read tone in an email, so the emotional signals that convey respect and appreciation in face to face communication disappear. When one is dealing with a charged or controversial matter, using email puts you at high risk of damaging the human relations that constitute the heart of a place like our department. Moreover, email often lands at the wrong address. I’m sure many of us have hit “reply all” and quickly realized there was someone included on the list who we would rather did not see that particular message. Email gets forwarded promiscuously, and sometimes erroneously.
To cite one recent example, one of our staff members recently received a message, sent to them in error, leading that person to believe that their service in the department was neither appreciated nor respected.

Even worse, email can encourage people to hide behind their screens and fire off missives that they would never verbalize in person. This brings us to the second concern, brought to my attention by two junior faculty about emails they recently received from a senior colleague. In this case, I’d like to anonymize the specifics. Simply put, a routine discussion about a policy question quickly escalated to the point where, by the last email, the recipients were being told that their work was ridiculous, prejudiced, and racist. The recipients were completely taken aback by the exchange, and asked if I could do something about it. I would like to do something. But as I’ve already noted, it is not easy for a department head to do much about slanderous messages unilaterally. I think there would need to be some agreements reached by the department about what our expectations are for collegiality so we can say collectively when it is that an email or other communication no longer simply disagrees with an opinion, but becomes, in itself, disagreeably aggressive.

Late last spring, the RCTE program was facing a similar issue, where the faculty felt that collegial communication was breaking down. They made an effort, with the help of Human Resources, to draw up a list of protocols that they all agreed to honor. I’ve provided copies of that, just so you can get an idea of the spirit of respect that I’m trying to find a way for us to encourage. What I’m wondering is whether we would like to try articulating as a department a similar set of guiding principles for respectful communication?

We certainly can’t do that today, but we could start. We could also talk about how to set up a fruitful conversation about this subject at the retreat that Aurelie and I are trying to set in motion.”

End of statement. A discussion followed:

a. It was noted that the RCTE document began as an agreement among RCTE members, but late was referred to as a “code of conduct.” Concern was expressed about this formulation.

b. It was noted that while it is important to protect academic freedom it is also important that the department not allow abusive emails to circulate and for communication to remain civil and professional.

c. It was noted that even a program director, when informed about inappropriate conduct by a faculty member, cannot do very much about it and can only refer the issue to the Head or to OIE. It was noted in response that the head also has limited options, which is why a department statement or agreement might be important as a form of cultural intervention.
d. It was noted that sometimes emails are sent because a faculty member cannot find out about decision that have been made and may send them in frustration. It was noted in response that there is always an open door policy and that any faculty member is welcome to meet with department leadership whenever they have questions or concerns.

The Meeting was adjourned late at 4:10 pm.

*At the 4/27 meeting, the following addendum to these minutes as added*

Additions/Corrections to 3-30-18 Departmental Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Matthew Abraham

The following additions/corrections pertain to the departmental discussion on 3-30-18 about “Appropriate use and tone of email among department members, including the following concerns/topics raised by different faculty members.”

1. Matthew Abraham indicated that it is important to maintain a space for faculty disagreement about professional matters, including heated disagreement about such professional matters in email. Administrative attempts to either stop or limit how an issue can be discussed in email could in fact represent an attempt to avoid addressing a pressing matter, or worse, to suppress discussion of problematic administrative actions or decision making.

2. In the context of the discussion about program faculty finding a colleague’s multiple follow-up emails about a programmatic issue annoying because of the frequency and tone of such emails, Matthew Abraham indicated that the colleague who is making the inquiries experiences frustration because of what appears to be stonewalling, especially when one does not receive a response or acknowledgement to said inquiry. Abraham stated that a faculty member’s frustration is understandable under such circumstances when it appears tactics of silence or unresponsiveness are seemingly being employed to stave off an inquiry about program business.

3. Matthew Abraham noted that departmental faculty have reported feelings of being harassed to departmental and College administrators after perceiving they have been improperly addressed by a colleague either in person or by email. Administrators have taken it upon themselves to inform faculty who have been so accused of such harassment that the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity or Human Resources would follow up with the faculty member as part of a formal inquiry process. At other times administrators have specified that, since harassment is OIE’s and HR’s specialty, faculty who have experienced feelings of harassment should report such incidents directly to OIE—rather than through a departmental or College administrator. As Abraham noted, months go by and the supposed harasser hears nothing from OIE. If it’s not a departmental or college administrator’s job to inquire about or investigate issues of harassment, why would administrators inform one of our number about a possible forthcoming contact from OIE or HR about harassment? Abraham noted that such could FYIs from administrators could be experienced by faculty as intimidating or as part of an effort to stave off persistent inquiries about departmental and College practices and decision making.