Department of English Meeting: Friday, October 26, 2018


Meeting began at 1:30 pm in ML 411

I. Visit from Dean Jones – open discussion

A. Jon Reinhardt asked JP about competition, overlap, and concerns that come out of the RCM model and courses across colleges.

   i. JP acknowledged encroachment from sciences and College of Humanities. Noted missed opportunity in the past in merge Humanities and SBS. JP is in favor of proposal for a new graduate college/College of Liberal Arts or Arts and Sciences, and thinks we may need headway with new provost in place. Believes we need serious collaboration at the UG level in regards to RCM.

B. JP thanked Shelley Rodrigo, the Writing Program, and the Department for bringing Adobe to the Writing Program curriculum. He stated that this is an exciting development for the university and the students, and that this is something students will carry with them throughout their career. He praised Department for approving the degree in Professional & Technical Writing.

C. Chris Cokinos asked about the new president’s commitment to arts, sciences, and the environment, all of which have felt under siege as of late.

   i. JP: Environmental studies is one of the pillars of the strategic plan. We have 14 environmental degrees on this campus. We should be collectively advertising ourselves as one of the top environmental universities in the country. We should be collaborating. The Institute on the Environment was working on this through the green course guide, but the VPR was not focusing on undergraduate education. The key to undergraduate education in this area is the more environmentally oriented you can bring to campus, the more
research you can bring through these faculty. We need a reimagining here.

ii. Chris followed up and said he had heard good things about the president but wanted to know JP’s perspective.

iii. JP: We have a weird work chart with English and Latin American Studies in SBS, Spanish and Portuguese in the College of Humanities. It doesn’t make a whole lot of sense and there’s a learning curve. In my field, for those in critical geography or humanistic geography, there are theoretical engagements and overlap between us and English. Those in STEM fields think English is here to teach students to write and SBS faculty are here to help scientists translate their findings about the world to the public—be communicators for policy. They don’t look at us as having research questions from our own intellectual traditions. That’s a severe hurdle in terms of training certain kinds of people.

D. Cristina Ramirez asked about integrating work with Mexico.

a. JP: We have signed a bi-national consortium on immigration, human rights and human security. There aren’t any English colleagues on this at the moment, but they’re bringing in faculty from the arts and humanities. We’re also the recipient of the Castro House and have $250k set for renovations. It’s a perfect location on the border for cross-border excursions or invitations. We also have good relations with Collegio, Sonora and Nogales and also with the University of Sonora in Hermosillo. The president said our priorities are “Mexico, Mexico, Mexico” – it’s redundant, but he meant it.

E. Susan White asked about attrition and how to best market the English major.

a. JP: We lost about a year on this with the loss of our previous Marketing and Communications person. On the SBS website, you’ll see a standing page for every major in the College.

b. Paul Hurh mentioned that he is working on a video marketing project for the UG program with the College.

c. JP: There will always be students interested in Lit or CW, but we also have a tremendous opportunity to increase excitement and the number of students in this Department. Professional & Technical Writing can help with this.
II. Report on Academic Program Review

A. Aurelie Sheehan filled in for Shelley Staples and thanked all of the core committee members and focus groups. Aurelie noted that November 20th is our deadline for the APR. The first survey is due on Monday, and subsequent surveys will follow.

III. Approval of Minutes from last meeting / announcement on Laura Gonzales

A. Minutes approved, unanimous except for one abstention.

B. Newsletter: Aurelie announced that we’re collecting news every month, and the next deadline is November 8th. If you’re in a program, send news to your PD but if not, you can send it to Aurelie and Adela.

C. Aurelie reviewed the itinerary for Laura Gonzales on November 5th and 6th and invited everyone to attend the talk, open hour, and class. She reminded Department of Dr. Gonzales’ relationship to the PTW major and reviewed the SPFI application procedures. We applied for and received funding for the visit through SPFI Campus Visit funding. We have also applied for a full SPFI hire for Dr. Gonzales. Council approved the application for funding, with the understanding that a Departmental review and vote would occur after Dr. Gonzales’ visit.

i. Paul asked about calling this a job talk if money is not yet approved, and noted that the PTW major is directly linked to this potential hire.

ii. Aurelie said that since the hire has not been approved/funded, we have assembled a preliminary “hosting committee,” which will become the nucleus of a hiring committee, the composition of which will be sent to Council for approval, as per Bylaws. The Council will receive the committee’s recommendation. The materials and recommendation will be sent to the Department for review.

D. Aurelie reminded faculty to get in touch with their Council reps (or anyone on Council) if they have questions or areas of concern.

E. Aurelie also announced that our job ads are finally up (for CW-AIS and 18th Century Lit) so if you have any contacts, especially diverse candidates and underrepresented populations, we want to get the word out about these hires.
IV. Career-Track Professor Promotion Plan

A. Aurelie introduced the career track professor promotion plan (distributed by email earlier in the week). She reviewed the CT lecturer promotion process of last year, and noted that we have seven CT professors in the department and we are required to put a plan in place for their promotion as well. Dev Bose and Alan Kohler have spearheaded an effort to draft this plan.

B. Dev Bose introduced the plan: As long as the Writing Program has existed, a great deal of work has gone into research, service and administration to support this large program. We’ve been doing this work for a while but titles have not always reflected this. Last week, Alan and Dev met with Council to present this draft. Council voted to forward the plan to the Department.

C. Alan Kohler: This plan is built on the work that we’ve already done on the Lecturer promotion plan. We’re hoping to get into compliance and have a promotion plan for this employee category. This model identifies this position as distinctive from the tenure track and lecturer positions. It’s not fully teaching or a standard TT workload. Career-track professors typically have a 60% teaching load, in addition to administration and service.

   i. Jon Reinhardt asked about applied scholarship vs. scholarship / creative work.

   ii. Paul mentioned that scholarship that would be weighted for promotion must directly emerge from scholarship / creative work and it must have an affiliation with other parts of the job.

   iii. Tenney asked if the idea is that certain people will have 20% scholarship and certain people will be on 20% admin, depending on what the project needs are?

   iv. Aurelie said that it’s an individual contract so the workload distribution is established at the time of hire or yearly renewal, and that teaching would typically be between 60-80%.

   v. Dev noted that the goal was to include the phrase “workload as appropriate” to make it flexible.

   vi. Lynda Zwinger asked if there is a time limit for when folks go up, and Alan responded that there is none currently.
vii. Paul noted that since there is a policy in the department for using the word scholarship, it might make sense to use language that distinguishes it from tenure track.

viii. Susan M-C noted that the goal was to invoke Boyer’s definition of scholarship, both scholarship of discovery (traditional) and “applied scholarship.” Recommended referencing Boyer in document. Notion of applied scholarship is also used engaged in with tenure track faculty.

ix. Farid asked if we are now creating a new aspect to a position that has existed for a long time by virtue of this promotion plan.

x. Alan replied that this wasn’t pushing the envelope forward in creating a new position, and that we’re trying to be reflexive. There hasn’t been a strong push to measure or analyze this previously because previously, these roles existed without a plan.

xi. Farid asked what the duties called for and Susan M-C noted that the current range of CT Profs don’t all have the same workload. One might have a research component while others don’t, and most have admin but not all. There’s variation depending on unit need.

xii. Dev noted that we are trying to recognize that some of the candidates do research work and recognizing that, bearing in mind that the bulk of the contract is teaching.

xiii. Ander mentioned that the job of the promotion plan is not to create new categories or work unless it is already part of their workload. It’s designed to be flexible not only to range of current workload practices, but also to create possibility in other programs. If we were to have a CT professor in creative writing, you would want to have an inclusive enough definition of what that scholarship may be.

xiv. Farid asked if it makes sense to think of research as emanating from program affiliation, the type of research that would count in or be aligned with a program.

xv. Jon said that this brings in a whole different discussion about affiliations and programs, and asked if all CT Profs are affiliated with the Writing Program.

xvi. Hayriye noted that she found it hard to process information with such short notice and asked to be given more time to read and come up with questions for important documents.
xvii. Aurelie replied that we’re not asking for a vote today, simply discussing and we’re hoping to gather the Department’s input and feedback. She said that we know it’s important so we’d like to give the time necessary to vet, and that we are at the same time working against a deadline. The plan is to think about suggestions from the Department, create a new draft, bring it to Council, and then Council will consider further before sending it back to the Department.

xviii. Aimee Mapes mentioned this is also about flexibility, as there’s a lot of different work being defined here.

xix. Lynda noted that she’s all for flexibility but we should also be trying to get at specificity as scholarship can mean so many different things.

xx. Paul noted that it’s mainly just trying to consider candidates coming up, so they know what’s going to be counted.

xxi. Stephanie Pearmain noted that much of this is set to mirror promotion and tenure for the tenure track. She said that those documents are also set up to clarify workload so if anything strays from the norm, the committee members can see that.

xxii. Tenney mentioned that at the College level for P&T, they look at whether achievements align with the category. He asked about rank eligible CT Lecturers being able to sit on the promotion committees, and was curious if CT professors were comfortable with this. He asked about the salient differences between the Lecturer promotion plan and this one.

xxiii. Alan said that this came up in Council, and the CT professors agreed that rank eligible Lecturers would be welcomed on committees.

xxiv. Dev said that much of the beginning of the document was borrowed from the SBS documents. As for differences between documents, the CT professors create dossiers and not portfolios.

xxv. Tom Miller noted that there is applied scholarship that underscores all of this. He encouraged Dev and Alan to include comments that invoke Boyer on research, teaching, and service. He questioned having lecturers on committees.

xxvi. Farid said he could be excited about having a CT professor in CW but was having a hard time understanding this document because of all our other promotion criteria (TT) that are discipline specific and program specific.
He mentioned that expectations are different between programs, and he’s trying to understand why we have the differences. He noted that “CT professor” is not a discipline, it is a rank, and yet all of our other promotions are discipline specific.

xxvii. Susan M-C noted that at the TT level we hire into graduate programs but CT professors are not hired into grad programs. If a CT professor were hired primarily for CW, it would be up to CW to decide how that person is teaching. In the WP, CT profs have expertise / degrees in one of the areas represented by a graduate program, but they aren’t actually faculty in those programs unless they’re appointed as affiliate faculty. But primarily, they’re teaching in WP or UG program, and then maybe sometimes teaching grad courses as program required.

xxviii. Aurelie noted that we are talking about big ideas that are worthy of a separate discussion: how we structure the department as a whole through grad programs and how scholarship intersects with teaching and service.

xxix. Ander mentioned that the P&T guidelines have been there for a long time and may be based on a different understanding of how we want the department to operate. Ander argued against trying to tie this new document to this old document that has some problems. He suggested we look at the differences to assess P&T guidelines. He said we are not hired into grad programs, we are hired tenure track faculty into an English department but we’re assessed for programs.

xxx. Tom Miller noted that we have an inclusive view of scholarship at the University level with an inclusive view of scholarship of engagement from Boyer. He noted that the department may want to revise the P&T guidelines.

xxx. Aurelie noted this as a potential recommendation for further discussion. She thanked everyone and said a new draft would be created and distributed to Council soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.