
FAC'S SHEET

**Newsletter of the University of Scranton Faculty Affairs Council
November 2007**

Mark Your Calendar!

FAC Meeting Set For November 13 In Brennan Hall 509

The third FAC meeting for 2007- 2008 is scheduled for Tuesday, November 13 in Room 509 of Brennan Hall. Lunch will be served beginning at 11:15 a.m. with the business meeting starting at 11:30 a.m.

The Executive Committee urges all members to attend. Check in the right hand column for the agenda.

<i>FAC Meetings For 2007-2008</i>
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The FAC Executive Committee has scheduled monthly membership meetings for the 2007-2008 academic year on the following dates and at the places indicated. All regular meetings are set for Tuesdays, beginning at 11:30 a.m. Additional meetings may be called to address special issues or concerns.

- November 13, 2007 – Brennan Hall, Room 509
- December 11, 2007 - Leahy Auditorium
- February 12, 2008 – Brennan Hall, Room 509
- March 11, 2008 – Leahy Auditorium
- April 8, 2008 – Brennan Hall, Room 509
- May 13, 2008 – Brennan Hall, Room 509

FAC'S SHEET

is published periodically by the Faculty Affairs Council at the University of Scranton. The editor is Willis Conover. Comments and suggestions from the membership are welcomed. Members may also check FAC's Web site at www.scranton.edu/fac for further information on the Faculty Affairs Council, an affiliate of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Copies of the Faculty Contract and Handbook are found on the site. Members may also link to the national AAUP home page.

AGENDA

For November 13th Meeting

1. Chair's Report (Michael Friedman)
 - a. Update on FAP Replacement Plans
 - b. Handbook Committee Issues
 - (1.) Professional Staff with Teaching Duties
 - (2.) Off campus courses
 - (3.) The Tenure Clock and Sabbaticals
2. Contract Administrator's Report (Kevin Nordberg)
3. Treasurer's Report (Dan West)
4. Grievance Officer's Report (Ned Warner)
5. Secretary's Report - Elections (Joe Wilson)
6. Old Business (Michael Friedman)
 - a. Staff Parking in Lot S

Heard It Through the Grapevine: Confidentiality and the Board on Rank and Tenure

by Michael Friedman, FAC Chair

It is a fact universally acknowledged that the University of Scranton comprises a close-knit community. Our care for each others' lives and well being expresses itself most positively at moments of personal joy or tragedy, when credit for one member's success or the burden of another's loss is shared by the rest of the University family. However, the down side of a close-knit community is the thirst for gossip about our colleagues: the desire to hear and tell the secrets about our friends that crackle with regularity through the University's grapevine. In most cases, this rumor network operates in a benign fashion, but in certain situations, like the operations of the Board on Rank
(Please Turn to Page 3)

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MINUTES

from the October 9th FAC Meeting

Michael Friedman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m. in Leahy Auditorium.

Chair's Report: Friedman reported that the various replacement plans for the FAP were being devised by the deans of the respective colleges; CAS's FAP replacement plan is done, but the others are still in progress. Friedman reminded the membership that mandatory plans would be subject to a FAC vote. During discussion, it was disclosed that the deans intend to continue the released time issued under the old FAPs.

Friedman then addressed the parking in S-Lot during the special sessions. The administration wishes to continue last year's plan, which allowed staff to park in some of the spaces in S-Lot over intersession and summer. There was some discussion of the problems caused last year by the agreement, including snow being blown into existing faculty spaces and times when the lot was full and faculty were unable to park.

Contract Administrator's Report: Kevin Nordberg reported that the examination of Blue Cross benefits and pre-approved testing was still being pursued, and he urged members to pre-qualify all procedures when possible. Nordberg also discussed the increasing use and development of online courses and the proposal in KSOM to offer an online MBA. Nordberg expressed dismay that there had been no communication to the faculty from the administration on intellectual property rights and online courses. He reminded faculty that they have a right to compensation for intellectual property.

Nordberg also reported on the use of background checks on new faculty hires. Ostensibly, the administration only runs a criminal background check, but the form provided by the security company doing the checks suggests that they are providing the administration with much more sweeping information. Numerous faculty expressed consternation with the practice.

Friedman then discussed the administration's wish to amend the Handbook to include Associate Provosts as senior academic administrators in order to allow them to be hired with a tenure guarantee. Many faculty expressed reservations about the idea, although some did state that expanding tenure guarantees to lower-level administrators did conform to the national norm. Faculty were

(Please Turn to Page 4)

Heard It Through the Grapevine

(Continued From Page 1)

and Tenure, misuse of the grapevine can damage a faculty member's chances for career advancement and put the entire tenure and promotion system at risk.

Confidentiality is so crucial to the operation of the Board on Rank and Tenure that Appendix I of the *Faculty Handbook* begins with the following statement: "In order to protect the individual faculty member's good name in the academic community and to safeguard free discussion by the members of the Board on Rank and Tenure, the review of each candidate by the Board must be regarded as confidential." All candidates for promotion and tenure therefore have a contractual right to expect that remarks about their virtues and shortcomings, offered within the context of a frank and open discussion, will not leave the conference room. In order for such a discussion to occur in the first

place, the members of the Board on Rank and Tenure must be able to trust their colleagues not to divulge what is said during their conversations. If a member of the Board ever hesitates to offer a criticism of a candidate because he or she fears that this comment may travel through the grapevine back to the faculty member in question, then the whole system of peer review in the rank and tenure process has been compromised.

On the other hand, the members of the Board on Rank and Tenure do not shoulder the responsibility to maintain confidentiality alone; the rest of the faculty also have a duty to allow their elected representatives to carry out their deliberations in confidence. As much as we might be interested in hearing how our department colleague's case is faring before the Board, it is incumbent upon us not to prod the members of the Board for information that they are not allowed to share. The leaking of details about individual discussions and votes actually creates distractions that delay the process,

putting both the members of the Board and the candidates through more meetings and a longer wait until the final decisions are delivered. Therefore, this rank and tenure season, I call upon the members of FAC to resist the temptation to avail themselves of the rumor mill, and perhaps the Board on Rank and Tenure will be able to complete its work with integrity and dispatch, rendering recommendations that will lead to prompt decisions by the President.

Changes at Blue Cross

from Kevin Nordberg
FAC Contract Administration Officer

In January 2008, certain changes will take place in the corporate structure of Blue Cross including their choice of a different sub-contractor to handle optical coverage. Although it is expected that there will be no modifications in coverage because of this change, there is the possibility that some optical providers who were previously in our network might not be in the new network. So it may be a good idea – before your next appointment after the new year – to check with your optical provider to make sure that they are in our Blue Cross network.

Faculty Approve Tenure Clock Proposal

By a vote of 133-13, the members of FAC approved a proposal to allow faculty members to stop the tenure clock for one year on as many as two occasions for the birth or adoption of a child (under 6). This new language applies both to female faculty members who adopt or give birth and to male faculty members who adopt or whose spouses give birth. Faculty members may choose to decline such a postponement of their tenure review date at their own discretion. The proposal will go into effect when and if it is approved by the Board of Trustees at their next meeting.

Luncheon Menu

for November 13th Meeting

- **Mixed Green Salad with Two Dressings**
- **Roast Turkey with Dressing**
- **Sliced Baked Ham with Fruit Sauce**
- **Cranberry Sauce**
- **Mashed Potatoes with Gravy**
- **Corn**
- **Rolls and Butter**
- **Apple and Pumpkin Pies**
- **Coffee, Tea, Soda, and Water**

Serving will begin at 11:15 a.m. in Brennan Hall 509.

MINUTES from October 9th Meeting

(Continued From Page 2)

emphatic in their position that any potential administrator would have to meet the qualifications for an appointment in his/her department before a grant of tenure could be made.

Grievance Report: Ned Warner reported that one grievance had been dropped, but there was still an active grievance by the History department. Warner reminded the membership that the Board of Trustees was in the process of approving the new disciplinary policy, and he advised that if any Dean attempted to enforce the policy retroactively, citing incidents that occurred before the approval of the new policy, a grievance should be filed at once.

Secretary's Report: Joe Wilson announced that FAC elections for new officers would be held in early December. He requested that all nominations be forwarded to him no later than 1 December. At

this time, no current officer whose term was expiring had decided whether to run for re-election or not.

Mike Friedman then brought up the issue of stopping the tenure clock for new parents. The stoppage of the clock was not a leave of absence, but merely a right to postpone a tenure decision for a year because of childbirth or adoption. The faculty member has the right to accept a stoppage at his/her discretion; there is a limit of two stoppages before tenure, and both male and female faculty can avail themselves of the right. The faculty seemed in general to approve, but due to lack of a quorum, the vote would have to be taken electronically.

New Business: Faculty reported that they have had difficulties with the travel policy. Reimbursements have not been forthcoming in a timely fashion, people have been penalized for driving rather than flying, and there are concerns that the rules for international travel have become uncommonly picky. The Faculty Senate is taking up the matter. The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Joe Wilson
FAC Secretary

NOMINATIONS DUE DECEMBER 1

From the Secretary: Please remember to get nominations for election to the FAC Executive Committee to me by December 1. Three officers' terms are expiring in June: Dan West, Joe Wilson, and Ned Warner. The term of service is two years. The election will be held on December 8-9. At this time, none of the incumbents has decided whether to seek re-election or not.