Executive Committee Minutes – 9/24/12

Present: Steven Hirsch, Jeanne Penvenne, Richard Eichenberg, James Ennis, Thomas Downes
Absent: Karen Panetta

1) Meredith Goldberg, Vice-President of the TCU Senate, met with the committee. The conversation touched on:
   - JumboDay: Proposal is to have a day on which classes will be cancelled. Day would be a surprise for students. Senate plans to bring the idea to the Student Life Committee (CSL) to discuss. Idea is that JumboDay would be a replacement for the Naked Quad Run (NQR). Intent is to bring together the entire Tufts community. Questions to be addressed by CSL: What will faculty reaction be? What are logistical issues? One possibility is to have three dates pre-proposed, with one chosen after faculty are allowed to weigh in. Impetus for this proposal is both the demise of the NQR and concerns about student life raised by the trustees. General reaction of committee members was that faculty support may be hard to get and that logistical issues are likely to be insurmountable.
   - Student representatives: Committee expressed gratitude for Senate’s hard work in insuring that all committees have representatives. We will communicate with committee chairs and let them know that student representatives should be treated with appropriate respect.
   - Pre-major advising: Senate is concerned about the quality of pre-major advising and asked the committee for our views about steps that could be taken for improvement. Committee members indicated that pre-major advising should be clearly delineated as part of a faculty member’s job. Also, advisors need to make better use of specialists and of web sites when providing advisees with information. Currently, the Educational Policy Committee is responsible for advising.

2) Discussed handling of minutes

3) Specific Learning Disabilities Subcommittee has chosen a faculty member as chair. We decided that Committee on Committees should address the policy question of administrators serving as chairs.

4) Tenure and Promotion Committee (T&P) question about handbook language that prevents faculty members from coming up for tenure or promotion while on leave – language in handbook is administration interpretation of trustee policy. Deke Mathieu has been asked to interpret the trustee policy. May be case that, in effect, this is actually an administration policy. We agreed that we should raise this issue with the Deans. Answer will determine whether T&P should engage the Deans or the trustees to have the policy changed.

5) T&P also approached us to ask for advice concerning how to handle other committee
governance issues. Plan - Ask T&P to decide on a strategy and, if they are in agreement, instruct them to attempt to handle the issues internally. If that is unsuccessful, ask them to provide us with all information so that we can address these issues.

6) OEO appeal procedure – Grievance Committee has asked us to find out about the dead link on the OEO web page that is supposed to go to the appeal procedure. Will ask OEO about the status of the appeal procedure.

7) Preparation for meeting with Deans:
   - How does strategic planning map on to governance structure?
   - Raise problem of tenuring people in interdisciplinary programs.

8) Meeting with Dean Linda Abriola (Dean Joanne Berger-Sweeney absent)
   - Dean Abriola discussed planning process in engineering school, development of new courses as part of first-year experience
   - Also discussed efforts to broaden capstone experience and make that experience more standardized.
   - First-year courses: Goal is to have 6 to 8 in each semester. Currently, there are 7.
   - Raised T&P question about not being able to come up for tenure while on leave. Dean Abriola indicated that this was a result of precedent, not a policy that was established by the Deans. Dean Abriola’s concern is that leave may prevent a faculty member from being available during the preparation process. Also expressed a concern that faculty members being tenured must be fully committed to Tufts. Engineering has abided by the process as it is delineated in the handbook. Next step- Will get back a response from Deke Mathieu and, depending on that response, have T&P talk to the Deans about modifying the language in the handbook.
   - Dean Abriola would like to work with T&P about adapting the process so it is not so department centric. Need to find ways of supporting junior people who are interdisciplinary.