Minutes approved at April 19, 2016 meeting of the RWJMS Faculty Council

Minutes
RWJMS Faculty Council December 15, 2015

Present: Boruchoff, DiCicco-Bloom, Kelly, Pintar, Roth, Walworth, Willett

Absent: Ayers, Brewer, Jacinto, Kim, Kiss

Guests: Jeffrey Carson, Provost

Council President Monica Roth welcomed RBHS New Brunswick Provost Jeffrey Carson to discuss the RBHS Policies and Guidelines Governing Appointments, Promotions, and Professional Activities of the Faculty.

1. Minutes of the October 13, 2015 Faculty Council meeting were approved.

2. Invited Guest: Discussion with Provost Jeffrey Carson

Dr. Roth provided Dr. Carson with questions prior to the meeting. Before addressing those questions, Dr. Roth suggested that the floor be opened for questions from those in attendance.

A faculty member on the tenure-track, who is publishing regularly and holds the rank of Assistant Professor asked about whether they should apply for promotion or switch tracks, given that if denied promotion and tenure, they would have to depart the University. Dr. Carson replied that faculty will have a choice of choosing a track, and will be required to do so by the end of June 2016. Dr. Carson offered to look over the faculty member’s CV in a private meeting.

Dr. Carson elaborated on the requirements for success on the tenure track: activities that speak to a national reputation, sustained funding from some significant competitive source (NIH or equivalent); demonstrate that achieving in a very competitive environment; talks at national meetings, service on committees: activities that speak to a national reputation.

Dr. Carson noted that if on the tenure track for 6 years, would have 3 more years on up or out, but because of transition, can get 5 years for up or out. Dr. Carson acknowledged that tenure track is a bit of a gamble: if take that track and don’t get promoted, have to leave.

Dr. Carson suggested that for clinicians, if running a successful clinical program, security may be less of an issue (perhaps), but acknowledged that there is no security quite like tenure. For tenure, expected standards of faculty are different than on the alternatives.

In response to a question about the timeframe for switching tracks, Dr. Carson stated that switching tracks is not a pattern that the institution wants to encourage. In new hires, a faculty member on the tenure track is a major institutional investment, so having a switch in track represents a loss on that investment. For now, given the changing environment, the option is there, but it will not be encouraged in the future.

Similarly, if come in on the clinical scholar track, can someone switch to the tenure track if achieving success? Not to be encouraged.

In response to a question about whether faculty could apply to the Professional Practice track now, Dr. Carson replied that the track would not officially start until June. Therefore, individuals currently on non-tenure track until then are to be evaluated on the current criteria for non-tenure track. Beginning July 1, all future evaluations will be based on criteria for new tracks. In response to a question as to whether other schools use a similar track and what would the implications be
for changing jobs, Dr. Carson noted that the professional practice track is becoming more widely used.

Council member Dr. Boruchoff asked about how much switching there might be amongst the non-tenure options as individuals progress through their careers, reflecting that the nature of her activities have changed over the years. Dr. Carson agreed with this observation and believes that there will be flexibility in how the tracks are used. In many of the non-tenure tracks, the requirements are similar; how each division chief, chair, dean and school will use the tracks remains to be seen. The Professional Practice track is more distinct as there is no scholarship requirement. Dr. Carson observed that not only do institutional needs change over time but faculty interests do as well over the course of their careers.

Dr. Boruchoff asked whether there is concern that as people are put into different tracks they may be less likely to engage in responsibilities of academia (service, teaching, etc)? Dr. Carson doesn’t think so because those activities will be valued in the evaluation and promotion processes. Faculty will need to meet with their chairs/chiefs to balance those activities within the chosen track. Dr. Carson suggested that faculty must have conversations with their chiefs and chairs regarding their activities. Examples offered from the floor: if 95% clinical, faculty find it hard to imagine being on a track other than Professional Practice, and think they will be pushed to NOT do anything other than see patients. Dr. Carson agreed that would be an appropriate use of that track, and emphasized that use of these tracks will be up to departments. Faculty on clinical scholar, clinical educator, teaching track will have a scholarship requirement. The Provosts have created a broad structure; how the schools use that structure is up to the departments and faculty. Dr. Carson sees a two-sided conversation: challenge from school’s perspective is that schools need these activities to be done and faculty need time to do them; clinical model will need to have RVU expectations cut back for some faculty and have others pick it up. Challenge for the departments and school is how to pay for that time.

Dr. Carson was asked about scholarly activity: what is the quantity required and how is quality defined? Dr. Carson responded that there are many definitions of scholarship. The document lists scholarship that involves research, and scholarship that does not (reviews, case reports, practice guidelines, for example). Clinical scholar and clinical educator tracks have different emphases and list different examples, and he believes that there is enough flexibility in the guidelines and certainly in the interpretation by the A and P committee to handle faculty without having to pigeon-hole faculty into particular tracks. Will be looking for excellence in the work that faculty members are doing, the exact mix will vary as the groupings within the tracks are a bit artificial.

Dr. Roth expressed concern that the guidelines are set by RBHS, not by the school. She noted that the pathway for approvals beyond the A and P committee on the tenure track are described: A and P Committee to Dean to PRC (Rutgers Promotion Review Committee) to Board of Governors (does not involve the Chancellor). Dr. Carson clarified that he sits on the PRC at present.

For non-tenure track appointments and promotions, the pathway goes from the A and P Committee to the Dean to the Provosts and Chancellor. Dr. Roth asked whether the Chancellor shares an appreciation for the flexibility that Dr. Carson describes? Dr. Carson thinks so: it’s a brand new system, it has not been tested so will have to see how it goes. The fundamental spirit is that the school and RBHS are looking for excellence regardless of how that is being achieved within the tracks: looking for good docs, good teachers, producing meaningful scholarship, really good administrators running great programs. There will be overlap amongst the tracks and faculty may experience changes in their own activities, and Jeff is confident that there will not be a problem. The chancellor wants faculty to develop an area of concentration because that is how
national reputations are achieved. Nothing is set in stone; it’s what the package looks like and what achievements are brought to the table.

Dr. Carson emphasized that when asked to counsel faculty, he advises them to do what they love to do: what makes them happy, what they’re good at; start there, and then negotiate with people paying your salary, so you can do as much of what you love to do as possible. Hopefully the vast majority of what faculty do will be what they want to be doing and that will result in the best performance. If faculty pursue what they’re good at and try to excel, they are likely to succeed.

In response to a question regarding the length of appointments, Dr. Carson noted that the duration of appointments was negotiated with the Union.

One of the submitted questions is how do faculty know what was negotiated and what was not negotiated, and could the guidelines be annotated to indicate what was negotiated? Dr. Carson responded that they could ask the Union about what was negotiated. Criteria for promotion are not negotiable: the University has the right to set criteria for promotion and did; though he emphasized that those criteria are essentially the same as they have always been. Items that were negotiated include the duration of contract and the process by which promotion takes place, and the agreement was to use the legacy Rutgers process.

With a junior faculty member in mind, a question came from the floor noting that the hybrid track described in 2015 was a good fit, but that track is no longer a choice. Dr. Carson noted that he too liked the hybrid track because it described faculty members doing things to include research, teaching, and clinical activity. Rutgers administration required that RBHS use the existing track names, and Dr. Carson believes the descriptors used to define the Rutgers track names take into account activities in all of the areas that were listed in the hybrid track. There is overlap in the clinical tracks in particular.

Dr. Carson advises that faculty negotiate their time and then select a track that fits, keeping in mind that there is a scholarship requirement in the clinical educator and scholar tracks, and if don’t have time to do it, then might not be a good choice; professional practice may be more appropriate. Someone with substantial administrative responsibilities might belong either in the Clinical Educator or Professional Practice (depending on whether active in scholarship) tracks.

Faculty member expressed dismay that after 25 years to be told that they are on the clinical practice track feels like an insult. Dr. Carson responded that this track finally gives RWJMS a way to promote people because of their clinical contributions.

Faculty Council member Dr. Dicco-Bloom asked for clarification of what the PRC is and how it is composed? Dr. Carson noted that Rutgers defines the Promotion Review Committee as made up of senior successful members of the faculty. Each of the provosts is on the committee: from Newark, Camden, New Brunswick and one from RBHS (so Dr. Carson doing the first three years, and Dr. Wieder doing the next three years). Another RBHS representative is from NJMS. Barbara Lee, Rutgers’ Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, chairs the PRC. The PRC begins meeting in mid-January, every Wednesday from 9:30 to noon. Members receive 8 to 10 packets to review each meeting, which are sent on a flash drive or downloaded from Dropbox. They are extensive packages that include letters for candidates and letters representing the three levels of review. Meetings work like a study section: everyone puts out their preliminary assessment: yes, no or discuss. If department, A and P committee and Dean all agree, and letters look good, then typically a brief discussion and approved (he estimates that ⅔ are like that). If disagreement at different levels of review, then the PRC discusses. If someone is going to be turned down, then case is tabled the Dean is invited to meet with the PRC and final vote is taken. Barbara Lee is tie-
breaking vote. PRC is advisory to the President who brings it to Board of Governors for final approval. When asked how individuals are put on the committee (appointed versus elected), Dr. Carson referred the question to documents on the Rutgers Faculty Affairs website.

Dr. Carson finds the PRC to be very thoughtful and the packages to be impressive. Teaching component is seriously considered.

In response to a question, Dr. Carson clarified that all schools of Rutgers, including Camden and Newark, feed into the PRC from all campuses. Provosts represent each campus.

In response to a question regarding titles, clinical qualifier is reserved for faculty who are less than 50% effort. All non-tenure track faculty titles are the same (tracks are not specified in title).

In previous system, part-time faculty had at-will appointments. In the new system, anyone at 50% effort or greater will have a full contract. Faculty will no longer have at-will appointments if 50% effort or greater.

A question acknowledged as off topic for the Provost, Dr. Willett asked who can address the loss of benefits when less than 100% effort? Dr. Carson noted that it is a state policy and suggested calling the governor or HR. Dr. Roth suggested talking to the Union.

In response to a question regarding qualified titles and coterminous status, Dr. Carson clarified that coterminous means that money for position is provided by a specified source other than RWJMS.

Dr. Roth asked whether there could be a central repository for questions regarding the guidelines that are being addressed at other schools? Dr. Carson acknowledged that this is desirable and would like to have a website for the Provosts and a resource for this information.

Looking at the submitted questions, Dr. Roth noted that in the Provosts’ presentations on the Guidelines, it is stated that the Bylaws need to be changed. If so, what in particular needs to be changed? Dr. Carson stated that the Bylaws are written by the faculty, have to be approved by the Dean and the Chancellor, and have to be compliant with negotiated portions of A and P document. Each school has a different set of Bylaws that create their committees and processes and structure. Deans have been encouraged to assemble committees to work on their Bylaws and expects that will happen sometime soon. Faculty Council member Dr. Walworth clarified that it is important not to conflate the Bylaws and the Guidelines; in the past the Bylaws state that its up to the faculty to set the criteria for appointments and promotions, but the details of the guidelines are not included in the Bylaws. Dr. Carson agreed that this (the Guidelines) is the sort of document that would be referred to by the Bylaws but not incorporated into them. It should be a live document, subject to modification as schools gain experience with it, and gather feedback from faculty, and that it can be changed and evolved. It would be impractical to have to change the bylaws as the guidelines evolve.

Dr. Roth asked how the guidelines would be changed in the future. Dr. Carson stated that he did not know, but suggested that provosts would gather feedback after promotions committees have had a chance to work with the guidelines. Revised document would be further discussed and if necessary, would need to take back to union if parts that are negotiable need to be revisited; and other parts that just go back to the faculty.

Dr. Roth asked if the “up and out” is negotiable? Dr. Carson stated that he doesn't know. There is a residual from the old system where people who have been in the tenure track have the rank of associate professor and will need to decide whether to stay in the tenure track. If they decide to
stay in the tenure track, they will have five years to achieve tenure or will have to go. Criteria is not negotiable.

Dr. Carson emphasized that a critical issue for all faculty tracks is mentoring. He noted that there are RWJMS and RBHS committees looking at mentoring. Council member Dr. Kelly emphasized that the institution needs to provide appropriate resources to foster success. Dr. Carson noted that the Provosts are reviewing offer packages to be sure that those resources and mentorship are in place for newly hired individuals.

Dr. DiCicco-Bloom asked for clarification of the up and out policy for tenure track faculty. Dr. Carson clarified that tenure track is up and out at nine years. If someone is promoted from assistant to associate professor early but without tenure, they still have to achieve tenure by nine years or will be given a one-year terminal appointment. What is unclear is what will happen to individuals who are associate professors on the tenure track who have not yet achieved tenure and will be given five years to do so: without knowing individual cases or details, so without any basis in facts, Dr. Carson suggested that having not yet achieved tenure, it would likely be best to switch to a non-tenure track.

From the submitted questions, Dr. Roth asked, is there or should there be some connection between rank and compensation? Whose job is that if not in the Provosts’ department? Dr. Carson responded that the Provosts are not involved in salaries. Salary is up to negotiations between the faculty member, the division chief, department chair and dean. Provost agrees that salary compression is a big problem, particularly at RWJMS, and in some departments more so than others. There should be a solution, but in a setting where the school has been in deficit for many years, it has been hard to fix. As school moves into the black, Dr. Carson is hopeful that some of the money would be used to correct inequity. But that will be up to the division chiefs, chairs and the Dean. In response to the question of whether the Dean has the authority to do that? The Provost believes the answer is yes.

Dr. Roth and the Council thanked Dr. Carson for the conversation.

3. Summary of recent RU Senate, RBHS Faculty Council and RWJMS Executive Council meetings
omitted in the interest of time

4. Old Business
none

5. New Business
Leadership of the RBHS Faculty Council wants membership to be rotated. Dr. Roth asked whether faculty should be directly elected (as done originally when only two RWJMS members were elected to the RBHS Council) or if RWJMS Faculty Council members would by virtue of office serve on the RBHS Council, as is currently being done. Those present preferred the latter approach as the one previously reasoned through and agreed upon by the Council and the Faculty.