

# Annual Priorities

## Academic Council

### Academic Year 2006-2007

Based on the discussion held at the Academic Council Annual Retreat on May 13, 2006 and a followup meeting of the chair, Skip Allis and vice-chair, Laurin Kier, the following are the priorities for the 2006-2007 academic year.

#### 1. Faculty and Shared Governance.

- Standing Committees. A full review of the membership and bylaws of all of the standing committees. This is in response to concerns raised by Standing Committee chairs and Academic Council members. It is also needed to continue the work on integrating the new Elon University School of Law into the Standing Committee structure of the faculty.
- Representation and Faculty Governance vs. Shared Governance. Much time has been devoted over the past few years to discussions about the effectiveness of faculty meetings. Council has also had discussions about the role of members of Council, whether as representatives or delegates. These discussions often turned to the idea of a Faculty or University Senate. It seems to be time to tackle this discussion in detail. A related part of this discussion should be the difference between faculty governance and shared governance. There are certainly times where the faculty should be governing themselves and other times where the governance of the university needs to be shared constructively between the faculty and administration. There are also areas where the governance should be by administration alone.

#### 2. Salaries.

- Salary breakdown and comparisons. The methods for awarding salaries varies from year to year, and in most years, the vast majority of the faculty receive a raise that at least keeps up with the Consumer Price Index. At the same time, the faculty would like the official policy to be to award a raise in line with the CPI for every faculty member. This does limit flexibility, and in some years may well limit merit raises, but it is reasonable for a faculty member to expect that doing acceptable work at Elon should translate to a salary that keeps up with the rising cost of living. We are also concerned about the group of Colleges and Universities to whom we compare ourselves. The general feeling is that most North Carolina private colleges and the ANAC schools are not the correct peer groups. The work done this year on a peer and aspirant list might be one resource to tap.
- Evaluation timing. The timings of Units I and III as well as the evaluation tools for chairs and administrators appear to be causing problems in relationship to determining raises. In many cases, chairs have not yet completed Unit III's by the time they have to meet with the Dean to recommend raises. Timing issues are even more pronounced when it comes to chair evaluations as they are due after the raise conferences take place. This timing needs to be re-examined. While examining that issue, the question of anonymity of chair, dean and provost evaluations should be considered along with the impact of those evaluations.

### 3. Teaching Support.

- Clerical Support. Many faculty members are feeling that their clerical support is spread too thin. Each secretary has multiple departments to cover along with other duties.
- Faculty Development Support. There was a general call for more financial support for faculty development. It was especially clear that the need for support of new faculty members was of paramount importance. At the transition time for new faculty from graduate school to Elon, the expectations for teaching are clear, but it is also a crucial time for research. New faculty members need support for continuing their research from graduate school, to make sure that the momentum gained there is not lost as various new expectations are introduced.
- Planned systematic growth/vision. There is a need for faculty to be aware of the long-term planning going on at the administrative level. Faculty often feel left out of the loop on decisions made that have an impact upon teaching. Since teaching is in the domain of the faculty, they should be involved in those discussions, and the decision making process should be open and transparent.
- Peer mentoring and feedback. The recently passed peer mentoring program needs to be brought to full fruition. It is important to make sure that it is available to all who want it, and that everyone who might want or need it is made aware of the availability. Related to that, although progress has been made on clarification of the expectations in the Promotions and Tenure process, more work remains to be done. It might be worth while for the Deans to communicate with the people coming up for promotion and tenure between the midpoint review and the decision time. It could be one-on-one or part of the current informational meetings.

### 4. Fall Report.

- Review of format and content. This is a general need as many new data have been added over the past few years, but the overall picture has not been examined. There are also issues related to the Law School, especially when it comes to salaries. There are already salaries on campus that skew averages, but that effect would be amplified by the inclusion of the faculty of the law school. There needs to be a way to mitigate the effect of outliers on reported averages. This would also give a more honest picture of salaries when compared to other universities and colleges.
- Release time reporting. The relatively new reassigned time program needs to be reported to the faculty. We need to investigate the best way to do this reporting, most probably through the fall report.

### 5. Ongoing issues.

- Academic standards. The Academic Summit needs to take place in the fall, and the results need to be made public as well as the effects of those results on decisions made.
- Adjunct Issues. There are ongoing discussions on a number of issues related to adjunct faculty. The primary of those is the possibility of benefits for adjunct faculty. It might also be useful to have a comparison of adjunct faculty salaries with other colleges and universities as we do with full-time faculty salaries. There are also questions about the adjunct faculty representative on Academic Council, including the length of term and the possibility of a vote. These have been discussed in the past, and will probably be discussed further as well.
- Diversity. Elon has done a decent job in attracting faculty of African descent, as well as more limited success in recruiting faculty from other under-represented groups. Council has continued to ask that the working definition of diversity be expanded to include more groups, including non-American faculty members, Hispanic faculty members and Native American faculty members, to name but a few. There is also the concern of retention, both in terms of year to year due to the added responsibilities often asked of our minority colleagues and also the effect that can have on tenure decisions.

- **Workload.** The current course reassignment program is well-received and appreciated. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that it was in response to a larger request to reduce teaching load across the board. Council and the faculty at large feel this is an important issue that needs to be kept on the table.
- **Law School Integration.** Other than the nuts and bolts issues of integration mentioned earlier, there are many other issues that need to be addressed. Certainly, integrating the law school with the undergraduate university is a difficult task on many levels. There is geographic distance, difference in mission and method, and the requirements for accreditation which limit things in many ways. At the same time, the law school has plans to align its curriculum and especially its methods with those of the undergraduate program, so there are ways to bridge the gap. This merits serious continued and deliberate attention.