

The Welfare Council advises the Senate Chair and the Steering Committee on matters that support, encourage, define, and evaluate the quality of the faculty and retention of faculty members including academic freedom and responsibilities; faculty benefits and compensation; faculty diversity; and programs that improve the quality of faculty life. Below is a summary of the items of discussion during 2016-2017.

Welfare of Women Faculty

The Council continued its work that began last year to identify issues affecting the recruitment and retention of female faculty. The Council invited Carolyn Tucker along with her graduate students to share the findings of her study – *Barriers to Professional Goal Attainment among UF Women Faculty Inventory*. A concern expressed is the expectation of women faculty to mentor the female students of male faculty. Other concerns included women earn less than their male peers do and often women do not negotiate high salaries. There were concerns that departments do not like ambitious women. Survey respondents requested more information and openness regarding the tenure process.

Improving the Online Training Experience

The Council worked with the Infrastructure Council to develop recommendations for required training programs especially those regarding user interface improvements. The Council supported the idea that, whenever legally permissible, a pre-test be offered for the faculty member to demonstrate the required proficiency. The Council recommended that faculty receive a list of required training at the beginning of the calendar year. The Council pointed out that there did not appear to be a central authority for reviewing training content and delivery, and the ability to require updates when deemed necessary. The Council suggested that UF Human Resources should have that authority.

Implementing the Climate Survey Action Items

Jodi Gentry, Vice President of Human Resources, presented the action items gleaned from the 10 forums held at locations around campus and online. The Council disused the long-term goals that include helping bring strong talent to UF; strategic compensation; intentional efforts at inclusion; and service excellence. A number of survey respondents expressed concern about the opaque nature of the tenure process. Respondents were also concerned about the lack of available parking that continues to have a negative impact on the quality of life at UF – this was especially the case for parents that must drop off their children at daycare and arrive on campus later in the morning. Parking was also a concern for elderly faculty that have difficulty walking and who find their available parking options continue to move further from their office.

Parental Leave at UF

The Council discussed the positive economic benefits of parental leave and the 100% retention of mothers at companies such as Patagonia, Inc. that have family-friendly benefit policies. The Council discussed changes to UF's leave policy to do away with sick and vacation leave, and move to a policy that could offer faculty more flexibility in how they elect to use their leave benefit – whether it is caring for a newborn or an elderly parent.

How Faculty Feel Valued

The Council discussed ways to highlight faculty achievements including the "Orange and Blue News". Other ideas included faculty discounts at university stores and a Faculty Club.

Faculty Club

A Faculty Club is an important collaboration element of the University's Strategic Development Plan. The Faculty Club is still under discussion by senior administration as to location and design. This initiative cannot move forward until space is committed.

Music Building Resolution

UF's legislative budget request includes \$12.5M for either the Music Building renovation or replacement. The Council discussed the difficulty the University has in soliciting donations for the Arts, and if UF receives outside funds, then plans are for a new building, otherwise plans are to renovate the Music Building. The Music Building is in the list of top five projects sent to the Board of Governors.

UF Quest

The Council shared faculty concerns about having their time diverted to teach UF Quest courses at the expense of courses required by undergraduate majors in the impacted Departments. The Council also discussed concerns about teaching evaluations for UF Quest courses that students are being required to take.

Insurance and People First

The Council discussed the case of a faculty member that had his health benefits canceled due to miscommunications with People First. There have been issues with People First customer service. We discussed how UF Human Resources is trying to work with People First to resolve these problems.

Benefits and Compensation

The Council discussed the Office of Human Resources' initiative to hire a benefit and compensation consultant. We discussed taking a long-term view of compensation and the need for transparency in the process. We discussed how our current system of retirement benefits is having an adverse impact on recruiting in some colleges, and UF's external competitiveness. In addition, we discussed how we should go about setting and managing expectations when it comes to compensation and benefits at UF.

Respectfully submitted,
Ray G. Thomas, Chair