

Committee on the Status of Women and Minorities (COSOWAM)

April 21, 2010

Present: Drs. PJ Coney, Renee Reid, Susan Kornstein, Andrea Ferreira-Gonzalez, Hongjie Lui, Mrs. Maria Curran, Mrs. Diane Bishop, Mrs. Deborah Stewart and Dr. Saba Masho

I. Welcome and Introduction

The meeting began at 4:05 PM with introduction of attendees.

II. Approval of Minutes

Approval of minutes was postponed to next meeting.

III. Meeting with Dr. Coney

The questions and answers are summarized below:

1. Question: Benchmarking - COSOWAM has been tracking SOM faculty benchmarking for several years. What is the SOM plan for benchmarking? Can you please share with us the benchmarking data summary on women and minorities for 2009? Were there any changes in the proportion of women or minority faculty, time in rank, women in leadership positions, promotion and tenure status, etc.

Answer: A data collection system is being developed by the University. In the future, data will be gathered and controlled centrally and it can be obtained by request only. The President is data driven and priority is given to data collection.

Generally, VCU rates higher than other institutions. However, we do not collect data on minorities. In 2009, SOM had 860 full-time faculty, about 34% were women and 28% were tenured. There were 91 newly hired faculty; 33% were women and 17% were minorities. Attrition was about 1%.

2. Question: Please elaborate how the SOM defines success. Should we expect any change in faculty expectations and definition of success at the SOM?

Answer: Success has to be individually determined. The definition has not changed. The dean is supportive of self-determined success that favors clinicians. The new promotion and tenure guidelines included a policy for promotion and tenure based on excellence in clinical services. Workload has not been discussed in the past but that is needed. Policies and management tools are in places that are consistent with faculty evaluation. Post tenure evaluation will also be used.

3. Question: What are the strategies for mentoring women and minorities?

Answer: Mentoring is a departmental responsibility. VCU SOM has a mentoring guide but there is no formal institution-wide mentoring.

4. Question: What are the most common reasons for leaving VCU? Strategies that SOM has taken to improve on retention?
Answer: Better position and career opportunities. Depending on the situation, the dean usually counters offer.
5. Question: Many faculty are feeling not supported by their departments in their effort to advance to leadership and promotion and tenure -- are the rules different from department to department?
Answer: Supports and opportunities may be different.
6. Questions: Some departments do not use the annual faculty evaluation to foster faculty development. Are there any central efforts to change or streamline faculty evaluations to help faculty succeed (promotion and tenure)?
Answer: The new faculty evaluation was designed to standardize faculty evaluation. It will be used for promotion and tenure.
7. Question: Most faculty are afraid to evaluate their chairs or provide a candid evaluation. Are there any efforts to address this problem?
Answer: Faculty should feel comfortable evaluating chairs. It is absolutely confidential. Dr. Coney will inform the dean that there is faculty perception that the written part of the evaluation may be provided to the chairs and easy to identify the faculty expressing concerns.
8. Question: This committee is interested in salary equity – can you please briefly discuss issues surrounding salary equity?
Answers: The dean has worked on salary equity. However, it has been very difficult to standardize faculty salary, especially for faculty hired a long time ago.
9. Question: What can this committee do to help your office?
Answer: COSOWAM can review data elements and provide feedback when the data collection system is being developed.