

CALS Faculty Council 2017-2018

Questions for CALS EC Town Hall – Received from multiple Units

Updated 09.28.2017

CALS Buildings and Facilities

1. CALS cannot be the most sought-after place to work in if the University fails to solve the deferred maintenance issues. Indeed, the expectations on CALS faculty members in the context of tenure and other productivity measures is the same as that on their peers in better buildings and facilities. The status of many CALS buildings is nothing short of depressing, unwelcoming, and plain ugly old and uncomfortable. Any plans to modernize? When?
2. What is the plan for regular and in-depth communication with faculty regarding the above points? More specifically, can the CALS EC provide regular updates on progress and timetables for current facility projects such as Building 90, Marley brick issues, sewer problems in Shantz, etc., similar to what Bio5 is doing with the new BSRL construction?

Unit Head Oversight

3. The 5-year performance review, and response from the Dean, was fairly thorough and detailed. The Dean clearly took the critiques seriously and tried to respond in the most positive manner. Is there any plan to have similar reviews for other CALS Executive Committee members, and Heads of Schools and Departments?
4. What does the EC believe is THEIR role in oversight of the HODs? Especially with reference to transparency and equity? There are significant differences in the way HODs operate and provide information/support/resources to their faculty. These differences hurt faculty morale tremendously. It would be great if some basic rules could apply across the college, yet maintaining the individuality of each HOD. For example, it has come to our attention that:
 - Some HODs do not favor allowing research faculty to use common resources and equipment if they do not bring in indirect costs via research grants.
 - Some HODs do not enforce teaching FTE for each faculty member.
 - Some Unit members report gender bias in teaching responsibilities with women having greater teacher loads than their male colleagues who have a similar FTE.

Teaching equity

5. When will Student Credit Hours, not just Credit Hours, be figured into Annual Performance Reviews?
6. With respect to a faculty member's contribution to a Unit, shouldn't the money they bring in via SCH (that the Unit gets through their teaching), be comparable to, or weighted as equally as, IDC returns via research? Where is this accounted for? Given the fact that faculty are being asked to teach more, or increase student enrollment, teaching effort should be taken into consideration, and be appropriately and fairly counted.

Research Equity

7. CALS has done an excellent job in hiring new faculty members in the last few years. What can CALS do to better protect that investment? Especially in the Research arena? New faculty members often are very slow to recognize that their roles have fundamentally changed since their Post-doc days, and that they now have new responsibilities. Should CALS be considering a mandated mentoring program of all new faculty members (not the current approach of recommended training)?
8. What is the accountability of start-up funds? Are the expenditures tied to specific project goals? Is that information publicly available?
9. There is very little transparency in IDC negotiations. Some faculty apparently negotiate IDC returns to their own programs; most do not. Why this discrepancy?
10. How will Schools and Departments who do not have the resources to cover start-up funds for new research faculty ever be able to be competitive in hiring in the future?

Salary issues

11. When it comes to salary raises, some Unit Heads decide to evenly distribute the funds they have for salary increases, and do not consider merit. This is upsetting: why give the same raise to a faculty member who has not performed well when compared to another that has gone above and beyond? What can the EC do to encourage more performance-appropriate merit compensation?
12. Salary equity needs an honest reevaluation. Short of a detailed well-defended numerical scale to justify some inequities, there are no justifications for a full professor making +\$150K and another ~\$90K.

Extension-specific issues

13. Is there a push in Extension to hire non-Continuing faculty (similar to POPs) for Agent positions?

14. We are now down to just one Associate Director for ANR Programs. What are the timelines, or perhaps, what is the strategy, for the vacant 4-H and FCHS Associate Director positions?
15. Are Extension faculty going to need to revise their Position Descriptions to include a percent service component?

Other/General

16. The hiring of new Administrative personnel has often been highlighted as one of the strategic initiatives for improving productivity, and stabilizing CALS finances. Are there publicly-available data on the changes in administrative costs in CALS for the past several years? Does CALS anticipate further increases in administrative capacity in the future?