

***** DRAFT *****

To: James Troha, President

From: Academic Planning and Assessment Committee (APAC)
Judith Benz
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Will Dickey
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CC: Kathy Westcott, Interim Provost
Celia Cook-Huffman, Executive Committee representative to APAC
Gerald Kruse, Assistant Provost

Date: March 24, 2014

Re: Process for New and Open Faculty Positions

After sending our January 20, 2014 memo to President Troha, APAC has gathered additional feedback on the process and criteria the administration will use to evaluate new and open position requests. Members of the committee have discussed the faculty feedback and summarize it in this memo.

Process

Position requests for new positions and to renew open positions should follow the process outlined below:

1. Department submits request to APAC
2. APAC provides feedback to the Department
3. Department submits revised request to APAC and the Provost
4. APAC sends comments on the requests from all program/departments to the Provost
5. Provost consults with Executive Committee
6. Provost meets with President to review requests
7. President consults with Cabinet
8. Provost and President make and announce decisions

APAC encourages department chairs to discuss their plans to request a new position with the Provost prior to preparing the request. If there is no chance the request will be supported, we hope the Provost will clearly communicate that outcome before the chair and department spend valuable time and effort on a fruitless request.

This process allows for early feedback to departments. Per faculty consensus, APAC will forward an evaluation of each request to the department chair first and, upon revision,

forward the committee's updated evaluation to the Provost. Faculty input is important and faculty members from APAC will evaluate the requests and Executive Committee will consult with the Provost. At the conclusion of the process, it is critical the results be shared publicly by the Provost and President.

[APAC members - Should requests be made public?]

During the Topic of the Day discussion at the March faculty meeting, some members of faculty suggested open positions be automatically refilled as they have in the recent past. While APAC understands the challenge in eliminating a faculty line in one department and shifting it to another department, the committee does not support the automatic renewal of open positions. However, perhaps the burden of proof should be different for a department or program defending an open position compared to a department or program requesting a new position. For instance, it's not impossible to envision a scenario in which a member of an excellent department/program with moderate enrollment retires and the position is defended by the department chair. Another excellent department with large and growing enrollment submits a proposal for a new position. This likely scenario illustrates the critical need for judgment that looks beyond quantitative facts and figures on one hand and a well-crafted argument qualitative argument on the other.

Also during the March meeting, a few faculty members expressed their frustration in not knowing if the position of a retired colleague will be refilled. In some cases, persistent low enrollment stokes the fear of losing a position and the frustration in not knowing how to plan for the future. Without clear communication from the administration, planning is impossible. In the event the administration will not refill a particular position after a professor retires or leaves, APAC again recommends that decision be communicated as soon as possible to the faculty member and his or her colleagues so that they may plan accordingly. In many cases, the decision to not refill a particular position will make completing a POE difficult or impossible for current students. Faculty and students will need sufficient time to plan for alternatives.

Criteria

The faculty suggestions on criteria can be organized into three separate but related categories: general contribution to the college; rationale or need for the position; and, budget/fiscal implications. The faculty suggestions are consistent with the current periodic review process and the broad set of criteria proposed by APAC in its January 200, 2014 memo to President Troha. It was clear that a single-criterion process is not acceptable.

Under the heading general contribution, departments requesting positions ought to make clear how the position is consistent with the Juniata College mission and supports the strategic plan and our liberal arts tradition. It is also important the department addresses its institutional history and the context in which they operate.

In developing a rationale for the position, faculty recommended departments address and the President and Provost consider a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative data. The following list is not exhaustive but represents the breadth of items faculty find important providing a rationale for a position:

- Is the position needed to support specialized accreditation or professional licensure?
- What is the departmental student-faculty ratio? How many FTEs does the department serve? How many student credit hours does the department generate? Number of graduates? Number of freshmen?
- What are the department's current contributions to general education? What are the department's current needs?
- What are the department's enrollment targets and how will the new position help meet them?
- How will the position support diversity at the college?
- What is the anticipated student impact?
- What is the department's strategic plan and goals? What are the department's learning objectives? How will the position support these plans, goals, and objectives?
- What is the external/national/international demand for growth in the discipline, field, or program supported by the position?
- Which internal needs or demands will the position support?
- Does the position support interdisciplinary opportunities, new directions, or new initiatives?

Many faculty understand their role in being a fiscally responsible institution. Several faculty suggestions called for departments to discuss the budgetary and fiscal implications including the current and anticipated costs and revenues and the long-term sustainability of the position, program, or department.

Assessment of outcomes and inputs were not explicitly mentioned by members of the faculty during the Topic of the Day discussion. However, members of APAC recommend departments have current assessment plans and results as well as up-to-date periodic program reviews on file with the Provost's Office before being considered for a new position.

Also, access to complete institutional data will be necessary for department chairs to adequately state their case for a position. The Institutional Research and Finance and Operations offices will need to provide information and address questions to assist in the process.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to offer feedback on the process for evaluating open faculty positions. We look forward to participating in the process and offering feedback as it moves forward.