Academic Senate Research and Professional Development Committee - AY 2008-09 Report

Support for Research and Professional Development at Cal Poly

Much of the effort in the Fall quarter focused on the discussion of a report to the provost by the committed completed in the previous year. Due to changes in the provost office as well as in the committee, the context of the report had changed from when it was completed. The committee decided to continue pursuing the goals identified in the report, and decided to request a meeting with the new provost, Dr. Koob, to discuss the report. The document was revised in order to reflect issues discussed in the meetings, such as an emphasis on the aspirational intent concerning the allocation of money and release time to faculty, the decisions on criteria and processes for the allocation of funds, and the connections to the RPT process and professional development plans of faculty members. In addition, the senate president was kept informed about the committee's plan on this. It was the intention of the committee to present a revised version of the report as a resolution to the senate, and some of the core aspects are reflected in the AS-691-09 Resolution on Research and Professional Development at Cal Poly, adopted by the Senate on June 2, 2009.

In the Spring 09 quarter, the committee invited the provost, Dr. Robert Koob, to present the committee report produced in 2008 at the request of the previous provost, Dr. Durgin. Dr. Koob offered his feedback on the report, leading to a discussion ranging from specific aspects of the recommendations like release time, funding issues, and space allocation, over the relation between scholarship and teaching, to Cal Poly's vision (or lack thereof). Since there are already two significant efforts going on with the WASC self study and the work on the Strategic Plan, we decided to concentrate on reviews of the outcomes from those efforts, rather than engaging in our own attempt at defining research, professional development, the role of a teacher-scholar, and related aspects. The committee also explored possible opportunities to engage the Cal Poly community in a discussion of theses issues within the context of the Science Café activities at Cal Poly's library. However, it is not clear what kinds of activities are most effective, and if the Science Café is the best venue. More entries were added to the informal list of activities related to the review of scholarship, research, and professional development at Cal Poly that is being compiled by the committee.

Conflict between R&PD and Cal Poly's Mission

The committee continued the discussions from the previous quarter, resulting in the statement below that was forwarded to the Academic Senate leadership:

> "On an interim basis, the Research and Professional Development Committee will hear complaints from faculty about initiatives that are perceived to be in conflict with Cal Poly's Mission Statement. If the Committee finds merit in a complaint, it will forward it to the Academic Senate Executive Committee.
>
> This is a temporary increase in the Committee's duties. We urge the Academic Senate to find a more permanent way to resolve such concerns."

Resolution on the RPT Focus Group Report

The committee examined the report by the focus group, and decided to propose a resolution that endorses a subset of recommendations made by the committee. Several of the recommendations were outside of the scope of the committee, and thus not included in the resolution. The AS-690-09 Resolution on Retention Promotion and Tenure Focus Group Report was adopted by the Senate on June 2, 2009.

Resolution on sustaining the community of RP&D activities

In order to foster further clarification of the role of research and professional development activities at a teaching-oriented institution like Cal Poly, the committee (with substantial help from the Senate

President, John Soares), formulated a resolution on research and professional activities. The AS-691-09 Resolution on Research and Professional Development at Cal Poly was adopted by the Senate on June 2, 2009.

Resolution on expanding the use of the Digital Commons

The committee considered proposing a resolution on this topic, but decided to postpone it until Fall 2009.

Review Cal Poly Strategic Plan

The committee reviewed the draft version of the Cal Poly Strategic Plan. A document with the committee's comments on the Cal Poly Strategic Plan - Feb 09 was forwarded to the authoring team of the plan. The committee will continue to review upcoming versions, in particular those parts describing metrics to be used for the evaluation of progress towards the goals and objectives.

Committee Organization

We are currently using a Wiki as a repository for committee documents, see [http://wiki.csc.calpoly.edu/senate-research-prof-def/wiki]. In general, this seems to work well, but there are some usability and functionality issues. Available through the Wiki are this report, as well as meeting agendas and meeting notes. The Wiki also contains more detailed information on specific issues on the agenda, but those documents are restricted to committee members only.

Franz Kurfess

Chair, Academic Senate Research and Professional Development committee

June 17, 2009