Dean's Faculty Advisory Committee  
University of Tennessee, College of Medicine  

October 4, 2011  

Call to Order  

The meeting was called to order by the president, Dr. Laura Sprabery, at 12:08 PM on October 3, 2011, in the Coleman building, Room A101.  

Attendance  

The following members were present:  

Lawrence 'LB' Brown, PhD, Louisa Balazs, MD, PhD, Maggie DeBon, PhD, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, PhD, Bob Foehring, PhD, Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD, William R. Morris, MD, Edwards Park, PhD, Larry Reiter, PhD, Claudette Shephard, MD, Laura Sprabery, MD, Thad Wilson, PhD  

The following guest(s) was (were) present:  

Polly Hofmann, PhD  

Approval of minutes  

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as written. Minutes had previously been distributed by electronic means.  

Business  

Pres. Sprabery began by noting the substantial time commitment that the curricular revision is now and will be requiring of clinical faculty. In recent years clinical faculty have been required to spend increasing time in the clinical setting, earning RVUs, so that adding another large commitment may place an unfair burden on them. The challenge becomes particularly pressing where any member of the clinical staff must be missing, such as by illness or vacation. Clinical faculty present at the meeting affirmed the concern Dr. Sprabery identified.  

Notwithstanding the DFAC's general expression of concern, the subject received limited discussion on this particular occasion inasmuch as Dean Stern was unable to be present for this particular meeting. The question will be raised again at a more opportune time.  

A second agenda item for this meeting concerned the Faculty Senate's ongoing efforts to revise the Faculty Handbook. Dr. Thad Wilson indicated that a current focus is minimum requirements for promotion, particularly publications. Colleges and departments can set higher requirements, via their bylaws, but one question concerns whether the Handbook itself should specify any minimum number, campus-wide.  

On the UT website are the College of Medicine's ByLaws, which were updated about 5 years ago to reflect the addition of an Executive Dean. A link for "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQs)
provides some informal guidelines, e.g. to suggest about how many publications are appropriate to achieve promotion to various ranks. These, however, do not have the status of official ByLaws.

Useful links online are:

Specific link to “Insider’s Guide” which has FAQ on P&T:
http://www.uthsc.edu/Medicine/Acad_Affairs/Fac_Adm/Promotion_Tenure/Insiders_%20Guide_%20to_%20Promotion.htm

General info and doc on P&T in COM:
http://www.uthsc.edu/Medicine/Acad_Affairs/Fac_Adm/index.php?doc=Promotion_Tenure/index.htm

Regarding the question whether the Handbook or CoM ByLaws should contain express numbers of publications, it was observed that any such requirement in the Handbook would apply campus-wide, across all colleges. A one-size-fits-all approach may not be appropriate. However, if a particular College required a larger number, faculty applying for promotion could potentially be surprised to find a higher number required within their particular College or Department. It was also pointed out that such numbers may be deemed a minimum necessary number, rather than a sufficient threshold to achieve promotion. For research-focused faculty, for instance, these might need to be publications in which one is a lead author while, for clinical faculty, being a middle or lower author may be deemed sufficient.

One option would be to leave such a numbers-requirement in the Handbook. Another might be to have no minimum requirement in the Handbook, and instead direct faculty to consult their own Colleges' ByLaws.

A further question was discussed, namely whether our affiliated clinical faculty should be in the traditional promotion stream, or whether there should be separate criteria for promotion for them. On one hand, being promoted to full professor requires that one have a national reputation. This may be more difficult to achieve where the faculty member is purely a clinical affiliate. It was noted that promotion from assistant to associate does not carry stringent requirements, whereas standards for promotion to full professor are considerably more demanding. At the same time, if promotions are given too casually, they can lose meaning and value, particularly where a clinical faculty member does little to teach residents or otherwise make active contributions to UTHSC. On the other hand, promotion to a higher rank may be a way of thanking faculty who otherwise get very limited concrete rewards for their contributions.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be held on November 7, 2011, at 12:00 Noon in the Coleman building, Room A101.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,