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

December 2, 2013  

Call to Order  

The meeting was called to order by the president, Dr. Larry Reiter, at 12:03 PM on December 2, 2013, in the Coleman building, Room A101.

Attendance

The following members were present:

Louisa Balazs, MD, PhD, Terry Cooper, PhD, Maggie DeBon, PhD, Denis DiAngelo, PhD, Bob Foehring, PhD, Scott Jackson, DVM, Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD, Kaushik Parthasarathi, PhD, Larry Reiter, PhD, Tiffany Seagroves, PhD, Laura Sprabery, MD

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

Polly Hofmann, PhD, Susan Senogles, PhD

Approval of minutes

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

Business

The meeting began with discussion of a DFAC subcommittee's ongoing efforts to create an Education Metric for measuring faculty's teaching activities. In an effort to test the validity of the Metric when it is finalized, Polly Hofmann has identified about 40 faculty who will be, in essence, her "test cases." If these faculty feel that their own annual evaluation has identified an appropriate percentage of time as having been devoted to teaching, and if the Metric now being developed by the subcommittee roughly matches the prior percent-figure, then she will consider this to be an indication that the Metric is successful.

Ensuing discussion offered several caveats to this approach. First, it was suggested that the percent-figure developed in conversations between chair and faculty (the "chair-faculty concurrence" number) may sometimes be essentially arbitrary—a number-from-the-sky or, perhaps, a number that is simply crafted to fit with other numbers such as for research and service. Where that is the case, then it would not be surprising to find that the subcommittee's Metric produces a different number. Where such a contrast occurs, it may be erroneous to identify the chair-faculty estimate as being a Gold Standard against which any subsequent Metric must be measured.

Second, the denominator used in the "chair-faculty concurrence" number may be very different from that in the Metric, thereby yielding percentage numbers that cannot be deemed comparable. The chair-faculty number may measure educational effort as a percentage of all the work that the
faculty person does. The Metric, in contrast, will likely be using a specific number as its
denominator. The reason, as proposed during DFAC discussion, is that a single denominator
applied across all faculty may be essential to ensure fairness and comparability among faculty.

Suppose, for instance, that Dr. Industrious regularly works 90-hour weeks, devoting 33% of that
time to educational activities. Suppose that Dr. Sloth actually only works about 21 hours/week,
enjoying computer games and coffee conversations the rest of the time. He, too, spends 33% of
his working time on education. The actual time that Industrious spends on education is 30
hours/week, while Sloth spends only 7. If educational effort is measured simply as a percentage
of "all the things this particular faculty member does," then Sloth and Industrious are deemed
equal. However, if we deem this "equality" to be bogus, then a single denominator would appear
to be essential.

In its current iteration, the DFAC subcommittee's Metric presumes that the baseline figure for a
full working week is the traditional forty-hour week. This is at least partly because UT and
UTHSC presume a 40-hour week throughout their employee policies – for annual leave accrual
and usage, sick leave accrual and usage, etc. The Metric subcommittee will discuss the
denominator question further in its next meeting.

Additional DFAC discussion concerned the question why all colleges at UTHSC are required to
have the same (or only moderately modified) Metric. It was roundly agreed that documenting
educational effort is an inherently difficult task and that perfection will not likely be achieved.

Terry Cooper, who is spearheading the Metric subcommittee's work to identify the actual
amounts of time that faculty spend on various teaching activities, informed the DFAC that 106
people have responded to the request for data. The next subcommittee meeting will discuss how
to use these data – e.g. whether to use a simple average for each type of teaching, whether to
remove the farthest outliers, etc.

Turning to the next agenda item, Pres. Reiter updated DFAC on the Translational Research Grant
Program subcommittee. It has focused not just on a potential grant program, but also on a
possible fellowship program as well, in which trainees would learn how to do effective
translational research. Dave Bridges has been added to the committee, whose members include
Larry Reiter, Martin Croce, Maggie DeBon, and Denis DiAngelo. The subcommittee's request
for funding will not likely be high, perhaps focusing more on smaller grants for higher numbers
of smaller projects, than on large amounts for one or two bigger projects.

As the final matter of business the DFAC, standing as the "committee on committees," needs to
nominate two candidates for the P&T committee. They must be MDs, and ideally need to be
tenured full professors. The DFAC secretary will ask DFAC members to elicit appropriate
nominations from their departments.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be held on January 6, 2014, at 12:00 Noon in the
Coleman building, Room A101.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 PM.
Respectfully submitted,

E. Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD
Secretary