Committee on Excellence in Teaching
Report on Faculty Participation

The Faculty Committee on Part-Time Faculty and the Faculty Senate requested that the Excellence in Teaching Committee examine the issue of adjunct participation in the EIT process. Concerns emerged when no adjunct received the EIT award for Part-Time Faculty in 2015. The Committee agreed to examine the issue and provide this report. The Committee felt strongly that the process was well-defined and accessible to all parties. Adjuncts were nominated for the award in 2015.   But nomination is only the first step in a lengthy process of reflection and evaluation. The process demands a great deal from the Committee members and even more from those who engage with it. The Committee chose to examine the data from both the 2013 and 2014 academic years in order to garner a more complete picture of the issue of faculty engagement with the EIT process.

Overview

Below is the data for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 academic years. In both years, the number of full-time faculty nominated far exceeded that of the part-time faculty. Similarly, the submission rates for full-time faculty were higher than for part-time faculty. In these two years, students nominated full-time faculty from all four schools on campus.   In 2013, the part-time nominees also represented all four schools.   However, in 2014, the part time nominees only represented three of the four schools.

2013-2014:
88 Faculty Nominated
      61 Full-Time Faculty (Representing all 4 schools)
      20 Part-Time Faculty (Representing all 4 schools)
       7 Ineligible Full-Time Faculty (They were ineligible due to their service on
          the committee at that time or they were previous winners. These individuals
          are omitted from the subsequent discussion as they could not submit
          materials)

34 of 81 Submitted Materials
      30 Full-Time Faculty
       4 Part-Time Faculty

Thus, of the 88 faculty nominated in the fall of 2013, adjunct faculty comprised 22.7% of the overall pool of nominees. But after the Committee requested materials from the nominees, adjunct faculty only constituted 11.7% of the submitted pool. Looked at another way, just under half of the full-time nominated faculty submitted materials (49.1%), but only one-fifth of the nominated adjuncts did so. (None of the nominated adjuncts were ineligible due to service, nor were they previous award winners.) In short, both faculty categories, full and part-time, showed a substantial drop off between nominations and submissions. However, even with an initially healthy adjunct pool of nominees, the Committee had few individuals to consider for the award, once they began

reviewing materials. In 2014-2015, the situation was quite similar, but the result was far more noticeable.

2014-2015:

76 Faculty Nominated
      61 Full-Time Faculty (Representing all 4 schools)
       9   Part-Time Faculty (Representing 3 schools)
       4   Ineligible Full-Time Faculty (See above.)
       2   Ineligible Part-Time Faculty (See above.)[1]

43 of 70 Submitted Materials
      42 Full-Time Faculty
       1 Part-Time Faculty

If there was a bit of good news in 2014-2015, it was that 60% of the full-time faculty nominated, subsequently submitted materials. That is higher than the year before when less than half did so. However, it is still less than ideal. Moreover, the adjunct faculty comprised only 14.4% of the nominees - a smaller percentage than in 2013-2014.   The one adjunct faculty member who did submit materials is nonetheless equivalent to one-fifth of the eligible adjunct nominees – the same submission rate as in the previous year. Unfortunately, that one individual did not submit a complete portfolio.

Conclusions

Overall, the Committee found that there are two related issues in the process.   The first is the gap between the number of faculty nominated and the number who subsequently submit materials for consideration to the committee. The issue of "drop off" is a problem for both faculty groups. There may be a variety of reasons that drop off occurs; some common to both groups and some unique to one or the other. The Committee posited that some full-time faculty may not submit materials because they are or - of particular importance - will be on sabbatical in the spring, and, thus, cannot fully participate in the process. Likewise, some part-time faculty teach only one semester during an academic year. If that is the fall, the faculty member may be nominated but may decline to submit materials as there would be no ability for that individual to advance in the process.[2]

Additionally, the selection process for the EIT awards is quite rigorous.   Faculty must submit their c.v.'s, a pedagogical statement, and the names of several students and one faculty member who would be willing to write letters of recommendation. Each of these items must be submitted within about one month during the fall semester.[3] Undoubtedly,

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[1] Even counting these two adjuncts, the 11 nominees only represented 3 of the schools on campus.
[2] A part-time faculty member who only teaches in the spring would face a different issue. Students may have forgotten about the course and its strengths over the summer and may not remember to nominate that person in the fall when the call for nominations goes out.
[3] The Committee contacts all of the students and the faculty reference for the nominee.

there are faculty members, from both groups, who have other demands on their time and who cannot meet these deadlines.[4]   They may be in the process of revising articles or texts for publication. They may have other responsibilities on campus and off. Thus, some faculty members may decide not to submit materials due to those demands. Moreover, some faculty members have indicated that they do not <u>want</u> to participate. The Committee cannot explain the rationales of those individuals as the Committee has not been privy to the individual's considerations.   However, in the past, affected faculty members (both full and part-time) have asked the Committee to remove their individual names from consideration.

One significant difference between the two faculty groups that may contribute to part time faculty drop off is that full-time faculty members seeking advancement can directly benefit from participation in the EIT process. Full-time faculty can use their recognition to demonstrate teaching efficacy when they seek promotions or tenure. For part-time faculty, that impetus does not exist. The recognition that comes through participation is largely internal for part-time faculty.   It is wonderful to be recognized but it does not guarantee them a course for the next semester. The converse is true as well. The failure to be recognized does not curtail their opportunities to teach at CCSU. If chairs widely acknowledged the value of EIT recognition to the department, more adjuncts might submit materials.

In short, there are a myriad of reasons why full and part-time faculty members might decline to submit materials. The Committee feels that participation in the process should be encouraged but must not be forced onto anyone. The EIT process is a purely voluntary one and should remain so. Given that fact, drop off will always exist to one degree or another.

The second related problem is the issue of nominations. Nominations are only accepted in the fall semester. Due to the nature of the Committee elections, none of the 2014-2015 committee members have access to the records prior to 2013. Thus, the Committee cannot determine if faculty nominations are in an overall downward trajectory or if the decline in nominations between 2013 (88 nominations) and 2014 (76 nominations) is a normal event.   Nonetheless, the Committee would like to increase the number of overall nominations received.   More importantly, the committee would like to see all four schools on campus represented within the nominations for both faculty groups.

The Committee posts the nomination announcement in every academic building, Memorial Hall, and the Student Center. It typically also appears on the webpage.   In the past, the Committee has also utilized email blasts to the student listserve. Additionally, The Committee has simplified the nomination process. The students just need to send one email with their name, the name of the nominee and the nominee's department.   The students do not have to write any supportive statements in the nomination. Some faculty members receive multiple nominations. Some students send one email with multiple

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[4] The Committee sets this particular time frame because the Committee must review all of these files by the end of January in order to determine the list of semi-finalists by the beginning of February.

faculty names on it. Encouraging the students to submit nominations was a goal of the Committee last fall. The Committee developed tear-off nomination slips in order to augment student participation.[5]

This year, the Committee intends to reach out to department chairs to ask them to inform their students about the nomination process and to request that the chairs encourage their adjuncts to submit materials. One way in which Chairs can help adjuncts is by assuring them that they will serve as their faculty reference for the EIT Committee. (All too often, faculty members from both groups lack faculty references.) The Committee will also try to place information into the dormitories.   The Committee has pursued this route previously but it is difficult for faculty to obtain access to the dorms. Even a student committee member might only have access to one dormitory.   The Committee also debated the development of a QR code for an EIT website where students could submit nominations. Undoubtedly, other avenues to promote nominations will emerge. An increase in the number of nominations should produce a larger number of submissions. However, drop off may still occur as some faculty voluntarily decide to opt out of this rigorous process. Nonetheless, the Committee hopes to continue to develop and promote the Excellence in Teaching Award with all faculty members.   Moreover, if the university and department chairs, in particular, emphasize the value of the EIT award, then more adjuncts and full-time faculty may decide to participate in this worthy process. The Committee hopes that as they develop new avenues for reaching students they will see greater participation by students that will include all faculty groups from all schools on campus.

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[5] Some Committee members noted that their students indicated that they found the slips easy to use and they could submit nominations in the short period between classes.