

Faculty Development Annual Summary Report 2018/19

Committee members: Lili Wright (co-chair), Erik Wielenberg (co-chair), Pauline Ota, Hiroko Chiba, Kevin Kinney, Nahyan Fancy (non-voting member); Tamara Beauboeuf (non-voting).

FDC had an active year in which the committee was repeatedly thrust into the center of campus debate amid a turbulent period of administrative change and financial worry. In the fall, the committee took seriously its mission to “develop faculty,” and decided to address one of the most critical issues in determining the faculty’s professional success: its morale.

Sensing the prevalence of low morale on campus, FDC created a three-question survey for all DePauw faculty members asking them to rate their morale. The resulting 10-page report offered numeric confirmation of what FDC intuited. More than half the faculty rated their morale between 1-3 on of a scale 1- 7 (one being “terrible,” and 7 being “terrific.”) Only 3 percent of faculty reported their morale was a 7. The full report is attached to this memo.

It is important to note this survey was conducted *before* a rapid-fire series of unpopular measures designed to ease budget shortfalls, including: a mid-year change in healthcare providers, a staff layoff of over 50 people, a reduction in sabbatical course reassignments (from 4 to 3) and pay (no more banked winter terms), the return of mandatory winter term teaching once every three years, and a sweeping faculty buyout. In other news, the faculty delivered a no-confidence vote to President McCoy, and the VPAA Anne Harris and Dean of the Faculty Tamara Beauboeuf both announced their departures from DePauw, along with several cabinet members who either retired or left for other jobs.

Meanwhile, normal FDC committee business continued. We adjudicated the following internal grants: Faculty Fellowships, Fisher Course Reassignments, Faculty-Student Summer Research grants, Tenzer summer grants, Sanger Student Leadership grants, Danks Summer research grants, and Oxnam and Minar nominations.

The committee believes several issues that arose during our discussions merit further attention next year:

1. Should faculty be paid multiple stipends for multiple summer grants? (This FDC said no.)
2. Should faculty and students be required to be on campus in the summer to receive faculty-student summer research grants? (This FDC said yes.)
3. How can FDC encourage more people to apply for internal grants? Not one person applied for the Fisher Fellowship. Some faculty believe these awards are highly competitive when in fact every single applicant but one who applied for a Faculty Fellowship this past year received one. What is the best way for FDC to improve outreach and communication? Should FDC be more explicit about the numbers/odds of getting an award?
4. What can be done about departments where faculty do not feel they can afford to drop to a 3-2 teaching load? Incoming VPAA David Berque suggested some FF grants might be given for faculty to complete their research in the summer and not take the course release, but still receive the financial package (\$5,000 + \$2,000). However, this suggestion overlooks the fact that FDC already awards competitive summer research awards (Summer Stipends and Faculty-Student Summer research). The point of an FF is precisely that it allows long-term faculty development projects to be sustained during a semester of each academic year, in addition to summers when faculty often carve out time to devote to their projects. Should FDC meet with the chairs to encourage them to support their faculty in applying? Shouldn't scholarly and creative work be considered an essential part of every faculty member's job, not a luxury some can't afford to take?
5. The PDF money ran out before Spring Break this year. This may be something the committee should discuss next year. Also, the amounts of PDF, conference money, and summer grants have not changed in 20 years.

Nahyan Fancy and Tamara Beauboeuf were proud of the PPD reading groups that ran in the fall, which were well attended. FDC also selected a speaker for a Global Learning reading group, which was held in the spring with 18 participants.

In the Spring, VPAA Anne Harris met with FDC and announced that the Board of Trustees wanted to eliminate the course-release time connected with Faculty Fellowships, as the salary stipend and project money (\$5,000 + \$2,000) were endowed, but the three courses reassignments for each year of the three-year grant—were not. “Change is going to happen in the Faculty Fellowship Structure,” she said. “Accept it and move within it.” Harris also said she held off the Trustees and wanted FDC to write

a proposal suggesting a way to handle faculty fellowship course reassignments that was more equitable, incurred less disruption to the class schedule, and that made these reassignments budget neutral. She stated that she would bring such a proposal to the board in May.

FDC went into high gear to gather research. The committee came to the conclusion that the arguments used to support the elimination of course reassignments with FF were either exaggerated or unfounded. In response, the committee generated a Mythbusters Fact sheet (attached to this report), which it was prepared to distribute to the Board of Trustees Academic Chair Justin Christian, who it wanted to invite for a meeting.

A few quick points: The course reassignments actually are not very expensive (around \$60,000 of the entire DPU \$114 million budget), chairs have almost a year to find substitute professors for the lost classes (though often the curriculum has the flexibility to not need another course to be offered in its stead), and compensated service, not Faculty Fellowships (or Fisher awards), make up the bulk of faculty reassigned time outside of sabbatical and pre-tenure leaves.

In a subsequent meeting, when these arguments were made, Harris encouraged FDC to think big and innovate and said she was even open to the idea of moving to a permanent 3-2 teaching arrangement if faculty made a variety of concessions, such as giving up faculty development reassigned time and some reassigned time for compensated service. She encouraged FDC to come up with a new paradigm for course reassignments at DePauw, again with a May deadline.

FDC was confused as President McCoy had publicly stated that 3-2 was off the table, so the committee asked to meet with McCoy and incoming VPAA Dave Berque. In that meeting, President McCoy insisted that Faculty Fellowships were *not* on the chopping block and FDC had plenty of time to consider possible changes to the Faculty Fellowship program. McCoy said his major concern was equity. That is, some faculty, he said, have complained to him they “apply and apply” and never receive grants, and in some departments, faculty decline to apply because of enrollment or cultural pressures. He said he was neutral to the idea of a permanent 3-2, but did not want to disappoint faculty if the proposal proved unfeasible.

FDC is very concerned that some faculty members are shut out of Faculty Fellowships because of high enrollment demands or pressure from chairs. Also, the committee wanted to verify if indeed some faculty members “apply and apply” and never win anything, despite its best attempts to be fair and “spread the wealth.”

In an attempt to size up the scope and severity of these problems, FDC conducted a survey. A total of 103 faculty members out of a possible 157 responded to The FDC Faculty Fellowship Survey. A separate report is attached detailing the results. In short, 75% of respondents had applied for a FF. Of those, 87% had received a FF. The 25 people who had not applied for a FF gave a variety of reasons, but not one suggested that these internal grants were unilaterally unfair or inequitable. Five professors in Math and Natural Science said they did not feel comfortable applying due to the burden it would place on their departments to have them drop a class. See the full attached report for details. FDC sees this as a curricular, departmental, and cultural problem, not a problem intrinsic to FF themselves.

At the end of the year, President McCoy resigned effective June, 2020. At this point, it is, of course, unclear whether DePauw's next president and VPAA will be invested in exploring a permanent 3-2 teaching load. This writer has been involved in 3-2 discussions on campus for two decades without movement so it is difficult to be optimistic.

Sincerely,

FDC for 2018/19

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Pauline Ota

Hiroko Chiba

Kevin Kinney

Nahyan Fancy (non-voting member)

Tamara Beauboeuf (non-voting member)