Meeting Synopsis:

1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda
The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Chair Rich Christie.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes
Minutes from the April 3rd FCFA meeting were approved with revisions.

3. Legislation Review
Christie reported that he had notified the Faculty Senate leadership of FCAS’s disappointment with the changes at the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) in the Class A Legislation regarding Delegation of Authority for Select Faculty Appointments. Both the Senate Faculty Chair Susan Astley and Vice Chair Jim Gregory responded. Gregory emphasized the importance of maintaining faculty authority over personnel issues. Though the Council was offered the opportunity to present the original language to the Faculty Senate as an amendment when the Legislation is presented, this was not thought to be viable.

Discussion followed on improving language within the proposed legislation on Delegation of Authority for Select Faculty Appointments. Concerns were raised about the consistency of the wording. The first was regarding lack of clarity as to whether a “majority vote” was required in the delegated committee for appointments. The Council agreed that this should be clarified to indicate that authority majority vote in the committee was required. The second was whether the elected committee would be required to be superior in rank to recommend renewals, as in the faculty vote in general. The Council agreed that the elected committee would have to observe the rank requirements. Christie was delegated to revise the language and send to both the Council and Faculty Senate staff to be presented at the Faculty Senate meeting.

4. Openness in P&T - Language Review
Christie requested faculty input on the drafted language to revise openness in Promotion and Tenure. It was clarified that the proposed additional interaction between the Chair and candidate prior to the submission of the Chair’s recommendation would be solely verbal, whereas the response to the Chair’s recommendation would be in writing. Discussion followed on whether the Chair should supply simply a
summary of discussion within the faculty vote rather than their opinion, as a Dean could ask for the Chair’s opinion, if desired. It was suggested to remove the Chair’s recommendation and solely have a Chair’s account of the faculty vote. This may resolve the concern that Provost Ana Mari Cauce had expressed with making the Chair’s independent and separate comments on the process.

The Council then discussed the implications of such a revision. These included increased transparency, reduced Chair’s privilege, increased efficiency and ensuring that candidates feel like they have input to the process. The suggestion to remove the Chair’s independent recommendation led to discussion of the issue of Chairs voting twice, once with the faculty, and again in their independent recommendation. This is an important issue in smaller departments. Secretary of the Faculty Marcia Killien noted that only two schools or colleges have departments with fewer than 10 voting faculty members: six of eight departments in Dentistry, and nine of 36 in Arts and Sciences. This led to discussion of the problems with the faculty vote in small departments. For example, a department of three faculty may only have one full professor, and only that person is eligible to vote on promotion to full professor.

The Council decided to expand the scope of the revision to address double-voting issues and also voting in small departments.

The Council then discussed how to determine when Chairs should vote. A suggestion was made for Chairs and Deans to have one vote, and choose when they use it. A former department Chair, Killien differentiated the responsibility of the Chair from that of the faculty, and provided an example where she, as chair, had called attention to concerns about a case that received a positive faculty vote. She noted that the Department Chair brings a different perspective to the vote and commented that she would be unhappy with removal of the unique position of Chairs. A suggestion was made for Chairs not to take part in the faculty vote, but have the responsibility of providing their independent recommendation.

Consensus was expressed to change the current Promotion and Tenure process to allow for discussion between the Chair and candidates and allow the written response by the candidate. The issue of whether the chair’s independent recommendation should be optional or required was discussed, with a consensus that it should be required.

Provost Cauce had additionally noted that many Chairs avoid stating their clear recommendation when passing the information to Deans. The question was posed to Vice Provost for Academic Personnel Cheryl Cameron how the recommendation of the Chair was valued by the Dean. Cameron noted that a summary is provided to the Provost, at each of the different phases of the process.

The question was posed as to why the process is currently inadequate. Additional openness was thought to perhaps make already hard decisions more difficult to make, but Provost Cauce had emphasized the importance of transparency. Members discussed Provost Cauce’s concern that it is already difficult to recruit Chairs due to responsibilities; additional openness may make this more challenging as well.
Christie noted the need for a balance of excellence and fairness, and he noted that he would rather not prioritize excellence over fairness. Rigor should be upheld in a fair process.

Further consideration was how to address issues through other means rather than the Faculty Code. The need for open, frank conversation was expressed by councilmembers, and the Chair’s duty of annual reviews was mentioned. Accurately portraying a candidate’s performance should lead to a P&T recommendation that is consistent and could make the Chair’s decision less controversial and less difficult to express to the candidate. Christie noted that Chairs could not redact their names, unlike faculty votes, and that the Council consensus was in conflict with the Provost’s concerns voiced at the last meeting.

Discussion continued on how to address the scenario of small departments and whether there is a need to develop policy for Associate Deans. Killien reiterated that small departments number only to 15 between two schools or colleges. The Council noted need to address cases when there are not enough faculty to provide a reasonable assessment. Recommendations were made to have the Provost and Council Chairs invited in order to best understand the situation and what could be done to address this. It was noted that some Associate Deans can be involved in the Promotion and Tenure Process at the College level. There was a suggestion that these scenarios could be better addressed within the College bylaws than within the Faculty Code.

Gregory reported that he and Killien had recently participated within a conference of all Faculty Senate leaders from the PAC 12 universities. The University of Washington was the only university that did not have a faculty committee or council with a role at the highest (Provost’s) level of the promotion and tenure process, though faring well overall in regards to shared governance.

5. Adjournment
Chair Christie adjourned the meeting at 10:32 a.m.

Minutes by Jay Freistadt, Faculty Council Support Analyst, jayf@u.washington.edu

Present:
- Faculty: Christie (Chair), O’Brien, Ricker, Buck, Vaughn, Landis, Bryant-Bertail, Huber
- President’s Designee: Cameron
- Ex-Officio Reps: Sukol
- Guests: Marcia Killien, Jim Gregory

Absent:
- Ex-Officio Reps: Anderson, David