Change in Process for Granting Emeritus/Emerita Status

The Motion
To adopt changes to sections 2.1.1.2.2 and 1.4.3.4.4 of the Faculty Handbook in order to give the Faculty Personnel Committee the responsibility for determining those faculty to be recommended for emeritus/emerita status.

The Rationale
Under our current handbook, recommendation for emeritus/emerita status comes “by action of the faculty.” The most logical interpretation of that language is that the full faculty should vote on candidates for emeritus/emerita status, as happened in a number of cases several years ago. This arrangement creates some obvious problems, for example, the awkwardness of raising genuine concerns about whether any given professor’s career has been marked by the “distinction” that this status requires; or the possibility that the approval of distinguished faculty might be marred by petty comments during an open approval process.

This motion would vest responsibility for making recommendations regarding emeritus/emerita status in the Faculty Personnel Committee. This is the body charged with making other decisions regarding status and rank, and its confidential discussions seem a suitable place for determining a candidate’s worthiness for emeritus/emerita status. There is no process in the handbook for how such a determination might be made, and it may be necessary to add such language. The current motion merely transfers the locus and responsibility for emeritus/emerita decisions to what we believe is the appropriate body, trusting the Faculty Personnel Committee to make wise decisions as necessary.

Current Handbook Language

2.1.1.2.2 Emeritus/Emerita

Upon retirement faculty members may be granted emeritus/emerita status by action of the faculty with the approval of the Board of Trustees. Normally, the title of “emeritus” or “emerita” is conferred upon faculty who have served Westmont College with distinction and have held faculty status for a minimum of 10 years. The title shall include the rank at the time of retirement plus the word “emeritus” or “emerita.”

Continued overleaf
Current Handbook Language contd.

Excerpt from 1.4.3.4.4 Faculty Personnel Committee

c) Responsibilities:
   1) To interview and recommend to the Provost candidates for appointment to the faculty.
   2) To make recommendations to the Provost concerning initial status, rank, tenure, and termination.
   3) To solicit faculty opinion in cases of initial appointment which also involve promotion to associate or full professor, or granting of tenure, prior to a recommendation to the Provost.
   4) To review cases where progressive discipline (See Section 2.2.4) is involved and to recommend the nature of sanctions if applicable.

Proposed Handbook Language (additions in bold, deletions struck through)

2.1.1.2.2 Emeritus/Emerita

Upon retirement faculty members may be granted emeritus/emerita status by action of the faculty with the approval of the Board of Trustees on the recommendation of the Faculty Personnel Committee. Normally, the title of “emeritus” or “emerita” is conferred upon faculty who have served Westmont College with distinction and have held faculty status for a minimum of 10 years. The title shall include the rank at the time of retirement plus the word “emeritus” or “emerita.”

and

Excerpt from 1.4.3.4.4 Faculty Personnel Committee

c) Responsibilities:
   1) To interview and recommend to the Provost candidates for appointment to the faculty.
   2) To make recommendations to the Provost concerning initial status, rank, tenure, and termination, and emeritus/emerita status.
   3) To solicit faculty opinion in cases of initial appointment which also involve promotion to associate or full professor, or granting of tenure, prior to a recommendation to the Provost.
   4) To review cases where progressive discipline (See Section 2.2.4) is involved and to recommend the nature of sanctions if applicable.