

Comments for the Faculty Senate Meeting 4/27/15
Tracey Sigler, Department of Management

I am concerned that the language about public engagement has been removed from the current draft of the faculty handbook.

It is my understanding that one goal of the overall handbook revision is to allow individual departments and units to develop unique RPT guidelines that fit their disciplines. However, I believe the language related to public engagement and scholarship of engagement and teaching needs to be in the faculty handbook because these are core values of the university. I do not believe individual units should be able to choose not to value, reward, or accept these activities. The faculty handbook currently protects those of us who work in these areas and I think it should continue to confirm for all departments that these are valued activities at NKU.

I contacted a list of NKU faculty and staff who are involved in this type of work to see if others shared my concerns. You should be hearing from faculty in your own departments about this issue.

Mark Neikirk, Director of the Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement emailed me back, very concerned that the current RPT guidelines in the handbook "... distinguishes us as a university at the national level. Significant portions of the book, *Becoming an Engaged Campus: A Practical Guide for Institutionalizing Public Engagement* (2011), written by Carole Beere, Jim Votruba and Gail Wells discuss the importance of valuing public engagement in RPT (from page 124 of the Votruba, Wells & Beere book) "There is probably no issue as fundamental to institutionalizing public engagement as reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT). In every campus conversation that even touched on increasing public engagement, NKU faculty mentioned these issues. They were unequivocal in their views: RPT policies must support public engagement in order for them and their colleagues—especially junior faculty—to invest significant time and energy in their work."

"To take them out our handbook, would seem to be a step backward. Having them in also has been a magnet for high quality professors who value this work. And having them in is part of the reason for our Carnegie designation." The Carnegie designation to which he is referring is the Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification. NKU was one of the first to receive this designation in 2006 and received it again in 2015.

I have been using service-learning since before I arrived at NKU in 2001 and I have colleague across the country for whom work in this area does not count, most often scholarship of teaching that does not count toward tenure. I have also served in as a department chair at NKU and have personally experienced the real outcomes for faculty of a single word that is or is not included in the faculty handbook. This language needs to be in the handbook. I hope you will agree and that one or more of you will propose a friendly amendment to the current draft to add back language about the value of public engagement and multiple types of scholarship at NKU.

Specifically the current version of the handbook includes the following language, some of which could be easily added to the new version.

Current language: "Each academic unit is expected to serve the full breadth of the University's teaching, research, service, and public engagement missions in a manner that is consistent with the unit's expertise and disciplinary focus."

Current language: "The University's strong commitment to public engagement may be reflected in any or all of these categories. Public engagement is defined as discipline-related collaborations between faculty members and communities, agencies, organizations, businesses, governments, or (effective 9/10/08) the general public that contribute significantly to the external constituency by sharing the University's intellectual and cultural assets."

Current language: "Since scholarship and creativity can take many forms, NKU recognizes and values a rich variety of such contributions. Faculty members will be evaluated primarily on work related to their disciplines and to the mission of their colleges and the University. NKU is strongly committed to the scholarship of discovery, integration, engagement, and teaching and to creative activity in all its diverse forms. NKU's commitment to public engagement and our metropolitan location provides specific opportunities for new and evolving forms of research, including research that draws on and supports its environment."

Thank you for your consideration.