

Faculty Benefits Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2018

UC 135; 3:15pm

Members Present: Vincent Owoso, Traci Freeman, Emily Shifley, Chad Anderson, Alyssa Appelman, Qi Li, Jennifer Sharp, Qing Su, Barclay Green, Gabe Sanders, Chari Ramkumar, Justin Yates, Perry Bratcher, Hanna Harwitz, Hans Schellhas

Call to Order –Agenda adopted

Minutes of 11.7.18 meeting approved with one correction: the number of Sabbatical applications for 2019-2020 was not 15, but rather 19

Announcements:

-Anyone interested in being Chair of the Benefits committee next year please consider and don't hesitate to ask Emily what is all involved.

-Our recommendations have been sent to the Provost, we have not heard back yet about which applicants she is able to fund.

Discussion item: Should Summer Fellowships be only for summer or is there a way to make them available year round to support Faculty research projects, course redesigns, program directorships, etc?

-Although we agree that it would be nice to be able to support faculty throughout the year, the costs of an adjunct to replace different faculty from different departments would not be equal. Another area of concern is that certain departments simply need their faculty to teach and cover certain classes and so there may be inequities in who could actually take advantage of an academic-year fellowship. Every department chair would have to deal with these fellowships unless they were somehow built into faculty rights like sabbaticals are.

-There is a Research council committee that has been thinking about how to support active scholars at NKU perhaps by bringing release time to them, although we do not know how this would be funded. There is definitely a struggle to do anything research related during the school year with a 4/4 load.

-This past year, we had 25 applications for Summer Fellowships, all of which we found acceptable, and only had funding for 15. If we started offering some fellowships during the academic year, they would become even more competitive i.e. we don't even have enough funding to support summer research, let alone summer *and* academic year research.

-We have also noticed an increase in faculty asking for funds through either the Summer Fellowships or Sabbaticals to do revising or creating new courses rather than doing scholarly or creative projects. "This is a larger issue that the whole Faculty Senate should be making demands about- either reducing course load or allowing course release for creating new courses or changing courses I don't think that faculty fellowships should be used to solve the problem of too heavy teaching loads and lack of course release for course development. It is a systemic problem that the entire Faculty Senate should be including in our long term demands, along with respect for tenure. In those disciplines that are experiencing growth and high demand for faculty positions, it is definitely hurting our ability to recruit and retain faculty." We should probably consult with PCC about these issues and making a statement.

-Ideally, having release time during the academic year for research, course development, or program directorships would be institutional programs separate from the Summer Fellowships.

Discussion item: Faculty Handbook 'Evaluation' Section –do we need to revise or is this still ok?

-Overall, we are fine with it, although “The urgency of the project to be undertaken” is sometimes hard to judge between different applications. This might just be something we need to explain better to the applicants in supporting materials about how they could address the timeliness of their project.

-The committee did have an issue with “Investigation of alternative funding sources, and/or the possibility of the project leading to future grants” because not all projects lead to future grants. This could favor certain disciplines over others. We would like to revise it so that it is more flexible but still shows that we care that the project is contributing to the faculty’s on-going research. Perhaps we could revise it as “Investigation of alternative funding sources and contribution of the project to the continuity of the applicant’s scholarship and creative activity” or “Investigation of alternative funding sources and the possibility of the project leading to future grants, scholarly work, or creative activity”

Discussion item: Weighting of Evaluation categories –do we agree? If not, how should these change?

-Currently outcomes a, b, h, and n are considered Overall Quality outcomes and account for 50% of the score. Outcomes d, e, f, and m are considered Overall Value and account for 30% of the score. Outcomes g and j are considered Applicant Diligence and account for 20% of the score.

-The committee had some discussion about how maybe that ‘urgency’ letter m could be weighed less, while ‘the probability of success’ letter g could be weighed more. We might consider switching these with each other as we revise the evaluation tool moving forward.

Revision Work on Evaluation tool and Chair/Dean letter

-We broke up into our three subcommittees to look at the evaluation tool and Chair/Dean form and make recommendations for revisions. Emily will combine the Evaluation tool and Chair/Dean letter revisions from the three subcommittees and we will examine this revised draft together at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned around 4:30

Future business:

Revise Applicant Instructions and Benefit’s website to match new Evaluation tool

Faculty Senate Scholarships (Spring Semester)

Future Meetings

SU 108 at 3:15

February 6th

March 6th

April 3rd

May 1st

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Shifley