

# Professional Concerns Committee Minutes for Dec 01, 2016

SU 109  
3:15 pm

**Members in Attendance:** K. McErlane, S. Alexander, K. Schwarz, K. Ankem, K. Katkin, J. Farrar, S. Weiss, L. Wermeling, A. Watkins, H. Ericksen, B. Buckley, B. Mittal, K. Sander, S. Nordheim, , A. Miller, K. Fuegen, S. Neely, J. Hammons, J. Gilbert, B. Zembrodt, S. Finke, B. Puente-Baldoceda

**Members Not in Attendance:** G. Newell, D. Dreese, Y. Kim, M. Carrell, M. Torres, T. Bonner

**Guest:** Provost Sue Ott Rowlands

1. Call to Order, Adoption of Agenda – The meeting was called to order at 3:15 and agenda approved.
2. Approval of Minutes from PCC Meeting of Nov 17, 2016 – The minutes were approved.
3. Chair's Report and Announcements-

The Senate's November meeting took place on Monday. At the meeting, The Senate approved PCC's recommendation for proposed amendments to the Faculty Handbook section on tuition waiver benefits, so that will go to Provost.

The Senate also recommended adoption of a new Senate constitution. This recommendation will be put up for a vote of the full faculty on Jan 23, 2017, just before the January 2017 meeting of the Faculty Senate convenes. The proposed new constitution would create a new Faculty Handbook Committee, which would be separate from PCC. It also includes a new position called faculty advocate. At the November Senate meeting, there was a floor amendment that will relax the current requirement that each Faculty Senator must also serve on an additional committee. Instead, under the proposal, every department will need to find someone to serve on each of the Senate committees, but it need not be the Faculty Senator. If approved by the full faculty, the new Constitution will still need to be approved by the President and the Board of Regents

A PCC member asked if PCC could obtain information about parking fees and maintenance of facilities. K. Katkin said he would try to get some written answers to these inquiries, rather than inviting someone from facilities management to address PCC.

Another PCC member asked about the relevance of this committee. Has PCC been avoiding friction with administrators to the effect of making ourselves irrelevant? Is the abundance of policy work taking away time from teaching? What about

consultants, why aren't we using faculty who have expertise in these areas? How is focus on assessment helping us as teachers? Discussion ensued. In response:

- K. Katkin stated that PCC will put issue of outside consultants on a future agenda.
- A PCC Member stated that external forces are driving assessment. We need a serious discussion about the value of assessment. Faculty can set standards for assessment. We do have a Gen Ed committee that looks into that issue so perhaps PCC should not take it up. Is faculty input coming in from another committee?
- The Provost stated that consultants are often cheaper than hiring additional in-house administrators or contracting with faculty members, in part because we do not pay benefits to consultants.

K. Katkin announced that PCC will take up sexual misconduct policy in January, when Senior Advisor to the President for Inclusive Excellence & Title IX Coordinator Kathleen Roberts can come to the meeting.

#### 4. Old Business

- **Voting Item: Reviewing Centers & Institutes**

K. Katkin presented three-page memo that summarized the PCC's prior discussion of this administrative policy proposal. The Provost stated that she would accept all the suggestions in the memo, and would revise the administrative policy accordingly. Without dissent, the PCC then voted to tender the memo to the Provost and to distribute it as an information item to Faculty Senate. The three-page memo is attached to these Minutes.

#### 5. New Business

- **Discussion Item: Financial Conflict of Interest Disclosure For Research**

The administration has opened a notice-and-comment policy proceeding on this subject. K. Katkin distributed the administration's draft proposal, and asked whether PCC should weigh in on it. The Provost stated that the purpose of this policy was to bring the University into compliance with federal regulations. One PCC Member noted that the draft policy states that compliance training needs to be done with CITI, rather than with any other vendor. The PCC Member asked why this is the case. The Provost stated that the identity of the training vendor need not be specified in the university's policy, and that she would work with PCC to remove this reference. No PCC Member has any other questions or comments on this draft policy. K. Katkin said that he would follow up with the Provost to remove the reference to CITI, but would otherwise drop this item from PCC's Agenda going-forward.

- **Discussion Item: RPT Issues: Biennial Review, Standard for Tenure in Non-Mandatory Year, Conditions To Be Removed**

K. Katkin noted that the Faculty Senate has never voted on the issue of changing the frequency of RPT review from annual to biennial, though there has been a lot of discussion of the issue. Both the Provost and several PCC Members had requested that PCC take up this (and perhaps other) RPT issues with an eye toward recommending whether the current process should be amended.

The PCC commenced discussion. Proponents of biennial review stated that it would be less burdensome for candidates and committees, and that annual feedback would still be provided through annual performance review. In contrast, concerns were raised that some junior faculty want more feedback, especially if expectations have changed over 5 years. It was also noted that RPT and annual performance reviews are not the same, and do not necessarily emphasize the same aspects of job performance as one another. There are two types of annual review.

Questions were also raised. If biennial review is adopted, could individual candidates still elect to have an intermediate (annual) RPT review? Perhaps at the departmental level only? Proponents of voluntary intermediate review stated that there has been a clarification from departmental RPT guidelines. Letters have become more substantive. In-between years could be informal, for the sake of the candidate. Perhaps such voluntary intermediate review could be seen as a robust form of mentoring.

K. Katkin said he will draft a proposal for review to occur at 2, 4, and 6 year, to begin discussion at our next meeting. The Provost said that the process must be uniform at the University level, though not necessarily at the departmental level. It was noted that any candidate can always ask the chair of his/her RPT committee to informally review the candidate's work or materials. Will have further discussion in second January meeting. First meeting will have other issues.

The Provost stated that she would love a mandate from this committee to tackle this issue.

It was noted that Faculty Senate has already voted to remove the handbook language on "conditions to be removed."

The meeting was adjourned 4:55.

Respectfully submitted,

Belle Zembrodt

## MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Samantha Langley, Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, & Outreach

From: Professional Concerns Committee

Re: Draft Policy on Establishing, Reviewing, and Discontinuing Academic Centers & Institutes

Cc: Provost Sue Ott Rowlands

Date: Dec 1, 2016

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The Professional Concerns Committee (PCC) of the NKU Faculty Senate has reviewed the draft policy proposal entitled “Establishing, Reviewing, and Discontinuing Academic Centers and Institutes.” The PCC now offers the following comments and suggestions on the draft policy.

### General Comments

1. The PCC agrees that a comprehensive written policy is needed to govern the establishment, review, and discontinuance of academic centers and institutes. The present proposal would add clarity, which the PCC believes is needed.
2. The PCC was unanimous in its view that the present draft policy proposal, if adopted, will discourage faculty members from initiating new proposals for centers and institutes and from continuing to participate in existing centers and institutes. From a faculty perspective, the proposal imposes new and additional administrative burdens on participation in centers and institutes, without offering corresponding benefits or rewards to faculty members who participate, or to the university as a whole. While the preambular language in Section I speaks of “a commitment of resources,” the sense of many PCC Members was that centers at NKU generally operate with little or no resources, and that this *status quo* is unlikely to change going forward even if performance review procedures are made more burdensome. Accordingly, the sense of the PCC is that this document is a “negative” document, designed to make it harder to initiate centers, easier to close them, and more burdensome for faculty members to operate them.
3. Several PCC Members expressed an understanding that Kentucky state law (or the Council on Post-Secondary Education) requires certain centers and institutes at NKU—including CINSAM—to exist and to remain in existence. If so, then any policy that is adopted may need to provide for separate treatment of such centers and institutes. The PCC has not researched this issue.
4. The PCC also found the bullet-pointed format of the draft document to be unwieldy, and unnecessarily difficult to work with and to comment on. If the draft policy is adopted, the PCC recommends that the document be formatted with shorter numbered paragraphs and with consecutive Section numbers, rather than bullet points. (The current draft jumps from Section IV to Section VII, for example. In the entire draft, only Section VII is subdivided into numbered subsections).

## Specific Comments

1. On Page 2, Section IV, first paragraph: In the second sentence, the word “most” should be changed to “normally.” The sentence would now read: “It is expected that **normally** institutes would involve faculty from multiple departments and schools/colleges.”
2. On Page 2, Section IV, first paragraph: In the final sentence, the word “only” should be inserted before the word “offer.” The sentence would now read: “Although centers and institutes do not have primary jurisdiction over academic curricula, they may **only** offer courses in cooperation with academic units.”
3. On Page 2, Section IV, third paragraph: In the only sentence before the bullet-points, the words “identify its primary focus within the university mission” should be replaced with the words “provide activities in one or more of the following areas.” The sentence would now read: “A center or institute will **provide activities in one or more of the following areas**: research, instruction or outreach.”
4. On Page 2, Section IV, third paragraph: In each of the three bullet-pointed sentences, the word “ordinarily” should be inserted after the phrase “center or institute.” The three bullet-points should read as follows:
  - A research center or institute **ordinarily** has research as its primary mission. Although classified as a research center, such a unit may also provide instruction, training, technical assistance, or public service programs. Although such units do not have jurisdiction over academic curricula, they may offer courses in cooperation with academic units.
  - An outreach center or institute **ordinarily** has public service or technical assistance as its primary mission. Research, instruction, and training activities may also be conducted as secondary components of the mission. Although such units do not have jurisdiction over academic curricula, they may offer courses in cooperation with academic units.
  - An instructional center or institute **ordinarily** has training or instruction as its primary mission. These units may also conduct research and public service activities. Although instructional centers and institutes do not have primary jurisdiction over academic curricula, they may offer courses in cooperation with academic units.
5. On Page 2, Section IV, after the bullet points, an additional sentence should be added that reads: “**In appropriate circumstances, a single center or institute may carry more than one of the preceding designations.**” This sentence is necessary to accommodate the continuation of existing hybrid centers, including CINSAM.
6. On Page 3, Section VII.2, under “Establishment of a New Academic Center or Institute,” the policy describes pre-proposal and full proposal stages. The PCC is concerned that the proposer is asked to provide information that s/he does not have. For example, "Description of space, facilities, and equipment needs for the next five years and how those needs will be met" implies that the proposer can control space allocation. Further, how would the proposer know whether

necessary funds will be available for a five-year budget? The PCC is concerned that this policy sets the hurdle too high for faculty and staff who wish to establish a new center. As such, it may discourage innovation.

7. On Page 5, Section VII.4, the draft policy addresses “Termination or Realignment of Academic Centers and Institutes.” The same subject is later addressed on Page 7, Section VIII, in the list of bullet points. It would be helpful if the subject were addressed in one single section or subsection, rather than piecemeal in different parts of the document.
8. On Page 6, Section VIII, in the final bullet point of the first list (i.e. half-way down the page), the words “where appropriate” should be added. The bullet-point would now read: “List of potential external reviewers, **where appropriate.**”
9. On Page 6, Section VIII, in the sentence that follows the final bullet point of the first list, the words “When external review is implemented,” should be inserted at the beginning of the sentence. As amended, the sentence fragment would now read: “**When external review is implemented,** the external reviewer’s report will include an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the center/institute and will address the following:”
10. On Page 7, Section VIII, following the bullet point on “discontinuance,” a penultimate sentence should be added. It should read: “**In the event that any of the latter three alternatives are recommended, the director and executive team of the center/institute shall have the opportunity to discuss the recommendation with the Provost before further action is taken.**”

#### **CONCLUSION**

The PCC is grateful for the opportunity to provide recommendations and suggestions and this proposal, and respectfully submits these comments.