

## Professional Concerns Committee

### Minutes for March 18, 2021

#### Virtual Meeting (On Zoom Conferencing Software), 3:30 pm

**Members in Attendance:** S. Alexander, K. Code, W. Darnell, L. Dynan, J. Elliott, K. Fuegen, N. Grant, B. Green, J. Herman, B. Karrick, M. King, K. Munte, M. Nakamura, G. Newell, M. Providenti, H. Riffe, G. Sun, M. Whitson

**Guests in Attendance:** B. Alston, J. Bloch, G.Hiles

**Members Not in Attendance:** J. Human, L. Manchise, A. Miller, B. Mittal, K. Noyes, J. Rubleske, J. Washburn-Moses, K. Yates

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1. Call to Order, Adoption of the Agenda
  - a) The Meeting was called to order at 3:33pm. The agenda was adopted unanimously without changes.
2. Approval of the minutes from the March 4 meeting
  - a) Draft Minutes from PCC Meeting of March 4, 2021 were approved without dissent with one alteration (item #2, "February 4" changed to "February 18").
3. Chair's Report and Announcements
  - a) **Vaccination resolution:** Faculty Senate, Staff Congress, and SGA approved a resolution advocating that all NKU faculty and staff be eligible for vaccination in Kentucky. Faculty senate president John Farrar sent the resolution to KY government. They confirmed that they had received the email. No news.
  - b) **Vaccination site:** There will be a mass vaccination at the BB&T arena March 20-21. They have 4,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine. Sign up through mychart. Has anyone heard if there are still appointments available?
  - c) **OH Vaccine eligibility:** Ohio has expanded vaccine eligibility to those 40 years of age and older plus those with additional medical conditions including cancer and obesity. All Ohioans over age 16 will be eligible beginning next Friday.
  - d) **Faculty Regent Open Forums:** There will be open forums next Wednesday and Friday for faculty regent. There are three confirmed candidates, possibly two additional. Attend if you can.
  - e) **Parental leave proposal:** A proposal for paid parental leave will come to the Senate. This is just a vote on whether to continue the conversation. More work is needed to iron out details regarding cost.
  - f) **Future PCC meetings:** We won't meet Thursday, April 1, as the university is not holding classes that day. That leaves just two meetings after today.
4. Voting item, proposed revisions to section 6.7 of Faculty Handbook
  - a) Background: we have removed "extraordinary merit" language, clarified language about acceptable reasons for an extension are not limited to those

listed, clarified that the year a candidate has paused does not count toward a two year term for reappointment, and additional time should not be a factor in the evaluation.

- b) MOTION: Accept changes to Handbook Section 6.7.
  - c) DISCUSSION: Suggestion to change reword and change “than” to “as” in 6.7, paragraph 4, sentence 2.
  - d) VOTE: Unanimously approved.
  - e) ACTION: K. Fuegen will take the approved revisions to Handbook section 6 to Faculty Senate’s March meeting.
5. Unfinished business, discussion item: Proposed revisions to section 11 of Faculty Handbook
- a) Background: PCC has discussed extending eligibility to summer fellowships and project grants for part-time faculty. Proposed language was added to section 11 to reflect this. Faculty with terminal contracts (e.g. phased retirement) would not be eligible.
  - b) DISCUSSION: K. Fuegen shared proposed changes with Benefits Chair – PCC and Benefits are aligned on eligibility for faculty development programs. No additional issues raised.
  - c) ACTION: K. Fuegen will bring the proposed language back to PCC in April as a voting item.
6. New Business, discussion item: deadlines for grade submission in 7-week and 5-week courses (<https://inside.nku.edu/registrar/calendars/spring-2021.html>)
- a) Background: The deadline to turn in grades is really tight. Classes end on Friday and grades are due the following Tuesday (4 days after last class). Suggestion was made to change the due date to the next Tuesday (11 days after last class). Registrar says a Tuesday deadline provides consistency (grades are always due on a Tuesday morning). A committee of administrators chose this day.
  - b) DISCUSSION:
    - There is no dedicated exam week in 5- and 7- week classes – final exam is held on the final day of classes.
    - Faculty are teaching a full 16 weeks of content in 7 weeks.
    - Extremely hard to give good feedback to students with such quick turn-around.
    - There isn’t time to give students 24 hours to provide feedback about grades on this short timeline.
    - Often due dates are right at the end of the term. If a submission is corrupted there is not enough time to seek a remedy. Suggestion that a Friday deadline would be better than the Tuesday after the last class.
    - Students not really aware that there is a Tuesday after the last class due date for grade submission.
    - When this has been discussed previously, it was indicated that the Tuesday deadline is necessary because some of these classes are prerequisites for classes that immediately follow, students may need time to reconnect with their advisors, and change their schedules. A request had previously been made to move the deadline from Tuesday 9am to Friday 9am.

- Summer courses begin on Monday May 10 but grades are due on Tuesday May 11. The rationale behind the Tuesday deadline does not hold.
  - The first 7 week session ended Feb 26, grades due March 2. The next 7 week session begins March 15, enough time to extend the submission date.
  - Suggestion: change deadline to Thursday 9am, 2 days more than we currently have.
  - The computerized registration system should be able to remove students from courses if they fail the prerequisite.
  - Consensus: there needs to be more time for grade submissions.
  - Students have until the end of Thursday of the first week to drop with 100% tuition adjustment. With a Thursday grade submission deadline, students could be dropped and they would have time to enroll in a different course.
  - A little more time would encourage better assignments that take more time to grade.
  - The short deadline for grade submissions has led to numerous requests for grade changes due to rushed grading, dealing with corrupted submissions, and student appeals.
- c) ACTION: K. Fuegen will draft a proposal to extend the deadline of grade submissions in 5- and 7- week courses to add 48 hours (Thursday following classes, 9am). K. Fuegen will look at the various summer and winter sessions to ensure students could still drop and get into a different course with the extension in the deadline.

7. Future Business

- a) Nothing at this time.

8. The meeting adjourned at 4:11pm

Submitted,

M. Providenti, Secretary

## **6. TENURE**

### **6.1 DEFINITION OF TENURE**

Tenure is the right of full-time faculty who hold academic rank to continuous full-time employment with the University without reduction in academic rank until separation from the University as defined in Section 10, Separation, of this Handbook, including such forms of separation as resignation, retirement, medical termination, program reduction, financial exigency, and termination for cause.

### **6.2. GRANT OF TENURE**

Tenure at NKU is granted in accordance with the provisions of the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the Bylaws of the Board of Regents and is normally granted after satisfactory progress during an appropriate probationary period. Tenure may be granted only by the Board of Regents. Tenure is granted in the department(s)/school(s) to which the faculty member or administrator is assigned at the time tenure is granted, and can be granted only after formal review by that department's/school's RPT committee as specified in Section 3.2.

### **6.3. PURPOSE OF TENURE**

The Board of Regents of NKU grants tenure to full-time faculty members in order to:

- Create an atmosphere favorable to academic freedom and responsibility;
- Provide faculty members reasonable expectation of security so that the University is able to attract and retain a competent faculty; and
- Promote institutional stability by creating a faculty with a strong, long-term commitment to the University.

### **6.4. ELIGIBILITY**

Unless tenure is received with an initial appointment, only full-time, tenure-track faculty who hold probationary appointments are eligible to receive tenure. Non-tenure-track faculty are not eligible to receive tenure.

## **6.5 CRITERIA FOR TENURE DECISIONS**

In order to be eligible for tenure, the faculty member must hold the appropriate terminal degree or its equivalent, and must be judged effective as a teacher, in scholarly and creative activity, and in institutional and public service. The criteria set forth in Section 3.1 and in the department/school and college RPT guidelines shall be applied to applications for grant of tenure.

## **6.6 PROCEDURE**

The procedures specified in Section 3, Evaluation, apply to applications for grant of tenure.

## **6.7 TIME**

Normally a faculty member will be considered for grant of tenure during the faculty member's sixth year of probationary appointment, including University-recognized credit for prior service, upon the faculty member's application. A faculty member may request grant of tenure in a non-mandatory year, and they will be evaluated according to the criteria in Sections 6.5 and 3.1. Denial of tenure in a non-mandatory year is not a basis for non-reappointment.

A faculty member may be allowed to pause the RPT process for up to two years and extend the probationary period under some circumstances with or without taking a full or partial leave of absence by making a formal request to the department chair/school director.

Acceptable reasons for extending the probationary period include, but are not limited to, care for a newborn or adopted child, care for an elder or dependent, and serious and prolonged illness. Other circumstances not mentioned above may be reviewed and the candidate awarded an extension if deemed appropriate by the Provost.

The RPT process may be paused and the probationary period may be extended in one-year increments. An individual may request to extend the RPT process for a second time (for a separate or the same reason than the first request), but the total extension during the probationary period may not exceed two years. If an initial extension is granted, a reduction in productivity during the period of time addressed in the request should not prejudice a subsequent decision regarding the request for a second extension.

Applications for reappointment are reviewed biennially as described in Section 3.2.1. A year in which the RPT process is paused does not count toward a two-year term for reappointment. Thus, the candidate is not required to submit an application for reappointment during a year in which the RPT process is paused.

A formal request in writing must be given to the department chair/school director clearly stating reasons for pausing the RPT process. The application will then proceed to the Dean

and to the Provost. If possible, the request should occur substantially prior to the scheduled submission of the tenure application so that due consideration to the request may be given. Once the application has been submitted, the Chair/Director, Dean, and Provost are asked to review the request as expediently as possible with special regard for the RPT calendar.

Despite the pause of the RPT process and extension of the probationary period, candidates granted an extension are expected to meet only the criteria stated in Sections 6.5 and 3.1. The candidate will continue to participate in the annual review process for merit but not for tenure evaluation. The RPT evaluation following the extension should consider all work submitted by the candidate using the established criteria. The candidate's accomplishments over the extended probationary period should be evaluated as if they had been accomplished in the shorter standard probationary period. The additional time due to the extension should not be a factor in the evaluation. Should a candidate be denied an extension of the probationary period by either the Chair/Director, Dean, or Provost, the appeals process shall follow the guidelines put forward in this Handbook, Section 14, Grievances, as defined in Section 14.3, Complaint Process.

In colleges where there is no department or school, the dean will function as department chair in these processes.

# **1. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

(See also Section 12 for other faculty leaves.)

## **11.1 SABBATICAL LEAVES (no changes)**

## **11.2. FACULTY SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS**

### **11.2.1. PURPOSE**

Faculty summer fellowships provide funds to support professional development during the summer months. The following are examples of the types of activities that may qualify the applicant for a faculty summer fellowship:

- Improving teaching skills;
- Individual research;
- Scholarly writing;
- Creative and artistic projects;
- Preliminary studies and literature searches; and
- Attending seminars or courses related to one's field or professional work.

### **11.2.2. ELIGIBILITY FOR FACULTY SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS**

Full-time and part-time tenure-track or tenured faculty may apply for a faculty summer fellowship. A faculty member who receives a faculty summer fellowship will not be eligible to receive another faculty summer fellowship until the third summer following the prior fellowship. A faculty member who will receive a terminal contract is not eligible to receive a faculty summer fellowship.

### **11.2.3. TERM OF THE FELLOWSHIP**

The duration of the summer fellowship is two months, usually between June 1 and July 31. The time window may be shifted so that it starts as early as the Monday following spring commencement or ends as late as two Fridays before the start of fall classes.

### **11.2.4. STIPEND OR REASSIGNED TIME**

All recipients on an academic-year contract will receive the same stipend in a given summer. Each year the provost, after consultation with the Faculty Benefits Committee, will announce the exact amount of the stipend for faculty summer fellowships prior to the application deadline.

Recipients on academic-year contracts will receive 90 percent of their stipends near the beginning of the term of the fellowship, normally during the first week in June. The

remainder of the stipend will be paid only after the reporting requirements have been completed.

All recipients who are on a fiscal-year contract will receive 100 percent reassigned time for two months during the summer of the fellowship in addition to accrued vacation time. They shall continue to receive their regular salary during this reassigned time.

#### **11.2.5. CONDITIONS**

Faculty summer fellowships are not awarded to enable faculty to complete degree requirements. Recipients of faculty summer fellowships will not teach any summer courses or perform any other paid duties for the University during the term of the fellowship. Exception: a recipient on an academic year contract may take part in isolated service activities for which he/she receives a small stipend, such as assisting with summer advising sessions or contributing a few hours to a summer camp, provided that the recipient extends the duration of the fellowship by one day for each extra service activity and receives confirmation in advance from the the chair of the Benefits Committee.

Recipients of faculty summer fellowships must agree to return to the University for a minimum of one academic year following the fellowship or to repay the University the full amount of the fellowship stipend. Recipients of faculty summer fellowships must comply with the University's outside-activity guidelines during the term of the fellowship.

In addition to the fellowship-reassigned time, a recipient on a fiscal-year contract is entitled to one month of vacation between mid-May and mid-August.

If, between the awarding of a fellowship and the funding or beginning of the fellowship, intervening circumstances prevent the recipient from fulfilling the terms of the fellowship or the University from funding the fellowship, the University is not obligated to fund the fellowship.

#### **11.2.6. REPORTING**

No later than September 1, the faculty member shall submit a report summarizing what she/he accomplished on the faculty summer fellowship to the Office of the Provost. The report should consist of an approximately 250-word abstract outlining the major accomplishments, a one to two page extended overview of the fellowship and a photo of the faculty member or of their work appropriate for publication. The Office of the Provost will disseminate to the department chair (or other appropriate supervisor), to the dean of the faculty member's college, and to the chair of the Faculty Benefits Committee. A copy of the report will be placed in the faculty member's personnel file



maintained in the Office of the Provost.

#### **11.2.7. PROCEDURES**

The procedures set forth in Section 11.4, Application and Procedure, apply to applications for faculty summer fellowships.

### **11.3. FACULTY PROJECT GRANTS**

#### **11.3.1. PURPOSE**

Faculty project grants are awarded to provide funds to pay expenses, purchase equipment, and to cover other financial needs for sabbatical leaves, faculty summer fellowships, and for other instructional, scholarly, and creative activities where financial support is not available through department budgets. Availability of department funds should be communicated by department chairs or program/school directors as part of their evaluation of the application.

#### **11.3.2. ELIGIBILITY FOR FACULTY PROJECT GRANTS**

Full-time **and part-time** tenure-track or tenured faculty may apply for a faculty project grant. A faculty member who will receive a terminal contract is not eligible to receive a faculty project grant.

#### **11.3.3. AWARD**

Normally the maximum amount for a faculty project grant will be the amount of a faculty summer fellowship. Especially worthy projects, however, may be funded with additional amounts. Grant funds will be made available on May 1 of the calendar year in which the award is made and must be spent before June 30 of the following calendar year.

#### **11.3.4. LIMITATIONS**

No salary or honorarium may be paid to any full-time faculty member from grant funds. Projects leading to completion of a terminal degree and student projects will not be funded.

All property, including equipment and art works, purchased with faculty project grant funds becomes the property of Northern Kentucky University. The provost will make the final determination of assignment of all property purchased with grant funds.

#### **11.3.5. GRANT ADMINISTRATION**

##### **11.3.6.1. ADMINISTRATION AND ACCOUNTING**

The Office of the Provost will coordinate administration and accounting for the grant. All expenditure authorizations must be approved prior to disbursement. The Office of the Provost will provide information and assistance in complying with regulations of the University and the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

#### **11.3.6.2. FISCAL PROCEDURES**

University fiscal policies and procedures are subject to change. Recipients of faculty project grants are expected to check with Office of the Provost to insure adherence to current practices.

#### **11.3.6. FINAL REPORT**

Upon completion of the grant, the faculty member will submit a report to the Office of the Provost. The report should consist of an approximately 250-word abstract outlining the major accomplishments and completed goals, a one to two page extended overview of the project grant, and a photo of the faculty member of their work appropriate for publication. The Office of the Provost will disseminate the report to the department chair or other appropriate supervisor, the appropriate dean, and the chair of the Faculty Benefits Committee. A copy of the report will be placed in the faculty member's personnel file maintained in the Office of the Provost.

#### **11.3.7. PROCEDURES**

The procedures set forth in Section 11.4, Application and Procedures, apply to applications for faculty project grants. If, between the awarding of the faculty project grant and the funding or initiation of the project, there are intervening circumstances that would prevent the recipient from completing the project or prevent the University from funding the project, the University may revoke the grant.