

Professional Concerns Committee

Minutes for February 16, 2023

Hybrid Meeting (SU 109 and Zoom Conferencing Software), 3:15 pm

Members in Attendance: S. Alexander, K. Ankem, R. Brice, W. Darnell, J. Elliot, K. Fuegen, R. Gall, P. Hare, K. Katkin, Y. Kim, A. Miller, M. Zacate, M. Nakamura, M. Providenti, H. Riffe, H. Schellhas, J. Washburn-Moses, M. Scola

Guests in Attendance: J. Bloch, M. Cecil, G. Hiles, S. Kim, C. Lawrence, J. Vest

Members Not in Attendance: B. Green, J. Herman, W. Herzog, L. Manchise, I. Saad, M. Washington

1. Call to Order
 - The meeting was called to order at 3:19pm.
2. Approval of the agenda
 - The agenda was approved as distributed.
3. Approval of the minutes from the February 2.
 - The minutes from the February 2, 2023 meeting were approved as distributed.
4. Chair's Report and Announcements
 - The executive committee met on Monday. We discussed the search for the next permanent university president and our expectations for the composition of the search committee. The Senate President provided an update regarding bills in the legislature concerning higher education. At this point in time, there are no bills coming out of committees that are concerning.
 - During a meeting of the Board of Regents last month, one of the regents requested an analysis of the costs associated with accelerated online programs. We can think of costs as not only encompassing money. There may be costs associated with the long-term health of degree programs that have an accelerated online option. It will be up to the faculty to make the board aware of these costs. I'd like to assemble a subcommittee to compile a list of these costs and to draft a position statement about the future of Academic Partnerships at NKU. The statement would first be vetted by this committee and then be vetted by Senate. Pending Senate approval, the statement would go to the Board.

H. Riffe has done some preliminary work by gathering feedback from a number

of programs. The Subcommittee would gather additional feedback from other programs and draft a one-page position statement. K. Fuegen will chair the subcommittee.

DISCUSSION:

- Volunteers to serve on subcommittee: H. Riffe and S. Alexander
- Contact K. Fuegen if you would like to serve on this subcommittee.

5. Discussion item: Should courses featuring high-impact teaching practices (e.g., course numbers ending in x92, x95, x96, x97, or x99) be considered part of workload?

BACKGROUND:

None of the courses x92, etc. are considered part of workload. Credit hours are used to determine workload. Tenure-track faculty are expected to teach a maximum of 12 credit hours per semester. Faculty teach independent study 499 courses that do not count as part of workload in which students enroll and pay tuition. PCC could draft guidelines/guardrails regarding workload. These 400 level courses employ high impact teaching practices. One faculty member said “these courses don’t count for anything but brownie points.” Should we prioritize faculty compensation for high impact practices? Should these courses be part of faculty workload? Workloads are likely to increase and high impact practices could be the first thing to be set aside.

Do faculty receive any compensation for these practices (e.g. banking hours)? Should faculty be compensated?

DISCUSSION:

- Business Informatics does not compensate for independent study. A course would have 35 students, independent study only 1. It’s an administrative decision about revenue. There is no expectation that a faculty member needs to accept a student for independent study.
- Chemistry – 492 and 292 (supervised research) courses are part of conducting scholarship involving students. 1-14 students can enroll in these courses. There is no compensation. Up until 2008, a faculty member could get reassigned time for teaching these. While there can be workload agreements, it isn’t a given. 396 is a teaching assistantship which is 1 on 1.
- Social Work used to have a banking system leading to course release. It was not easy and it doesn’t happen anymore.
- Physics had a banking system. You could make deposits but not withdrawals. This isn’t up to departments – college decision.
- Accounting – no compensation.
- Communication – no compensation. Is this a senior who needs this course to graduate? The burden falls on tenure-track faculty who add it to their portfolio. How do you recognize this work if not in pay?

- K. Fuegen: a count of independent studies – 23 programs had students enrolled in 492, 497, or 499. Over 100 students in all. If we count 1 credit hour for each, that's 166 credit hours. It is possible to teach a 492 for 0 credit hours. There are other similar courses so this is an undercount.
- There is a big difference between teaching 30 and supervising 1. However, there is a significant commitment to supervising a student.
- It could be argued that counting one credit hour per student toward workload is reasonable but this doesn't scale well.
- Should teaching these courses be considered part of service and research?
- We could expand our workload policy to include teaching and mentoring. How can this be included in a policy? There should be formal recognition of small group work. The most rewarding teaching happens in small groups.
- Because there is no incentive structure, a lot of people are just saying "no." Is this something we are willing to lose as a university?
- Faculty can say yes or no. Some good students have taken all the courses and want to go beyond that – it is professionally rewarding to say yes to those students. There are also students who might see this as an opportunity to write a paper without taking a course. The suggestion is to only say "yes" when the student has already taken and received good grades in all the courses related to the project they want to take on. Still uncompensated but more rewarding.
- Many of these are students who would have to delay graduation or need AP courses in which only 5 enrolled.
- In Chemistry, 492 is a required option for students.
- Getting students involved early in research, 292 courses, is good for retention.
- Working with faculty on research projects is a recruiting tool at NKU.
- There is a risk these courses and high impact practices could end without addressing compensation.
- Compensation could be banking/reassigned time. Or money.
- Banking is a problem. You need the time now, not later.
- J. Vest: At other universities, these sorts of classes are defined as "part of service load" which is a part of total workload.
- But this is teaching, not service. Service is the least important part of APR/RPT and considering defining this as service reduces the time faculty can participate in shared governance.
- The administration needs to say this is important.
- Provost: Doesn't want to hear people are working without compensation. What is an appropriate compensation level per student? Other campuses pay per student. An independent study is not 1/35th the work of teaching a course.

6. Discussion item: What areas of inequity in workload exist?

BACKGROUND:

The current workload policy only addresses teaching. Needs to include things like

advising, mentoring, service activities, scholarship and creative activities. What are the areas of inequities? Many vacant faculty positions will not be filled this year. Instructional costs still need to be further reduced. Workload will be constant or increased. Satisfaction is related to faculty retention. Faculty have talked about clinical burnout – substantial risk of disengagement. This can happen when faculty are not recognized or rewarded for their work. Inequity leads to dissatisfaction which can lead to burnout and lower wellbeing. What constitutes workload? Should the workload include service and scholarship? Should there be baseline expectations for teaching, service, and scholarship? Should the amount of time spent be included in the policy? Should it allow for differentiation between 2/2, 3/3 or 4/4 teaching loads?

DISCUSSION:

- Some benchmarks define workload in terms of ratio with teaching. In a 4/4 load, 4/5ths of workload of teaching. Ambiguous about number of hours.
- J. Vest: Hours are defined for HR/ACA/FMLA purposes. For one credit hour, there is 1 hour contact, 1 hour prep, 1 hour grading. That makes a 4/4 load 36 hours per week. 1.5 hours for service and research. This is obviously unrealistic.
- Should this policy be changed? Is there an idea about what the change should be? If it should address scholarship and service, how should it address them? Might be better to not change it. Departments have guidelines.
- Problem quantifying scholarship: sciences have a higher number of co-authored works while other fields tend toward single-authored articles. Expectations will be different in different departments. The expectations can be set more easily at the college or department level.
- We could start with teaching hours.
- There should be less an expectation for service and scholarship for people with higher teaching loads.
- It's easier to compare workloads within a department or school. We don't know what happens in another department, school, or college.
- There is a general perception that "other areas" have lighter teaching loads.
- Does it matter that within a department some faculty teach 3/3 and others 4/4?
- It's good that there are disparities. The teaching loads reflect active scholar status. If you are not an active scholar, you get a higher teaching load up to 4/4.
- The amount of scholarship over 5 years determines whether your load is 3/3 or 4/4.
- The amount of scholarship expected isn't about accreditation. Some departments negotiated more reasonable expectations.
- J. Vest: The university defines 12 credit hours of teaching is the way workload is defined.
- That's tenure track. There is no workload policy for non-tenure track faculty.
- We do a lot more than teaching. Should the policy reflect that? What is workload beyond teaching load? How do we articulate what people are expected to do?

- Any workload policy needs to include flexibility.
- The most flexibility comes from not addressing this at the university level. Adding more duties to this policy will increase our workload. The university workload policy addresses teaching. Departments have expectations for scholarship and service.
- We are already doing these things but not being recognized. Adding these things to the policy could lead to recognition for this work.
- There is a lack of transparency about what people are doing, lack of clarity about what people need to be doing to get tenure. People feel they aren't getting credit for the work they do. A more detailed policy could lead to transparency, clarity, and credit.
- Where does credit come from? APR? RPT? Departments should be following their guidelines in APR and RPT. APR and RPT take service and scholarship into account.
- It's not up to departments if their standard workload is 3/3 or 4/4. The perception is that it's due to funding. A department with a 4/4 norm could not consider 3/3.
- For those with a 4/4 workload, there is a potential gain by adding scholarship and service to the standard workload.
- The potential gain isn't adding scholarship and service to the 4/4 workload. The gain is in reducing teaching load to 3/3 for active scholars.
- Why not recommend 3/3 for active scholars and 4/4 for inactive scholars for the whole university?
- Does this discussion include NTT? No, not at this time.
- There needs to be a discussion of NTT workloads.
- There doesn't need to be a discussion of NTT workloads – NTTs don't have scholarship or service requirements.
- Many NTTs are primarily advisors. A lot of NTTs are active scholars.
- J. Vest: In the Business School, NTTs get load credit for being active scholars.
- "I find that outrageous." Agreement.
- J. Vest: In practice, we are all over the place.
- If scholarship is a job expectation, they should be on the tenure track. We eliminate tenure if we make the NTT responsibilities and perks the same as tenure-track.
- We need to maintain a distinction between NTT and tenure-track.
- NTTs shouldn't be defined as doing research. If that's a part of their duties, those expectations can be written into their contracts. We need to define tenure and NTT clearly.

7. Discussion item: Are there concerns regarding the Research, Grants, and Contracts office?

BACKGROUND:

Concerns have been raised about staffing availability, difficulty in finding support and resources. Has anyone else heard concerns about the office?

DISCUSSION:

- Very long lead times for budgets
- Biology – suggests faculty have concerns but nothing specific has been communicated. RGC is meeting with Biology department soon.
- RGC has been great in the past. Department chairs and directors have made the process difficult which has led to fewer grants being written.
- Complaints related to the budgets. New money and year-to-year turnover has created issues.
- Burden is on the faculty to manage the budget in SAP. When you do that once a year, you forget how it works.

8. Adjournment (4:35pm)

Submitted,
M. Providenti, Secretary

13. FACULTY WORKLOAD POLICY

13.1. GENERAL

The credit hour is the recognized standard by which faculty teaching load is measured. The traditional twelve (12) semester credit hours is the maximum required undergraduate teaching load for all full-time tenure-track faculty. Individual departments/schools may propose their own credit hour equivalencies and reassigned-time policies. Such policies must be in writing and must be approved by a majority of the tenure-track departmental/school faculty, the chair/school director, the appropriate dean, and the provost. In colleges where there is no department or school, the dean will function as department chair in these processes and approval must be given by a majority of the tenure-track faculty in the college. Regardless of external funding for research or other grant activities, faculty will normally teach a minimum of 50% time in a given academic year. The provost may grant exceptions to this policy on a semester-by-semester basis.

Feb 16, 2023 PCC Item