

## Professional Concerns Committee

### Minutes for September 15, 2022

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

**Members in Attendance:** S. Alexander, K. Ankem, R. Brice, J. Elliot, K. Fuegen, R. Gall, P. Hare, J. Herman, W. Herzog, K. Katkin, A. Miller, N. Mihindikulasooriya, M. Nakamura, M. Providenti, H. Riffe, H. Schellhas, J. Washburn-Moses, M. Washington, M. Whitson

**Guests in Attendance:** M. Cecil, G. Hiles, J. Vest

**Members Not in Attendance:** W. Darnell, B. Green, Y. Kim, L. Manchise, I. Saad

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1. Call to Order, Adoption of the Agenda
  - a) The meeting was called to order at 3:15pm.
  - b) The agenda was adopted unanimously with the addition of a discussion item on the grade submission deadline for 7 week courses.
2. Approval of the minutes from the September 1 meeting
  - a) Draft minutes from the September 1 meeting were not addressed in the September 15 meeting. Approval delayed until the October 6. Meeting.
3. Chair's Report and Announcements
  - a) The Faculty Senate is expected to discuss potential changes to the Senate Constitution at its September meeting. One potential change would extend membership in the Senate to part-time faculty. This is an issue the PCC discussed during our March 17 meeting. There were varied opinions on the matter. Consider sharing your perspectives with your Senator.
  - b) There are other proposed changes, e.g., the appointment of members of the Elections Committee (shall each college have representation on the Elections Committee?), specifying who is eligible for run for position of Faculty Advocate (only full-time tenure-line faculty?).

4. New Item: grade submission deadline for 7 week courses.

**BACKGROUND:**

This was addressed by PCC in spring '21. These courses end on a Friday, grades are due the following Tuesday at 9am. This affects the types of assignments. Final assignment grades cannot be posted before the final course grade. There is no time to deal with problems (e.g. corrupted files submitted on last day of class). PCC proposed extending the grade submission deadline by 48 hours, which is still before to drop deadline in the following session. Registrar only willing to extend the deadline 24 hours – Wednesday

9am. The Provost asked for this to be discussed at PCC.

DISCUSSION:

- a) The classes often are extended through Sunday. Assignments are often due on Sundays. The last week of a 7 week course would be short otherwise.
- b) In the first term, an additional 24 hours is good. But in the second term, grades are due weeks before the 16 week semester. Why are faculty rushed to get these grades in when the traditional course calendar does not require it? In the transition from fall to spring, classes sometimes begin without grades being prepared. Only faculty in the accelerated programs are held to these short timelines.
- c) One reason for the Tuesday deadline is that 16, 7, and 5 week courses all consistently have a Tuesday grade submission deadline.
- d) This deadline allows students enough time to add and drop courses. How much time is needed to advise students based on their performance?
- e) Provost: will talk to Registrar: why can't we have 2 additional days if there is a week between terms. There will be one additional day and there will be a discussion about adding another.

ACTION:

- f) KF will create a Qualtrics survey in March '23 for faculty who teach 7 week courses to ask if the extension is sufficient.

5. Discussion item: Shall we include language in the Faculty Handbook that explicitly states that conversations between faculty members and the Faculty Advocate (FA) regarding reappointment, promotion, and tenure matters and performance review are confidential?

BACKGROUND:

The FA meets with faculty to address concerns. The FA wants to make it clear that faculty can discuss APR and RPT issues with the FA without violating confidentiality rules. The Senate Constitution says these discussions are confidential. However, this is not addressed in the Handbook where faculty would most likely look.

DISCUSSION:

- a) The FA role needs to be better defined in the Handbook. Confidentiality should be among the issues written into the Handbook regarding the FA.
- b) The information needs to be placed where faculty can find it.
- c) The issues, APR (Section 8), RPT (Section 3), and Grievances (Section 14) could all mention the FA.
- d) Section 14, Grievances, could be updated to include the information in the Constitution.
- e) Concern that faculty should be able to find information about the FA when the issue may not be a potential grievance (e.g., a concern about how a chair evaluates teaching effectiveness).

- f) Suggestion: Add a short reference to the Constitution in Section 3, 8, and 14. There is support for this.
- g) Is redundancy an issue to be concerned about? No, Constitution and Handbook are very different documents.
- h) Where should a section in the Handbook for FA be added?
- i) No objections to adding language regarding confidentiality and the FA.

ACTION: KF will draft language for APR (Section 8), RPT (Section 3), and Grievances (Section 14).

6. Discussion item: Shall a person not be permitted to serve on an RPT committee if their spouse is submitting a dossier for reappointment, promotion, or tenure?

BACKGROUND:

Currently there is no specific language in the Handbook barring someone from serving on their spouse's RPT committee. It has been suggested that this should be explicit in the Handbook. Should this be stipulated in the Handbook? Should we stipulate that no one at any level in the process be the spouse of someone who is submitting a dossier?

DISCUSSION:

- a) In the chat: spouse or domestic partner.
- b) This should already be covered by the university's nepotism policy. But adding new language the Handbook is not a problem.
- c) This has come to PCC because there has been a question about this somewhere on campus.
- d) In addition to the nepotism policy, there is also a conflicts of interest policy, and a consensual relationship policy.
- e) Should we add to the RPT section of the Handbook something like "To avoid conflict of interest, family members or spouses of faculty under review may not participate at any level in the RPT process, including as a committee member. If a faculty member is not able to serve after being selected to serve on the RPT Committee, the chair of the department will be responsible for selecting a replacement."
- f) Suggestion: remove "To avoid conflict of interest" and just state the rule. Agreed.
- g) Suggestion: add "domestic partners." Agreed.

ACTION:

KF will correct the proposed language. It will be presented at the October 6, 2022 meeting as a voting item.

7. Additional items

- a) Suggested RPT issue for combined departments or schools where there is only one faculty member in a discipline. Committees cannot include members from

other departments. Committees can contain members from outside the applicant's discipline who are in the same department. However, committees cannot include a member from a discipline related to the work of the applicant if that related discipline is in another department. The Handbook states that an external reviewer can only be brought in if there are not enough reviewers in the department. It would be helpful to have a reviewer from a related discipline from within the university to serve on an RPT committee.

From J. Vest in the chat: "The issue is specifically that the Handbook only allows external members if there aren't enough to fill a committee. I can see why that might be the case, but when there is a single faculty member in a department with a specific focus that overlaps with another department, it restricts options for the committee."

PCC could suggest a way to provide the ability to add members from related disciplines in other departments.

**ACTION:**

KF will look at the Handbook and PCC will continue this discussion.

8. Adjournment (4:01pm)

Submitted,  
M. Providenti, Secretary