Professional Concerns Committee

Minutes for November 2, 2023

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

Members in Attendance: S. Alexander, T. Anderson, K. Ankem, W. Darnell, K. Fuegen, R. Gall, J. Gilbert, P. Hare, K. Katkin, A. Miller, M. Nakamura, J. Nolan, T. O'Callaghan, M. Providenti, H. Riffe, J. Wasburn-Moses, M. Washington, M. Whitson

Guests in Attendance: J. Bloch, J. Farrar, G. Hiles, K. Horine, S. Kim, A. Lipping, R. McDade, J. Vest

Members Not in Attendance: R. Brice, J. Mader-Meersman, L. Manchise, B. Russ, I. Saad, J. Sanburg, K. Sander, M. Zacate

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1. Call to Order, Adoption of the Agenda
    - The meeting was called to order at 3:15pm.
    - Motion to strike the second sentence in agenda item 4.b.: "A department chair or school director makes a recommendation for promotion."
    - Motion carried, the agenda was approved as amended.
2. Approval of the minutes from the October 19 meeting
    - The minutes from the October 19 meeting were approved as distributed (however, henceforth in the minutes, J. Wasburn-Moses's name will be correctly spelled).
3. Chair's Report and Announcements
    - The Faculty Senate met on Monday. The search for a new Assistant Vice-President for Administration and Finance and CFO has begun. Jeremy Alltop will depart in January. The hope is to have a replacement by February or March. The chair of the search committee, Bonita Brown, has asked for a representative from the Faculty Senate to serve on the committee. If you are interested, contact John Farrar by the end of today.
    - Provost Cecil delivered a report regarding the contract negotiations between NKU and AP. The content was similar to his report to PCC at our most recent meeting. He proposed that there be an advisory committee of faculty that would be charged with conveying concerns about AP to the administration. This should be a place where faculty can safely voice concerns. There was a lot of support for this idea at Senate, and it is consistent with a recommendation set forth in the faculty AP statement. The Provost acknowledged that the Criminal Justice program and the Social Work program may be removed from AP.

- Comment from Criminal Justice (CJ) representative: CJ asked for the contract to end for the entire university without renegotiation. As long as there is an AP contract, CJ wants to be a part of the AP program.
- The sense from Provost's presentation to Senate was that CJ was being removed. The sense from CJ was that they wanted AP to do a better job recruiting.
- J. Vest: The Provost is open to the discussion about CJ and AP.
- Is it possible for AP to do more recruiting for CJ?
- The concern is that if there isn't an AP CJ program that prospective students have been told there isn't an online CJ program.

- NKU Athletic Director Christina Roybal delivered a presentation about an athletics proposal. The Board of Regents had requested that Athletics explore ways to increase revenue. The proposal is to expand four sports programs and add six new programs. The projection is that the costs associated with these expansions and additions would be offset by tuition. The ultimate goal is to find ways to increase in-person enrollment.
- Senate President John Farrar has written an opinion piece advocating for fairer funding of higher education in KY. The piece appears in LINK NKY (October 26). https://linknky.com/opinion/2023/10/26/opinion-why-are-nku-and-wku-students-worth-less-to-kentucky-than-their-peers/
- TEEC Chair Chris Lawrence indicated that information sheets regarding the new student evaluations of instruction are forthcoming. These may assist RPT candidates and committees with interpretation.
- General Education Committee Chair Andrea Brooks stated that the committee has not received any proposals for new gen ed courses. They will review any proposals that come in.
- The Senate is seeking nominations for several positions: at-large Senators, peer review advisory and hearing committees (alternates and members), the complaint advisory committee, and the financial exigency committee. The Senate is also seeking nominations for persons willing to serve as Faculty Regent from January through June of 2024. The nomination form and details are on the Faculty Senate website. Deadline: November 3.

  DISCUSSION:
  - Should PCC/Senate weigh in on the athletics proposal? The type of argument being presented to establish new athletic programs (attract students, costs offset by tuition) was rejected as an argument to establish academic programs (e.g., having a German professor). The cost to establish these athletic programs is far greater than the cost to keep academic programs open. There is no endgame in PCC making a statement aside from the faculty making a statement.
  - The numbers being presented by athletics feel "underpriced" and the certainty of drawing in new students seems overly optimistic.

- The projection is for break-even if all the proposed slots are filled by students. The additional instructional costs are not considered in the proposal.
- The Board of Regents will vote on this proposal in less than a week. There is no time to prepare a statement before they meet.
- Did the Athletic Council vote on this? Is this a voting item in their Bylaws?
- The Regents will vote on this regardless of the Athletic Council.
- J. Vest: The Faculty Regent thought there were no cuts to Athletics in the last Board meeting because athletics had a plan. This is probably that plan and it is already in the budget.
- The cost was $430K for program expansion, $1.4M total. There was no itemized list or any specific details in Athletics' Senate presentation.

4. Unfinished business: Discussion of proposed changes to Faculty Handbook policies 1.3 (Full-time non-tenure-track renewable faculty) and 1.4 (Full-time non-tenure-track temporary faculty)

   BACKGROUND: We lost several NTTR faculty in the spring semester. There was a discussion, especially in A&S, about ways to improve job security for R faculty. The proposal provides 2-3 year contracts for R faculty and for T faculty to be converted to R after 3 years. Titles would also change: R would become "Teaching" and T would become "Visiting." The conversation centered around 3 issues: hiring, evaluation, and titles.

   - **Hiring:** The university conducts searches for renewable faculty. Will a faculty member with a temporary appointment be required to interview for a renewable position, if such a position becomes available?
     - Rs want to be part of search committees. Parallel to tenure-track, more formalized search process. Rs feel disrespected.
     - In Law School there is a dividing line. If an R is expected to teach as much as a tenure-track faculty, the search process is the same. All faculty are expected to attend candidate presentations and to vote.
     - J. Vest: An R search should follow same procedure as tenure-track.
     - Ultimately the dean makes the choice. The committee says who is acceptable and who is not.
   - What if there is a person in a T position for 3 years?
     - The committee should be able to give that candidate a recommendation of acceptable or not. There is no benefit to being a T who can be included in an open search.
     - J. Vest: If a person has been in a T position for 3 or more years, that indicates that a more permanent *position* is justified. That position could be tenure-track or R.
     - This is not about the person, it's about the position. The proposal suggests it's about the person.

- Suggestion to clarify the proposal's language to "the position" should be converted….
- But the proposal is to give the *people* in NTTT positions more security.
- It could be a problem if the person in the NTTT position is a mediocre performer. There should be a search for the best candidate. An NTTT who has done well in the position would have an advantage and likely get the R position.
- J. Vest: T faculty are hired by the chair or director while R searches have the input of the faculty.
- **Motion** to strike from the proposal section 1.4, the last sentence in paragraph 3 starting "After three years…." Seconded.
  DISCUSSION
  - Suggestion to disqualify T faculty from applying for the converted position. E.g., University of Colorado prohibits visiting faculty from applying for positions in the year they are visiting.
  - If Ts can be converted to Rs, that could prevent those positions from being converted to tenure-track.
  - Suggestion to not disqualify Ts from applying for converted positions – that could be a department policy, not a university policy.
  - Maybe the discussion about converting visiting positions belongs in another section of the Handbook: APR section? A completely new section?
  - **VOTE**: Motion to strike sentence passes by voice vote.

- **Evaluation:** The performance of renewable and temporary faculty is evaluated during annual performance review. A department chair or school director makes a recommendation for promotion. Should there be additional faculty involvement in the promotion process? What are the evaluation criteria?

  BACKGROUND: Comment from an NTT faculty member: The proposal would make titles and contracts more equitable and allow for better planning of our lives; concern – A&S Dean says there are only 30-40 base-funded lecturer lines in A&S (NTTT specific) but twice that in NTTRs [Note by J. Vest: Ts are not base-funded, Rs and tenure-track positions are base-funded, Ts have been hired out of operating, i.e., one-time, funds]; longer contracts could lead to NKU eliminating over half of their lecturers; this NTT faculty member who sent the comment is in favor of the proposal if it doesn't lead to the elimination of positions.

  DISCUSSION:
  - Last year the highest number of lost positions were tenure-track and tenured. 49 total from unfilled vacancies and voluntary separation. The number of NTT positions lost was 35. New positions approved: NTT = 25, TT = 13.

- The pattern is that the cheapest positions are being approved.
- J. Vest: from 7/2022 - 9/2023 we lost 90 full time faculty, 62 of them base-funded (tenured, TT, R). Additional faculty leaving in 12/2023. In areas with enrollments decreasing, tenure-track positions have been approved less often. Rs have been used to fill immediate teaching needs. R lines have a flexibility TT lines do not.
- NTTR compensation has a bimodal distribution, some fit the A&S model of about $50K but in professional programs, NTTRs can have a very high salary. NTTR salaries are varied.
- J. Vest: Professors of Practice and Clinical faculty are technically Rs but would not be included in this discussion. Those are often higher range salaries.
- The practice in HHS, 20-25 years ago, had 3-year visiting appointment lines that became TT if the budget allowed.
- College of HHS has been working on criteria for professors of practice, NTTRs, which include teaching and service: requirements for teaching load, excellence in teaching through creativity and high impact practices, credit for service outside NKU, inclusion of DEI, credit for participating a principal investigator on grants, scholarly presentations, publications and research count but are not required. Should PCC establish something like that for NTTRs?
- Research falls under "service" for accreditation purposes.
- How would this apply to Undergraduate Academic Affairs?
    - There isn't DEI in the classroom but there is in tutoring initiatives.
    - NTTs in UAA hire, train, and supervise student tutors.
    - Suggestion: each unit should have their own guidelines to fit the scope of what they do.
    - J. Vest: Suggestion to copy what is in the Professor of Practice section. "*Criteria and the process for appointment, reappointment, and promotion, and the terms and conditions of employment…, must be established and approved by the faculty of their respective academic departments, school, or programs and approved by the applicable chair, director, or dean.*"
    - It is a problem that only chairs, directors, or deans evaluate.
        - Then the unit can write a guideline that says there will be a committee.
    - UAA only has 6 faculty.
        - Write guidelines that accommodate that.
        - The issue is resources – it would take too much time to have a committee for every person. HHS left this up to the chair, director, or dean for that reason.
- EKU and WKU are comparable institutions. What are their policies? Were their practices considered?
    - We'd have to ask the committee that prepared this proposal.

- UC Blue Ash has levels of promotion within adjunct ranks. We could look at their process.
- Should there be a committee when NTTRs seek promotion? Or leave this to chair, director, dean?
    - Suggestion: this should be formalized, there should be a committee, NTTRs should be part of the committee, there should be peer reviews, focus on teaching (not publications).
    - Some departments don't have enough NTTRs for committees.
        - What about an NTTR representative?
        - NTTs do not think TTs should be on these committees.
    - Senate President in Chat: "According to the statement on collegial governance, faculty bodies have primary responsibility for academic personnel policies and academic personnel decisions." Evaluations are personnel decisions and should be the purview of faculty, faculty evaluating faculty. Question is how to do that.

- **Titles:** Proposed titles for renewable faculty mirror those of tenure-line faculty, e.g., Assistant, Associate. Do these titles send the message that tenure is unimportant?
    - This discussion item is tabled.

5. Future Business
    - Terms of NTTR contracts, how that works with financial exigency (or just a financial bind), etc.
    - Academic freedom. K. Ankem will send details to the chair.
    - Unfinished grievance procedure.
        - May need to form a subcommittee with faculty who have served on peer review hearing and advisory committees.
    - Different terminology for UAA?
        - Wait until Academic Commons is here?

6. Adjournment (4:35pm)

Submitted,
M. Providenti, Secretary

1. DEFINITION OF FACULTY STATUS

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Faculty are professionals employed by Northern Kentucky University (NKU,"the University") to perform teaching and other academic responsibilities commensurate with the missions and goals of the University. "Professional" is construed to mean a person who, because of competence in a discipline, has the ability and responsibility to impart knowledge through effective teaching, other assigned activities, or both, and to engage in research and creative endeavors in an impartial and judicious manner.

The definitions set forth here apply to all provisions of this Handbook.

1.2. FULL-TIME, TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

Full-time tenure-track faculty are probationary or tenured faculty who hold the academic rank of Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor, and who teach a full course load as stipulated by the University, or whose academic assignment is more than 50 percent within an academic department or program. Department chairs or school directors who hold faculty status are full-time, tenure-track faculty. Reassigned time does not remove a person from full-time, tenure-track faculty status.

1.3. FULL-TIME, NON-TENURE-TRACK, RENEWABLE (NTTR) FACULTY

Full-time, non-tenure-track renewable (NTTR) faculty hold the rank of Lecturer and perform full-time duties as stipulated by the University in their appointment form, but they are not appointed to a probationary or tenured position. At no point will appointees to these positions accrue time toward tenure.

Faculty holding a non-tenure-track, renewable (NTTR) appointment are generally appointed on a year-by-year basis following performance review. The performance review process is on the normal schedule, based upon duties as stipulated in the appointment form. Notification of non-renewal of appointment must be made to the faculty member by March 31. Faculty holding non-tenure-track, renewable (NTTR) appointments are employed as the result of an internal or external search process. At the end of five years in the position, a full-time NTTR lecturer is eligible for promotion to Lecturer II. After five years in the position, a Lecturer II is eligible for a promotion to Senior Lecturer. Criteria for promotion to Lecturer II and Senior Lecturer will be established in writing by each academic unit, subject to the approval of the appropriate dean (or program director). A record of satisfactory performance in teaching is a necessary requirement for promotion. The recommendation for promotion will be made by the head of the academic unit, in consultation with the faculty, during the normal performance review in the fifth year (in the case of Lecturer II) and tenth year (in the case of Senior Lecturer) of the lecturer's appointment, or in subsequent years in case of a negative recommendation. The recommendation (positive or negative) will be forwarded to the appropriate dean (or program director), who will make the final decision.

Non-tenure-track, renewable (NTTR) faculty holding the rank of Instructor before the 1994 adoption of this Handbook by the Board of Regents shall retain that rank. After the adoption of this Handbook

by the Board of Regents, non-tenure-track, renewable faculty shall hold only the rank of Lecturer for the entire length of their appointment.

1.4. FULL-TIME, NON-TENURE TRACK, TEMPORARY (NTTT) FACULTY

Full-time, non-tenure-track, temporary (NTTT) faculty hold the rank appropriate to their credentials and teaching experience. Normally the appointment rank will be lecturer, adjunct professor, or visiting professor. Temporary faculty will perform full-time duties as stipulated by the University, but they are not appointed to a probationary or tenured position. At no point will appointees to these positions accrue time toward tenure.

These faculty are expected to carry a full course load and to perform all of the duties associated with these teaching responsibilities. Departments/schools may invite them to faculty meetings and may involve them in appropriate committees; they are expected to attend any meetings related to their teaching. Any other assignments or responsibilities should be specified by the department chair/school director at the time of appointment and are subject to the approval of the dean (or program director). Departments/schools may use this category to employ faculty who have no teaching responsibilities, e.g., grant supported researchers or postdoctoral associates.

Faculty holding a non-tenure-track, temporary (NTTT) appointment are appointed on a one-year basis. A temporary position appointment may be made as a result of consultation between the department chair/school director and the dean, with approval by the provost. Temporary appointments are one-year, temporary, terminal appointments that can be repeated. Lecturers holding one-year, temporary, terminal appointments before the 1994 adoption of this Handbook by the Board of Regents may be appointed to new one-year, temporary, terminal appointments, regardless of the number of past appointments, if such positions are available and if their past performance warrants reappointment. No additional notice of non-renewal of appointment is necessary.

Non-tenure-track, temporary (NTTT) faculty are provided with Social Security contributions by the University. In addition, health insurance is provided by the University if the appointment is full-time for the complete academic year. If the appointment is full-time for less than one complete academic year, health insurance is provided by the University as needed to comply with local, state, or federal laws or regulations.

*Note: differences between existing Handbook policy and proposed policy are highlighted.

1.3. FULL-TIME TEACHING FACULTY

Full-time Teaching faculty hold the rank of Assistant Teaching Professor, Associate Teaching Professor, Teaching Professor or Distinguished Teaching Professor. Teaching faculty perform full-time teaching and service duties as stipulated by the University and their appointment form along with appropriate service in consultation with the department chair/school director. Teaching faculty are not appointed to a probationary or tenured position, and at no point will accrue time toward tenure.

Faculty holding a teaching appointment are hired as an Assistant Teaching Professor with a two-year appointment contingent on successful annual performance reviews each year from their department chair/school director. Subsequent teaching faculty contracts are renewed for an additional two (Assistant Teaching Professor) or three year appointment (Associate Teaching Professor, Teaching Professor, and Distinguished Teaching Professor), contingent on positive annual performance reviews as well as support from the department chair/school director and dean.. The performance review process is on the normal schedule, based upon duties as stipulated in the appointment form. Notification of performance-related non-renewal of appointment must be made to the faculty member by March 31.

Faculty holding teaching appointments are employed as the result of an internal or external search process. At the end of five years in the position, a full-time Assistant Teaching Professor is eligible and may apply for promotion to Associate Teaching Professor. After five years as an Associate Teaching Professor, one is eligible and may apply for a promotion to Teaching Professor. After serving as a Teaching Professor for a minimum of three years, those who can demonstrate significant contributions to teaching and service may apply for a promotion to Distinguished Teaching Professor. Criteria for promotion to Associate Teaching Professor, Teaching Professor, and Distinguished Teaching Professor are established in writing by each academic unit, subject to the approval of the appropriate dean. A record of effective performance in teaching is a necessary requirement for promotion.

Teaching faculty who are ready to apply for promotion should send a letter to their department chair/school director stating their intent during their normally scheduled annual performance review. This letter should include how they have demonstrated effective teaching and service during their time at NKU and have met the criteria for promotion as outlined by their unit. The recommendation for promotion will then be made by the head of the academic unit during the annual performance review in the fifth year for an Assistant Teaching Professor and in the tenth year for an Associate Teaching Professor's appointment, or in subsequent years in case of a negative recommendation. In addition, Teaching Professors may be considered for the Distinguished Teaching Professor position after significant contributions to the academic unit and a minimum of three years as a Teaching Professor. The recommendation (positive or negative) will be forwarded to the appropriate dean, who will make the final decision.

1.4. FULL-TIME VISITING FACULTY

Full-time visiting faculty hold the rank appropriate to their credentials and teaching experience. Normally the appointment rank will be visiting professor. Visiting faculty will perform full-time duties as stipulated by the University, but they are not appointed to a probationary or tenured position. At no point will appointees to these positions accrue time toward tenure.

Visiting faculty are expected to carry a full course load and to perform all the duties associated with these teaching responsibilities. Departments/schools may invite them to faculty meetings and may involve them in appropriate committees; they are expected to attend any meetings related to their teaching. Any other assignments or responsibilities should be specified by the department chair/school director at the time of appointment and are subject to the approval of the dean (or program director). Departments/schools may use this category to employ faculty who have no teaching responsibilities, e.g., grant supported researchers or postdoctoral associates.

Visiting faculty hold a temporary appointment and are appointed on a one-year basis. A visiting faculty position appointment may be made after consultation between the department chair/school director and the dean, with approval by the provost. Visiting faculty appointments are one-year, temporary, terminal appointments that can be repeated. After three years, those who continue to hold a visiting faculty appointment should be considered for an Assistant Teaching Professor appointment, if the budget allows.

Full-Time Visiting Faculty are provided with Social Security contributions by the University. In addition, health insurance is provided by the University if the appointment is full-time for the complete academic year. If the appointment is full-time for less than one complete academic year, health insurance is provided by the University as needed to comply with local, state, or federal laws or regulations.