

Professional Concerns Committee

Minutes for January 18, 2024

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, J. Gilbert, T. O'Callaghan, P. Hare, K. Katkin, J. Mader-Meersman, A. Miller, M. Nakamura, J. Nolan, M. Providenti, H. Riffe, I. Saad, J. Sanburg, K. Sander, J. Wasburn-Moses, M. Washington, M. Whitson, M. Zacate

Guests in Attendance: T. Anderson, J. Bloch, V. Cooper, J. Farrar, G. Hiles, K. Horine, S. Kim, A. Lipping, R. McDade, D. McGill, S. Sloan, J. Vest

Members Not in Attendance: J. Kim, L. Manchise

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1. Call to Order, Adoption of the Agenda
 - The meeting was called to order at 3:15pm.
 - The agenda was approved as distributed.
 2. Approval of the minutes from the November 16 meeting
 - The November 16 minutes were adopted as amended.
 3. Chair's Report and Announcements
 - I am seeking nominations from three persons willing to serve on an ad hoc subcommittee this semester. The subcommittee will make recommendations for revisions to the Grievances policy (Handbook section 14). The goal of these recommendations will be to provide greater clarity for the petitioner and members of peer review committees. For example, it is not entirely clear whether a faculty member with a concern should file a grievance or a complaint. Also, must a grievance be filed by only one faculty member, or may multiple faculty members jointly file a grievance? Any member with experience in either of those roles should consider self-nominating. I expect that the subcommittee will meet three or four times this semester. The work will culminate in a draft of revisions to the Grievances policy that will be presented to the PCC in April. I have asked Greg Hatchett to serve, because of his experiences as a petitioner and a member of peer review committees.
 - Call for volunteers: K. Katkin, H. Riffe, and K. Ankem all put their names forward.
 - Sandra Spataro, the new Faculty Regent, was sworn in yesterday. Rich Boehne, the Chair of the Board of Regents is departing in June. The faculty should be involved in making recommendations regarding a replacement.
 - Please convey recommendations to Faculty Senate President J. Farrar.

- Later this month the Faculty Senate will vote on revisions to the intellectual property policy. This committee has discussed IP at length. Last month, I raised concerns in Senate regarding the Inventions and Patents policy. Those concerns are no longer relevant. There was some confusion regarding drafts that had been posted on the policy website. Janel and I were able to resolve the confusion. The draft that I circulated to this committee last March is the same as the draft that J. Farrar circulated to the Senate last month. The PCC had no concerns last March, nor did the Senate express any concern last month. This is an example of effective collegial governance.
 - This will be my final semester serving as chair of PCC. It has been an honor to serve. Please consider nominating yourself as a candidate for PCC Chair. The term begins in July. The election is prior to the next meeting of the Faculty Senate (Jan. 29).
4. Unfinished business: 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: The impetus for the proposal was the loss of several NTT faculty last spring. Renewable faculty are appointed annually. 2-3 year contracts would provide them with more job security. There would be more opportunities for promotion and new titles in the proposal (NTTR = "Teaching Faculty" and NTTT = "Visiting Faculty"). Discussion in PCC has included: recommendations from the College of Health and Human Services; search process; and should faculty be involved in performance evaluations of NTT faculty.

PROPOSAL: PCC should vote on the two sections, 1.3 and 1.4, separately at the first PCC meeting in February. Nothing is final until the committee votes on the main issue to adopt the proposal. There could be a motion to rescind the portion of the proposal that had been previously amended (which would require 66% approval from the committee) or a motion could be made to postpone indefinitely. If neither of those motions happen, there would be 2 main motions, one to adopt 1.3, the other to adopt 1.4. Motions to amend can be made during the discussion of the motion to adopt. In the meantime, discuss the proposal with your faculty colleagues.

DISCUSSION:

- Motion to create an ad-hoc subcommittee to PCC to address proposed changes to 1.3 and 1.4 and bring recommendations to PCC and postpone the vote to the second meeting in February.
 - Discussion of motion: Is there a need for the subcommittee?
 - Yes. Issues: How would 2-3 year contracts affect university budget issues and early termination? What would be the structure of evaluations?

- Presidential BoR summary addresses need to address lagging staff compensation, creating promotion pathways for excellent performers – is that *staff* only?
 - A guest responds this is specifically about staff. This is frequently discussed in Staff Congress.
- Has there been a discussion about Distinguished Faculty rank? Yes. This was about creating a fourth level in the context of raises. This would be an issue for the subcommittee.
- Concern that “Teaching” title would create a perception problem since we are not an R1 institution.
- Concern there will be broad opposition to the titles Assistant, Associate, and Full Teaching Professor. The subcommittee should explore other potential titles.
- Concern that there are no other US universities where individuals with a master’s are called “Professor.” Miami has a “Teaching Professor” title but a PhD is required. Note that some programs have a terminal Master’s degree.
- Instructor title has been an option in the Handbook. What do we call people teaching with an ABD?
- VOTE: Motion to form subcommittee carries (18 for, 3 against)
Volunteers: J. Wasburn-Moses (Chair), J. Gilbert, J. Mader-Meersman, J. Elliot.
- Other subsections will have to be changed if the proposal is passed. 1.7.2 Special Appointment Visiting Faculty section; 1.9 uses “Lecturer”; need to create a new section in 1.9 for full-time visiting faculty

5. New business: Discussion of administrative leadership changes and faculty governance

BACKGROUND: There is a new provost. The announcement was a surprise to many faculty. On Wednesday 1/17/24 the BoR approved the appointment unanimously. The new Faculty Regent (S. Spataro) made a statement objecting to the process. Should PCC create an additional statement to bring to Faculty Senate or is the Faculty Regent’s Statement sufficient?

DISCUSSION:

- Yes, more needs to be said. It only took two presidential searches to lose transparent presidential searches forever. We have secret searches with no Faculty Senate participation. That had never happened with a provost’s position before this appointment. This isn’t a one time thing. The issue with the timeline for a proper search will always apply. President Short-Thompson has not respected shared governance. The financial transfer to athletics in the fall is an example. The Faculty Regent should have voted against the appointment. The Provost showed a lack of integrity by accepting the position under these circumstances. This is a direct attack on faculty governance.

- Circa 2004-5, wasn't Gail Wells appointed Provost? No, there was a search with three candidates.
- The president has been asserting a commitment to shared governance – doesn't feel true.
- Support given for President Short-Thompson from one PCC member who also states the Provost should have been named as interim and PCC should draft a statement.
- Support given from PCC member to draft a letter against the process.
- Support given for the Faculty Regent's statement from a PCC member. There is still an issue with the process. Also, support given for drafting a statement in PCC.
- Speculation on reasons: former provost a finalist in searches at other institutions, Academic Commons not settled, other reasons unknown.
- The former provost is still here in another role at his former salary. The President could have made decisions with the former provost in place. The President's reasoning was that we had a vacancy that needed to be filled immediately. There has been no indication of why that vacancy was created so quickly. Presidents often hire their own provost and the old provost remains in place through the process. If there were cause for dismissal, the former provost would not still be here in a different position.
- ACTION: PCC should draft a statement (no objections). K. Katkin asked to bring a draft statement to PCC.
- Can we talk about Academic Commons?
 - Provost: The President has asked the Provost to make a decision on the Academic Commons by February 1. Time is needed to talk to people. Who needs to be at the table to talk about the decision? How are we supposed to bring units together to serve students better and make a budget cut at the same time?
 - The issue is will there be additional cuts to Academic Affairs? It was indicated to Executive Committee that there would not be additional cuts to Academic Affairs. A cut to Academic Commons is a cut to Academic Affairs.
 - Provost: Right. This is a process of discovery. Is it a cut if a promise was made but there is no money? Is it helpful or acceptable to pause?
 - Support is needed for faculty too.
 - Provost: The options on Academic Commons appear to be go forward, pause, or do something completely different.

6. New business: Discussion of Board of Regents meeting (Jan. 17)

- Any thing else PCC should discuss from the 1/17 BoR meeting?
- Legislative decisions concerning the budget?
 - The CPE suggested a funding model that would disadvantage NKU.

- Provost: Based on the legislative schedule, it will be April before we know. Advocacy work is happening. President Short-Thompson is in Frankfort today.
 - Since there was not an interview for Provost, could we have sessions in which interview-like questions could get a response from the Provost?
 - Provost: Sounds like a good idea.
7. Future Business
- Look at other things happening in the Kentucky legislature: anti-tenure bill, anti-woke bill, etc.
8. Adjournment (4:30pm)

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.

1.7. SPECIAL-APPOINTMENT FACULTY

1.7.1. Emeritus Faculty

The “emeritus” designation is a way of honoring retired faculty or administrators who held faculty rank. Such persons hold the faculty title and rank held immediately prior to their retirement, followed by the title “emeritus.” Emeritus status may be granted upon or after retirement and is conferred by the Board of Regents, following the process set forth in Section 2.11 “Emeritus Appointments”.

1.7.2. Visiting Faculty

Visiting faculty are persons who hold a temporary appointment for an academic year, a semester, or a shorter term, as designated in their letter of appointment. Normally such persons hold a faculty appointment at another university or college. Such persons hold an appropriate rank preceded by the designation “visiting.”

1.7.3. Adjunct Faculty

Adjunct faculty are fully qualified research, teaching, or creative persons who are paid more than 50 percent of their salary from non-University sources such as grant funds, but who contribute significantly to teaching, research, or service. Where the rank of Professor does not appear to be suitable, “adjunct” will be added to the appropriate rank.

1.9. QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT TO RANK

The initial appointment of faculty, including full-time administrators with academic rank, shall be at the rank appropriate for the qualifications presented. These qualifications apply to promotion in rank (see Section 16.12 “Appropriate Terminal Degrees for Faculty”).

1.9.1. Instructor

An Instructor holds the minimum of a master’s degree (or equivalent, as determined by factors such as work experience, publications, and national or regional reputation in the field). An Instructor shows potential for competent teaching, scholarly activity, and institutional and public service activity relevant to educational background, teaching experience, and specified contractual obligations. An Instructor who receives an appropriate terminal degree may apply for promotion to Assistant Professor as stipulated by Section 3 “Evaluation” and Section 5.1.1 “Promotion to Assistant Professor”.

Non-tenure-track, renewable (NTTR) faculty holding the rank of Instructor before the adoption of this Handbook (1994) by the Board of Regents shall retain that rank, but may not apply for promotion to Assistant Professor.

1.9.2. Assistant Professor

An Assistant Professor holds an appropriate terminal degree (or equivalent, as determined by such factors as work experience, publications, and national regional reputation in the field). A person may be appointed as an Assistant Professor without holding the appropriate terminal degree or its equivalent, but if a terminal degree is required, it must be earned within the time stipulated in the initial contract of appointment. If an appropriate terminal degree is not received within the time set forth in the initial contract, the appointment at this rank will terminate. An Assistant Professor has demonstrated competence as a teacher and potential for scholarly and creative activity and service activity as defined in college and departmental/school RPT documents.

1.9.3. Associate Professor

An Associate Professor holds all the qualifications of an Assistant Professor and has been judged effective as a teacher, in scholarly and creative activity, and service activity as defined in college and departmental/school RPT documents. These criteria are listed in order of importance.

1.9.4. Professor

A Professor holds all the qualifications of an Associate Professor and is recognized as a very effective teacher, has a record of high-quality scholarly and creative activity, has demonstrated significant service activity as defined in college and departmental/school RPT documents, and has attained professional recognition at the regional, national, or international level. These criteria are listed in order of importance.

The applicant's entire academic career will be considered, with an emphasis on activities after tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. Applications may be submitted as soon as the above criteria are met, but faculty applying for promotion to Professor will typically have completed six years at the rank of Associate Professor.

1.9.5. Lecturer

A Lecturer is a professionally qualified appointee whose services are contracted primarily for teaching. Lecturer positions shall be non-tenure-track and non-tenure-earning. Lecturers are not eligible for sabbatical leaves, faculty summer fellowships, or faculty project grants, but they may be eligible for university retirement under the terms of the appointment form. Lecturers with full-time appointments are eligible for participation in any appropriate University group insurance plans/benefits. Voting privileges within an educational unit may be extended to a Lecturer within that educational unit.

1.9.6. Part-Time Faculty

Typically, part-time faculty hold the rank of Lecturer, or they may hold ranked adjunct positions. Tenured and tenure-track faculty may also request a term or permanent part-time appointment (see Section 1.5.2.).

*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.