

Professional Concerns Committee

Minutes for November 7, 2024

Hybrid Meeting (UC 375 and Zoom Conferencing Software), 3:15 pm

Members in Attendance: Deborah Amend, Amanda Brockman, Whitney Darnell, Gina Fieler, Kathleen Fuegen, Shannon Fredrick, Roxanne Gall, Jaesook Gilbert, Rich Gilson, Patrick Hare, Rachelle Janning, Alexis Miller, Makoto Nakamura, Joe Nolan, Tamara O’Callaghan, Michael Providenti, Kathleen Quinn (Michael Washington), Holly Riffe (Chair), Lee Kirstin (for Amal Said), Kurt Sander, Gang Sun, Emily Taylor, Jessica Taylor

Guests in Attendance: Janel Bloch, Richard Fox, Grace Hiles, Suk-hee Kim, Provost Diana McGill, Marius Truta, Jason Vest

Members Not in Attendance: Ken Katkin, Jered Moses, Ihab Saad, Jamie Strawn, Maggie Whitson

1. Call to Order, Adoption of the Agenda
 - The meeting was called to order at 3:18pm.
 - The agenda was adopted as distributed with one change: “Discussion/Voting item Research Misconduct policy” was postponed until the next meeting.
2. Adoption of the minutes from the November 17, 2024 meeting
 - Note that the highlighted text is from the Chair, not the Secretary.
 - The October 17 minutes were adopted with one correction: Kathleen Quinn was present on 10/17/24.
3. Chair’s Report and Announcements
 - Update on the highlighted portions of the minutes:
 - On the AI comments: Checked with Chris Lawrence (TEEC Chair) who is on a research Misconduct task force. TEEC is also discussing AI issues. Asked if TEEC could take on the issue of AI in research misconduct.
 - DISCUSSION:
 - Faculty on campus not aware that there is an AI task force. There needs to be communication about this.
 - Faculty are concerned about student evaluations, AI in the classroom, accusations about misusing AI.
 - The task force needs to go to departments and say “here’s what we are doing, what are your concerns?”
 - J. Vest: The working group is not an AI working group – it is TEEC working on the Academic Honor Code which would then come to PCC.

- What is the AAC&U? ANSWER J. Vest: The university put together a team to go to the AAC&U conference. Information was shared in the AI Teaching and Learning Plan in the spring and fall.
- Request that the Provost's office send out an update once a semester on what is happening with AI. RESPONSE J. Vest: "Happy to do that."
- Faculty would need to be taught how to use AI effectively.
- Request that the new faculty member hired in the Writing Instruction Program be added to the AI Teaching and Learning Task Force (CETI and TEEC).
- When will the AI Task Force have results? ANSWER J. Vest: The charge of the task force includes AI literacy development, ethical framework and guidelines around coursework assessment, academic integrity, pedagogical innovation, curriculum integration and program development. J. Vest will talk to the group and report back to PCC.
- Many institutions provide a blanket statement on AI usage concerning students and faculty. Columbia's statement says no to plagiarism and recommends sound research, citing sources, and deferring to journal guidelines.
- On the Research Misconduct Policy:
 - There have been discussions with various PCC members about discipline specific issues.
 - There was a suggestion to frontload the policy with the statement that the research misconduct guidelines would be directed by disciplinary standards.
 - Also, the suggestion to update the language from self-plagiarism to text recycling.
 - Let the Chair know if other institutions are doing work around this issue of which we should be aware.
- Discussion of PCC Rules of Decorum
 - Under Robert's Rules we must refrain from attacking a member's motives. One can say "that member is mistaken" but words like "fraud," "liar," etc. are forbidden.
 - Reminder that this is an inclusive community and disrespect will not be tolerated.
- Discussion of NKU Ethics and Responsibilities
 - This spells out our core values of excellence, integrity, inclusiveness, innovation, and collegiality.
- The Faculty Senate passed the revisions to the Human Subjects policy.
- SGA indicated students want access to auto-transcription in classes. Some schools have already said no to this.
 - If auto-transcription has been recommended by the Office for Student Accessibility, that is not an issue.

- Neurosciences indicates writing or typing helps connect synapses and aids learning in a way auto-transcription does not. Auto-transcription disrupts the learning process.
 - There are also concerns about the effectiveness and accuracy of auto-transcription.
 - It would be fine to provide guiding notes or PowerPoints.
 - PCC Chair will provide feedback to the SGA representative.
4. Discussion/Voting item Research Misconduct policy
- Postponed until 11/21 PCC meeting.
5. Discussion/Voting item: RPT policy as schools merge (Guests: Marius Truta and Richard Fox)
- Computing & Analytics (SCA) was 3 departments that went to 2 schools. The dean and chair preferred one RPT committee per school but the faculty wanted multiple committees for various disciplines.
 - The previous Provost was asked if there could be an exception to the Handbook to allow more than one committee in SCA. The exception was granted. The faculty's preference was 3 committees.
 - SCA is using the SOTA guidelines (committee representation is 3 members core to the discipline, 2 other members from outside the discipline).
 - SCA is trying to do what SOTA is now allowed to do in the Handbook.
 - A reason faculty wanted multiple committees is that one program is accredited and the accreditation body is very different from the other disciplines. Committee members from other disciplines may not know how to evaluate the RPT candidates in other areas well.
 - The proposal to allow 3 RPT committees in SCA was approved by the Dean and former Provost but it is not in the Handbook. The Handbook only allows SOTA to have multiple committees.
 - Option 2 (see handouts) would add SCA to the list of departments that are permitted to have multiple committees.
 - A couple RPT committees based on schools makes sense but having a lot of committees would break down cohesion.
 - Administrators could fix this by not creating more schools. Allow schools to adopt their policies but don't force those policies on the departments and colleges.
 - Are we opening the door to appeals by creating differences in the way committees are formed? Would it be possible to add additional members to ensure there is an appropriate number of faculty able to evaluate discipline specific research and keep the one committee model?
 - Expectations for teaching and service are not the same across the board.
 - 2 of the different departments originated from 2 different colleges – the background and expectations are very different.
 - SCA has very specific rules for evaluating candidates from each committee.

- From the experience in SOTA, the 2 non-discipline committee members will generally defer to the 3 members from the discipline.
- What is the primary difference between options 1 & 2?
 - Option 1 would broadly allow academic units to have more than one committee. Option 2 limits that ability to specific schools.
- Since this Handbook change does not affect every department, there is a request to see if there is a preference among the departments that are affected.
- Support for option 1 which would allow departments or schools to figure out how they should establish RPT committees. Option 2 would require PCC and Senate to revisit this issue regularly.
- Concern that Option 1, by creating an opportunity for multiple committees, will lead to departments to vote to create more committees which will lead to additional work for the faculty who tend to get voted onto these committees.
- Suggestion to move forward with Option 2 which would add SCA as a specific unit and get them into compliance with the Handbook. This issue could be revisited later if there are other issues.
- Revision to Option 2: *“Each department, school, or program in the case of SOTA or SCA, shall have...”*
- Suggestion to vote Option 1.
- Suggestion to vote Option 2 which is what SCA has asked PCC to consider (allowing RPT committees at the program level).
- VOTE to accept Option 2 with the amended language *“Each department, school, or program in the case of SOTA or SCA, shall have...”* Seconded.
 - The vote to accept Option 2 carried by show of hands.

6. Business

- None at this time.

7. Adjournment (4:34pm)

Submitted,

M. Providenti, Secretary