

Professional Concerns Committee

Minutes for October 2, 2025

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

Members in Attendance: Deborah Amend, Ali Balapour, Eric Barker, Robert Brice, Ada Cencki, Whittney Darnell, Gina Fieler, Jaesook Gilbert, Allyson Graf, Shelli Janning, Erin Kelley, Jang-Chul Kim, Julie Mader-Meersman, Dee Mornah, Makoto Nakamura, Joe Nolan, Michael Providenti, Tamara O'Callaghan, Kathleen Quinn, Holly Riffe (Chair), Kurt Sander, Catie Shelton, David Tataw, Jessica Taylor, Maggie Whitson, Matt Zacate

Guests in Attendance: Provost Diana McGill, Janel Bloch, Faculty Senate President Jacqueline Emerine, Grace Hiles, Sukhee Kim, Alar Lipping, Danielle McDonald, Steve Slone

Members Not in Attendance: Jered Moses, Ihab Saad,

1. Call to Order, Adoption of the Agenda
 - The meeting was called to order at 3:15pm.
 - The agenda was adopted as distributed.
2. Adoption of the minutes from the September 4th and 18th meeting.
 - The minutes for the 9/4/25 and the 9/18/25 meetings were adopted as distributed.
3. Chair's Report and Announcements
 - How do PCC and Faculty Senate ensure the policy revisions are circulated?
 - Policies should be circulated after they are amended but is there another review period for amended policies? Response: Question referred to Grant Garber (Legal). Comments go to the cabinet and they determine if changes should be made.
 - The Policy on Policies indicates the amended policy should be returned for review. No one recalls seeing that happen.
 - There is an upcoming meeting on the proposed free expression policy:
 - PCC Chair, Faculty Senate President, Legal, and a professor from the History department will be meeting about that.
 - Upcoming ADA accommodation meeting:
 - VP of Housing, VP of Student Affairs, Faculty Senate President, PCC Chair, Office for Student Accessibility, HR, and Legal will attend.
 - It does not appear we are following best practices (e.g., provisional accommodations). The policy is not bad but the procedures need to be brought into alignment.
 - Room reservations as resources:

- Some rooms are charged for use, cost depends on whether it is used by a student group, internal group, or external group.
 - Faculty and staff groups associated with SAFE (Staff, Administrators, and Faculty for Equity) can no longer reserve rooms. There is concern that people who have been associated with SAFE (or possibly other groups) have had their room reservations cancelled.
 - The Provost will report on this in a later meeting.
- CPE Value Neutrality Survey
 - The survey is coming to students, faculty, and staff.
 - One question is “I feel I am free to express my political viewpoints in the classroom.” The answers go back to the legislators. What is the correct answer to that? A: Whatever you feel the correct answer is, is the correct answer.
 - The questions on the survey are as follows: 1) I am exposed to a variety of ideological perspectives on campus, including competing ideological perspectives. 2) I am exposed to a variety of political perspectives on campus, including competing political perspectives. 3) I feel I am free to express my ideological viewpoints on campus. 4) I feel I am free to express my ideological perspectives in the classroom. 5) I feel I am free to discuss my political viewpoints on campus. 6) I feel I am free to express my political viewpoints in the classroom.
 - Students should feel free to express their viewpoints but faculty are not here to share their personal ideological beliefs.
 - What is an ideological belief versus a political belief?
 - NKU administers our own survey.
 - Will IP addresses be monitored? A: There is no good reason for that. The question will be forwarded to IT.
- Amy Gellen (HR) will attend the next PCC meeting. People are concerned about our health insurance. Is there anything else for HR?
 - Who is our broker? A: NKU is looking for a new broker right now.
 - There was a question regarding if this should be addressed in PCC or Budget committee.
 - What is the process to switch insurance providers?
- University President reported to Senate a \$2.5M shortfall which will likely lead to personnel cuts if salary savings are insufficient.
 - Q: In the past it was hiring freezes, not personnel cuts. A: Revenues must equal or exceed expenditures. The budget was built late fall, early spring. After the budget was completed, performance funding from the state was cut \$1.9M. Also, the KY Department of Revenue decided to stop collecting unpaid tuition, about a \$1M loss. There have already been operating cuts. Enrollment is higher than last year but less than budgeted. The hardest cuts are mid-year. 70% of personnel costs in Academic and Student Affairs are faculty – that can’t be cut. Looking at every job post, some going forward, some not. The university can’t wait

until February 2026 to see how the budget looks in the spring. A small number of filled positions will be eliminated.

4. Sliding Scale Parking Taskforce (Danielle McDonald)

- A table was created and shared using last year's data on the numbers of parking permits sold (not all employees purchase permits) broken down by income ranges (the ranges are from James Madison University, <https://www.jmu.edu/parking/files/parking-regulations.pdf>, pages 8 & 12).
- There was a question about just paying employees more but that is not within the ability of the task force.
- The goal is to be more equitable for those who make the least.
- Parking has to be cost-neutral. Parking fees pay for paving, lights, the bond on the garage.
- Questions:
 - Parking should be a benefit. Why is it the responsibility of employees to pay for paving? There is no consideration of household income. Concern that increasing costs are being driven down to faculty and staff. A: The university could pay for it, but it would need to make up the \$463K from elsewhere.
 - Our medical and dental insurance is bad; faculty and staff pay for parking so that it is cost-neutral to the university. Salaries don't meet cost of living increases.
 - Suggestions for where to take the money from? A: Athletics.
 - University President wants to eventually offer free parking.
 - Some universities served by effective public transit have expensive parking. Public transit is not a viable alternative here.
 - There is a preference for gravel parking lots.
 - Faculty want to teach online courses to avoid paying for parking. This undermines the goal of bringing more people here to create a more vibrant campus.
 - Some students and faculty/staff have complained there is not enough parking.
 - The pay tiers in the table do not include summer pay, etc.
 - There was a suggestion to approve this plan for 5 years with a long-term plan to make parking free by finding funds from athletics.
 - It was noticed that two bands, \$42K-62.999K and \$63K-83.999K pay the same fee. This is a large range.
 - Was there a consideration to have deans and higher ranking administrators pay while chairs and lower do not pay? A: There are not enough deans and up to cover the cost.
 - To make parking free for the lowest tier (under \$42K), \$58K would need to be found elsewhere.
 - Suggestion to add additional bands starting at \$106K. This may not make a big difference financially, but the optics would be better.
 - Could this be a sliding scale based on an individuals' salary?

- The numbers presented are open for revisions and suggestions.
 - There is an updated spreadsheet that will be shared.
- 5. Follow-up discussion/questions policies, etc.
 - Not at this time.
- 6. Old Business
 - Handbook minor change 9.1 Purpose and Applicability 2nd paragraph changed to careful “biennial” review from careful “annual” review. Change made to agree with prior approval to 3.2.1 Time schedule “Applications for appointment are reviewed biennially.” Section 9.1 should have been made at the time of change to 3.2.1
 - The change has already been made.
 - Comment: OK with the change but not the process. PCC should make a statement to prevent this from becoming a precedent.
 - Suggestion to change “biennial” to “every two years” to make the wording clearer and more user friendly. Response: this would cause 9.1 to be out of sync with 3.2.1 and it wouldn’t be a “minor” edit.
 - **MOTION:** PCC should issue a statement that it retroactively approves the change to Handbook section 9.1 (in which “biennial” replaces “annual” to be in alignment with Handbook section 3.2.1). However, PCC does not approve of how the change was made and this action should not set a precedent for future changes to the Handbook.
 - **VOTE:** Motion approved.
- 7. New Business
 - a. Amy Gellen, VP Human Resources, will attend our next meeting October 16, 2025
 - Concern with the dress code policy. What you can’t wear targets women. It also targets staff and student workers.
 - Look at the Flexible Work Arrangements and Emergency Closings policies.
 - Emergency Closings? A: the policy states we should flip our classrooms if we are able to do so.
 - Question for faculty: would faculty want the option for the university to remain open for remote work during an emergency closing?
 - No, not enough has changed since 2020 when the university made a big effort to loan students technology to attend remote classes. This issue is do the students have the capacity to flip to online, not the faculty. Some students may need to take care of children.
 - The pedagogy is different for in-person and online. It doesn’t make sense to do this for one day. This does not work for hands-on experiential learning.
 - A rationale behind the policy is that the university wants admissions, registrar, development, etc. to continue working but is telling faculty they can’t teach classes which creates an inequity.

- Some students report severe anxiety about classes on Zoom because of their experience in the pandemic.
 - Please continue to comment on the policies.
 - Suggestion to include the rational and whatever benefits are intended for the changes in policies under comment/review.
- b. Another federally mandated research misconduct change is coming our way. Can we link our policy to the Office of Research, Grants, and Contracts instead of updating the faculty handbook for each federally mandated change? We could insert a line that any changes must come through Faculty Senate.
 - Are we really not in compliance? In the past we were told we weren't in compliance because federal law stipulated that we have "at least 30 days" whereas our policy stated 45 days. A: We will get clarification from Legal.

8. Adjournment (4:39pm)

Submitted,
M. Providenti, Secretary