

Professional Concerns Committee

Minutes for February 19, 2026

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

Members in Attendance: Deborah Amend, Ali Balapour, Eric Barker, Ada Cenkci, Whittney Darnell, Gina Fieler, Jaesook Gilbert, Allyson Graf, Patrick Hare, Erin Kelley, Rachelle Janning, Jang-Chul Kim, Jered Moses, Makoto Nakamura, Joe Nolan, Michael Providenti, Tamara O’Callaghan, Kathleen Quinn, Holly Riffe (Chair), Ihab Saad, Kurt Sander, David Tataw, Jessica Taylor, Maggie Whitson, Matt Zacate

Guests in Attendance: Provost Diana McGill, Janel Bloch, Faculty Senate President Jacqueline Emerine, Grant Garber, Grace Hiles, Suk-hee Kim, Danielle McDonald, Steve Slone

Members Not in Attendance: Julie Mader-Meersman, Dee Mornah, Monica Wakefield,

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 February 5 meeting.
 - The minutes for 2/5/26 were adopted as distributed.
3. Chair’s Report and Announcements
 - Despite PCC not recommending changing the date for CTP reappointment notifications, the BoR is putting forth a resolution on the matter despite faculty having voted on the date.
 - Discussion:
 - Is this the BoR amending the Faculty Handbook on their own? A: No, because they say this change is only in effect for one year.
 - Is there any action faculty can take? A: Faculty could pass a resolution through PCC or Senate.
 - Has the BoR ever reversed a recommendation of the faculty regarding the Faculty Handbook before? A: No, not that anyone remembers. But the BoR is not overturning part of the Handbook – the resolution is to not adhere to the notification of non-renewal date notification for CTP faculty only for this year.
 - Was there a request for the BoR to do this? A: The chairman of the BoR notified the faculty and staff regents that this would be on the agenda. It does not appear that there was a request to do this from anyone in the cabinet. This was framed as a fiscal decision. It appears this was not a

decision made in a BoR meeting but rather an announcement of the chair.

- This issue could be discussed in Senate. Is there a different way to send these notifications to CTP faculty? Reminder that the CTP faculty are the only employee group that have a date for non-renewal notification – there is no date attached to visiting faculty and staff.
- The BoR resolution gives the institution flexibility to offer letters later than normal if needed. The BoR resolution does not require letters to be sent later. And the resolution is only for one year, it is not a change to the Handbook.
- The deans are doing what they can to avoid cutting any filled positions in the event of cuts to education in the state's budget.
- PCC should probably not act on this before the BoR acts. If there were a resolution, it might say that faculty expect the BoR to follow the Faculty Handbook.

4. New Business

- None at this time.

5. Old Business: Free expression policy (Grant Garber)

- HB 490, the “anti-tenure bill,” passed out of the House and will go to the Senate.
- Update on progress of the free expression policy: work started in the fall, there is not yet a proposed draft, and the committee has met twice. Expect two more meetings, then a draft. The proposed policy will come to PCC, Senate, and then the BoR in June.
- There was a presentation which started with the four university policies that touch on free expression: 1) free expression policy from 1990, updated in 2011; 2) posting materials; 3) speakers from off campus; and 4) uninvited speakers from off campus.
- The policy grants rights to members of the campus community.
- Protests are allowed to occur without reservation and without notice. The Dean of Students determines if something has become disruptive.
- Prior permission is required to use amplified sound. Flyers and posters are required to be date-stamped before posting.
- First Amendment rights and academic freedom are not the same thing, but they are related. There may be a statement regarding academic freedom in the free expression policy.
- Kentucky has a campus free expression act since 2017. It protects the rights of the campus community: faculty, students, and student organizations. NKU's policies are already aligned with this law.
- The government and public institutions like NKU generally may not create rules governing expression or enforce rules governing expression based on the government's assessment of the value of the speech or the social utility, or worth of the speech, or whether the speech is correct or not.

- Viewpoint neutrality would say that we cannot pick and choose which events are allowed to be advertised based on the nature of the event, the identity of the organization, or the content of the poster (with some exceptions).
 - Typically, hate speech is protected by the first amendment. Discriminatory harassment, based on a protected class, is illegal under state law and for some classes under federal law.
 - From a Supreme Court opinion: “the vigilant protection of constitutional freedoms is nowhere more vital than in the community of American schools, because a college classroom is peculiarly the marketplace of ideas.”
 - Two hot topics in committee:
 - How and under what circumstances, and according to what guardrails, should we allow third parties to engage in expressive activities in outdoor spaces on campus. What should the rules be?
 - Content-based assessment of objectionable speech. What can someone say and not say? Context matters: something on a sign marched around would be interpreted differently than if it were directed at a specific individual (e.g., taped to a dorm-room door).
 - Historically, the First Amendment has been an anti-majoritarian shield; popular opinions don’t need protections.
 - To what extent is a staff member with a particular scope of responsibilities allowed to use work time and work resources to engage in advocacy on campus issues internally – there are limits to that for government employees.
 - The First Amendment applies to all people in the country, not just to citizens. However, immigration enforcement has chilled free speech in a manner that is inconsistent with the first amendment.
 - Enforcement risk used to be assessed according to legal risk. These concepts have started to separate a bit.
 - From a First Amendment standpoint, one does not have a right to disrupt the speech of another speaker. However, one can engage in counter protest.
6. Announcements
- None at this time.
7. Adjournment (4:26pm)

Submitted,
M. Providenti, Secretary

- 1.7.1. Emeritus Faculty

Revised: Fac. Sen., 1.16.2020/BoR, 3.18.2020: Clarified the process and removed requirement of tenure.

An “emeritus” designation is a way of honoring retired or deceased faculty or administrators who held faculty rank.

1.7.1.1 Such persons hold the faculty title and rank held immediately prior to their retirement, followed by the title emeritus, emerita, emeriti, or emerit. The default title remains “Emeritus.” “Emeritus” status designations may be granted upon or after retirement or death and are conferred by the Board of Regents, following the process set forth in Section

- 2.11. EMERITUS FACULTY DESIGNATION

Revised: Fac. Sen., 1.16.2020/BoR, 3.18.2020: Clarified the process and removed requirement of tenure.

A department, school, or program faculty may nominate a retiring, retired, or deceased faculty member for appointment to designation as an emeritus status. To be nominated, the faculty member must hold (or have held) academic rank. Normally, a person will have served the University for a long period to be appointed. Such a nomination will be given to the dean by the chair or director, forwarded to the provost, and then to the president. The chair or director, dean, and the provost may make their own recommendations about the appointment of the faculty member when forwarding the nomination. The default title will be “emeritus” while emerita, emeriti, or emerit may be requested by the faculty member.

Emeritus status may be conferred only by the Board of Regents, and then only upon recommendation by the president (see Section 1.7.1 “Emeritus Faculty”).

<https://www.nku.edu/content/dam/academicaffairs/docs/facstaffsecure/FacultyHandbookNKU-2025fall.pdf>

Passed PCC unanimous support 2/5/26

1.3. Full-Time Teaching Faculty

Revised: Fac. Senate, 5.3.2024/BoR, 6.12.2024, Pres. Rec. C-11, p. 138-141: Updated position titles and renewal timeframes; the previous heading of this section was "Full-Time, Non-Tenure-Track, Renewable (NTTR) Faculty" and the position titles were formerly Lecturer, Lecturer II, and Senior Lecturer.

Full-time teaching faculty hold the rank of Assistant Teaching Professor, Associate Teaching Professor, or Teaching Professor. Teaching faculty perform full-time teaching and service duties as stipulated by the University and their appointment form. 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 generally hired as an Assistant Teaching Professor with a minimum one-year appointment. Subsequent teaching faculty contracts are renewed for an additional two-year (Assistant Teaching Professor) or three-year (Associate Teaching Professor and Teaching Professor) appointment, contingent on positive annual performance reviews as well as support from the department/program chair and dean/director/vice provost. 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**.

Proposal by Provost McGill is to change this date to May 1.