

DATE: 19 November 2012

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Post-Professor Development Opportunities Committee

FINAL REPORT of the Post-Professor Development Opportunities Committee (ad hoc)

At the May 2012 meeting, the Faculty Senate charged the Post-Professor Development Opportunities Committee to explore opportunities for professional development of those faculty at the rank of professor. Note that “professor” refers to full professor rank. This report outlines the findings, including the results of a survey to determine faculty sentiment regarding possible further development opportunities/rewards for those faculty in the rank of professor. The Senate wanted feedback from all faculty at any rank, since all are potential stakeholders in opportunities at the rank of professor.

NKU Professor Population

Professors make up a significant fraction of the NKU population. The current breakdown of NKU tenured/tenure-track faculty by rank (including those currently serving in administrative positions) is

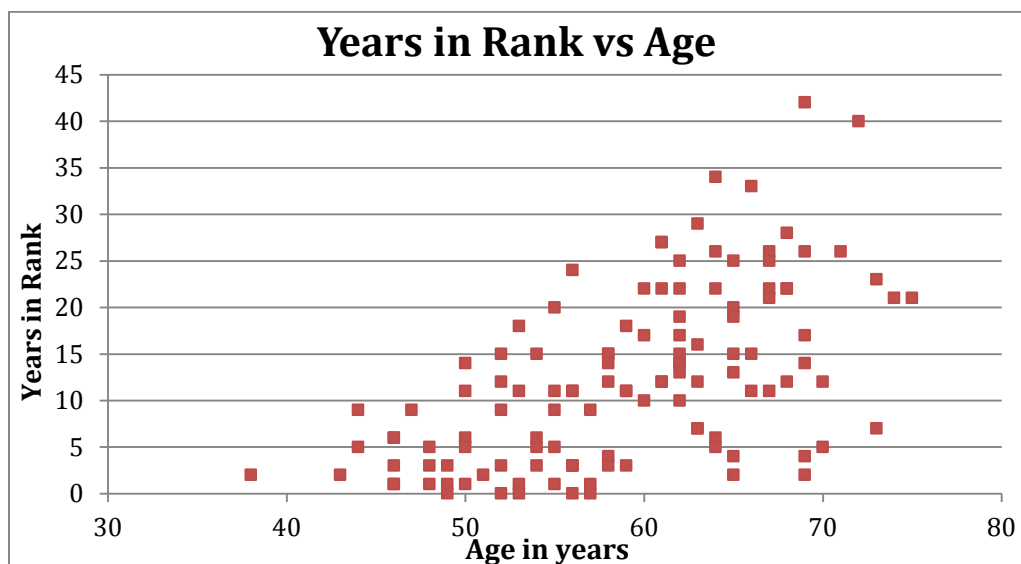
125 assistant professors

186 associate professors

120 professors

TOTAL: 431

Thus professors constitute 28% of all tenured/tenure-track faculty and about 40% of tenured faculty. Their average age is 59; the average years in rank is 12. The youngest professor is 38 (years in rank: 2) and the oldest 75 (years in rank: 21). The average age that the rank of professor was obtained is 47. Hence the “average” professor still has approximately 15-20 years of service left to the university after attaining the rank, without opportunity for a significant increase in salary unless he/she goes into administration.



Survey Results

Towards that end, this Committee created and administered an all-faculty survey. The survey was opened on 16 October 2012 and closed on 7 November 2012. The survey generated 217 responses from across the university. Participation by faculty in individual colleges was reasonably proportionate to the number of faculty in each college. The majority of respondents were faculty at associate rank (40%), followed by professor (35%) and assistant (25%). Over half the respondents had been at their current rank less than five years, and, of the faculty who identified themselves by gender, the number of male and female respondents was almost equal.

The survey requested participants to rank three possible development opportunities:

A. Distinguished Professor/Librarian Rank

- Rank given above the rank of professor in recognition of exceptional activities in the areas of teaching, scholarship and creative activity, and service.
- Standard 8% salary increase added to base salary (equivalent to percentage increase for other rank promotions).
- Rank retained throughout the remainder of the individual's NKU career.
- Minimum of five years in rank of professor at NKU required for eligibility.

B. Distinguished Professor/Librarian Award

- Award given to professors in recognition of exceptional service in **one** of the following areas: teaching, scholarship and creative activity, or service.
- Award consists of three hours reassigned time per semester for three years OR annual stipend for three years.
- Faculty may reapply for the award.

C. Do nothing. The current system at NKU is adequate, and no further incentives are needed at the rank of professor.

A ranking of all three choices was required, and no two could be ranked equally. Survey results are attached to this report.

Without question, **Proposal A**, the creation of a new rank beyond that of professor, was the preferred choice by over half (57%) of the respondents. **Proposal B**, the creation of an award, was the second choice by 70% of respondents, and the first choice of just under 22% of the respondents (half of those not choosing Proposal A). **Proposal C**, do nothing, was the third choice of 68% of respondents and the first choice of just under 22% of respondents.

A few themes emerged from the comments. Many of the respondents indicated that they felt both **Proposal A** and **Proposal B** should be implemented in order to recognize sustained outstanding accomplishments by faculty and to inspire faculty to work towards promotion to professor and beyond. Several preferred time to pursue scholarship more important than a pay

raise. In addition, several faculty suggested that, if an award is created, that it be available to faculty at **all** ranks, not just professor. Finally, concerns were expressed over funding availability, and there was some discontent with the current process of moving from associate to professor rank.

Distinguished Professor Rank at Other Institutions

The rank of Distinguished Professor is awarded by universities to their most accomplished faculty. Professors earning this rank have achieved prominence in their discipline and have demonstrated a sustained record of exemplary performance. NKU's benchmark institutions that confer the rank of Distinguished Professor include SUNY College at Buffalo, University of Akron, University of Southern Maine, and William Paterson University of New Jersey. The rank is also conferred at the following institutions of higher education:

- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Kansas
- University of Vermont
- Indiana University
- University of New Mexico
- University of Idaho
- Missouri State University
- Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville
- University of Utah

Existing Awards

There are currently nine university-wide awards plus Regents Professor available to recognize tenured/tenure-track faculty excellence for more than 400 faculty. Each of these awards is limited to only one faculty member per award per year. The benefits are limited, and Regents Professor is awarded infrequently.

1. **Faculty Excellence Awards.** Offered annually. Eligibility: All tenured/tenure-track faculty. Benefits: \$1000 development funds through awardee's department budget or a \$1000 stipend, plaque, certificate from GCCU (Greater Cincinnati Consortium of Universities).
 - a. **Sustained Excellence by a Faculty Member (over a 7-year period)**
 - i. Teaching
 - ii. Scholarly or Creative Activity
 - iii. Outreach and Public Engagement
 - b. **Excellent Performance by a Faculty Member (for past year)**
 - i. Teaching
 - ii. Scholarly or Creative Activity
 - iii. Public Engagement

2. Outstanding Professor Awards

- a. Frank Sinton Milburn Outstanding Professor Award. Offered annually. Eligibility: Teaching Faculty (50% or higher) with three year record. Benefits: one-time \$3000 stipend, plaque, certificate from GCCU.
- b. Online Outstanding Professor (sponsored by Educational Outreach). Offered annually. Eligibility: two semesters of online teaching in last two years, any instructor (full/part time). Benefits: plaque, \$500 stipend.
- c. Outstanding Advisor Awards (sponsored by Advisor Resources Center). Offered annually. Eligibility: any advising faculty with three years advising experience. Benefits: one-time \$1000 stipend, plaque, certificate.

3. **Regents Professor Award.** Offered infrequently. Eligibility: Professor rank. Benefits: Three years 50% reassigned time with \$8000 annual stipend, followed by three years at 50% reassigned time with \$4000 annual stipend, and the opportunity to reapply for three years at 25-50% reassigned time after the first six years with no stipend.

Committee Recommendations

As a result of the survey and other studies, the Post-Professor Development Opportunities Committee makes the following recommendations for Senate vote.

1. Establish and Implement a Distinguished Professor Rank

The survey clearly supports this recommendation. Such a rank will recognize faculty who have continued to distinguish themselves after attaining the full professor rank, inspire assistant and associate professors to aspire to a higher career trajectory at this university, and give NKU a new way to highlight the quality of our finest faculty and the students they teach.

2. Create Major Awards across All Ranks

Although Proposal B was not the first choice of the majority of faculty, it was a significant second choice and cannot be dismissed. In particular, the comments on the survey identified a real need for more available reassigned time for faculty to pursue major initiatives in research and creative activity, service, and/or teaching in order to move up in rank. A pool of reassigned time has historically been available to faculty at NKU, but it no longer exists. The current faculty awards available provide little financial compensation and no reassigned time. The creation of a major award at each rank or one across all ranks that offers significant financial compensation and/or reassigned time would serve to recognize faculty accomplishment, provide support to build substantially on that accomplishment with the goal of promotion to a higher rank, and create a culture that inspires faculty to progress in rank.