

Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities

January 24, 2020 Report

Submitted by Lauren McClain, Chair

In attendance: Lauren McClain, James Barker, Natasha Gerstenshlager, and Dan Clark (by phone)

We proceeded with the meeting although we did not have a quorum to vote – all votes were taken by email.

1. Update on Paid Parental Leave Policy: CAD sent the policy back to our committee with only one substantive change (and a couple wording edits that do not substantively change the policy). Their change was to offer the 16 weeks of paid leave in total if both parents work at WKU, instead of them each getting 16 weeks. We discussed this and while we would prefer that both parents have access to leave, we understand the concern that if both parents work in the same department, it would place significant burden on that department. The vote on this policy (attached) is 7 yes, 1 no. We will continue to think about other potential compromises when both parents work at WKU.
2. Child care options on campus: this was tabled until our next meeting.
3. Changing our charter to allow inclusion of non-Senate members on the committee: smaller colleges/library often have fewer Senators than there are standing committees, which places undue burden on those Senators to serve on committees. This has resulted in vacant seats on the committee, burnout among members who are on multiple committees, or members to be on the roster but not attend. The proposed change to the charter would allow Senators from a smaller college/library to select a non-Senator to serve on the committee. The vote on this policy change is unanimous.
4. Campus Free Speech Protection – An ad hoc committee of members of Faculty Welfare (James Barker and Jacob Bly) and Academic Quality will work on crafting a reaction to this statute and create a policy at WKU.
5. Post-tenure review procedure: This committee was charged with reviewing our post-tenure review procedure. Currently, all faculty go through an annual review process, even post-tenure. Some on campus think that tenured faculty should not have to go through an annual review – perhaps a 3 year review instead. Informal surveying has resulted in an even split of people who prefer one option over the other. We will do a short faculty-all survey to see what the will of the faculty is to inform our efforts going forward.
6. Sabbatical Policy: Our current sabbatical policy only specifies that faculty have to be tenured to take a sabbatical but does not address when faculty can apply. As a result, faculty have typically applied in their seventh year (after being awarded tenure in their

sixth year) for a sabbatical in their eighth year (which is out of line with the idea of a sabbatical – from the Hebrew for seven). A review of other universities in Kentucky shows that our practice is out of line with our peers. As a result, we have added a sentence in the Sabbatical Policy that says that faculty may apply for a sabbatical in their sixth year. Since faculty are not eligible for a sabbatical unless they are tenured, in the event that a faculty member applies and obtains a sabbatical for the seventh year but is not given tenure by the end of the sixth year, the sabbatical would be void.

7. Grievance Policy and Appeals of Non-Continuance and Tenure Denials: Both of these policies were discussed and preliminary research into other universities' procedures was presented. We will continue to work on these and vote on changes at the next meeting.