

## Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee Report

March 20, 2020 – Via Zoom

Submitted by Lauren McClain, Chair

Members present: Lauren McClain, Natasha Gerstenschlager, Jacob Byl, Julie Lee, James Barker, Melanie Asriel, Conner Hounshell

### Old Business:

1. Post-tenure review process – changing from annual review to every 3 years – Lauren was not able to get these changes made prior to the meeting so we will discuss and vote on recommendations next month.
2. Lots of Handbook changes:
  - a. Revisions to Continuance: Addition to make clear what is sent to the Board for review
  - b. Revisions to Financial Exigency: Brings our procedures in line with AAUP recommendations
  - c. Revisions to Grievance VIII.B: Eliminates the process that currently requires faculty to attempt to solve issue informally and then go through the chain of command in one's own college for policy violations against a member(s) in that chain. (This is then connected with the subsequent change in the next revision)
  - d. Revisions to Grievance VIII. C. and D.: Presents a different procedure to be followed when filing a grievance.
  - e. Revisions to Program Closures: New language makes explicit that Colonnade is an academic program and faculty contributions to Colonnade have to be considered in decisions to eliminate faculty positions when there are program closures.
  - f. Revisions to Tenure process, Promotion for tenure-eligible lines, and Promotion for Instructors (three different places in the handbook): New language allows faculty who receive a negative recommendation at any stage of the process to include a memo responding to that recommendation with 15 days of notification which will be included in the packet going forward.
    - i. All of these handbook changes were supported unanimously. The Chair sent them all to Faculty Handbook Chair, Kirk Atkinson, on Monday, March 23, 2020.
3. Tony Glisson and Thelma Jackson (Director of WKU Childcare) were invited to join us to talk about childcare benefits, lack thereof, and ways to potentially move forward with changes – Tony could not make it and Thelma had technical difficulties getting on to the Zoom meeting. We will meet with them soon.

### New business:

4. Faculty Worklife Survey: We decided to make a few changes to the survey. Namely, we eliminated the section of questions about the Strategic Plan, we added a section about WKU's response to COVID-19 and the impact on faculty work/life balance, we added a

section about diversity/inclusion and how supported people here feel based on their sociodemographic characteristics and disability status, and we added a section on faculty confidence in CAPE, the CPE project, the Compensation Study, and RAMP. We will administer the survey on Tuesday, March 24 and leave it open for 3 weeks, sending a total of 5 reminders.

5. We discussed SITES for this semester and considered a resolution about if or how they should be used given the nature of this semester. We decided that we need more time to think about it and tabled it indefinitely with the note that McClain would check to see if the SITES for this semester could be changed to add questions about the transition to online learning.
  - a. When McClain checked on this semesters' SITES, the question was forwarded to Rob Hale, as Academic Affairs was already discussing this. Hale indicated that their discussion centered around (1) making SITES option for continuance, tenure, and promotion for this semester with a note that opting not to use them should not be used against faculty in any way, (2) that there would be at least an open-ended question added to SITES about the transition midsemester. McClain offered to write a few closed-ended questions to be considered for use. McClain also suggested that in the email to students, they are encouraged to consider the early part of the semester (and the original plan for the full semester) when answering the first questions and then answer the new questions about the transition. McClain sent suggested questions to Hale, who discussed them with Deans and DHs. Three quantitative questions were selected in addition to the qualitative question originally suggested by Hale. Faculty Welfare then voted electronically on this plan. The vote was 8-0 (2 did not respond) for the additional questions and 7-1 (2 did not respond) for making SITES optional for C, T, & P this semester. We also made the recommendation to Hale that DHs be directed to review all SITES for faculty in their department and if any significant failure to move the course online or make reasonable accommodations for students came up in the evaluations, the DH should meet with the faculty to discuss. The questions are as follows:

The following statements are in reference to the time since the transition to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am satisfied with my professor's quality of communication.					
My professor responded to emails within a reasonable amount of time (1-2 business days).					

My professor provided a clear plan for how the course would proceed after the transition online.

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Open Ended Question: Comment on the transition of this course to the alternative learning environment in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.