

**Subject:** Faculty Fellows Question

**From:** "Hale, Rob" <rob.hale@wku.edu>

**Date:** 11/22/2021, 4:34 PM

**To:** "Jaggers, Trish" <trish.jaggers@wku.edu>

**CC:** "Fischer, Bud" <robert.fischer@wku.edu>

Dear Trish and FWC,

I conferred again with the interim HR director and consulted with General Counsel and then spoke again with the Provost about concerns that some faculty have about the participation of faculty fellows in preparing annual evaluation documents for a dean to review. I explained to him that the committee was not as concerned about associate/assistant deans doing this kind of work (even though some committee members had concerns about the selection process), but that it was particularly about colleagues in these shorter term, *fellow* roles.

As I explained at the last FWC meeting, the fellow in this case would not evaluate faculty performance but would be preparing them for the dean to review by putting some data in a spread sheet and highlighting any factual errors. As we discussed, this role is along the lines of a souped-up office associate who is facilitating and streamline work. The faculty fellow would also make observations about the process to recommend improvements for the process as part of his work in the role.

Provost Fischer, Andrea Sherrill, Andrea Anderson and I agree, based on our different roles/perspectives, that having a faculty fellow prepare evaluations in this manner is appropriate, legal, and within the spirit of the faculty handbook and past protocols. If a faculty fellow were to breach confidentiality, that would obviously be a problem, but we should presume that colleagues taking on these roles would be professional and unbiased when they leave the role, similar to the way a department head, dean, or associate dean returning to the faculty would be professional and unbiased if they return to the faculty. While the handbook (II.X and VI. B) references a workflow whereby evaluations travel from a DH to a dean, we don't believe that precludes any clerical work preparing the files—office associates and asst./associate deans have often had knowledge of the content of evaluations materials and have assisted the deans as they make their evaluations. The emphasis in these sections of the handbook is on the authority of the evaluation (who makes the actual evaluation as packets move through the chain) and the amounts of merit increases.

We've advised the dean that we believe the plan to involve a faculty fellow in this process is appropriate, but we've left it to her and her leadership team to decide if she wants to carry on with this approach.

I'm around tomorrow morning (or after break) if you want any additional information or if you have questions.

Best,  
Rob

--

Rob Hale (he/him/his)  
Associate Provost for Faculty & Academic Excellence  
Professor of English  
Western Kentucky University  
270-745-5776