

Fairmont State University
Faculty Senate Condensed Handbook
Comments

January 26 Special Meeting

Members Present: Chuck Shields, Donna Long (VP), Paul Reneau, Jason Noland, Tom Cuchta, Todd Clark, Cassidy Greenwood, Janet Floyd, Jim Davis, Nathaniel Myers, Nina Slota, Rachel Cook, Robert Niichel, Stephen Rice, Tabitha Lafferre, Zachary Taylor, Stephen Roof, Tim Oxley, Todd Clark, Victoria Nichols,

Guests: J. Robert Baker, Rick Harvey

General note: consistency, format and spacing throughout the document. Lots of double spacing, inconsistent use of capitalization, font, etc.

Forward:

Positive comment: gender term and pronoun usage. The section on syllabus “post syllabus”. It is appropriate to transition the language to “Faculty courses” or “their courses” to be gender neutral instead of using him/her, his/her.

Include date of revision.

Faculty Support Services:

There was a note on tutoring, the name should be changed in the document to the LEAD Center. However, the name of this center has changed several times over the last few years, so, it is important to also ensure there is some contextual language to make it clear should the name change again before another revision of the handbook.

It says media requests have to get approval before talking to any media. At the last Faculty Senate meeting with Provost, he stated we only need to get URM approval if we have a FERPA or HIPPA issue.

Big Blue Button no longer exists but is listed. But, we should have something on any captioning services that might be available.

“We also encourage the use of skype”. No one has said that to me. I don’t know if that needs to be in there or not. There used to be Skype integrated into our platforms. But, we have TEAMS which likely replaces it.

Probably need to make it more generic like “Virtual conferencing” or something. Specifically saying Skype could lead to issues if we end up not supporting it.

Grievance Policy:

Please include a chart timeline of the maximum length of time at each stage. Todd Clark stated he could do this.

Please include language about AFT being a union available as an option to faculty. That could be a short separate section.

Faculty Benefits:

Question: It doesn't talk about what happens with leaves of absence in the tenure clock if you aren't tenured. (i.e. in cases of cancer requiring time off)

The other comment is much of the language assumes 9-month contracts instead of 12.

Use of the word contract? Cindy has consistently told us we don't have contracts, letters of appointment are not contracts, so I'm not sure that is the right term there.

In this document under cultural and recreational activities, it talks about the Department of Music. Even if the dissolution goes through it still would not be a department of music.

Similarly, dramatic productions, are we going to have those?

The second page, leave of absence talks about accrued annual leave. Who gets that as faculty? Chairs and Deans? It might be useful to put something in about who accrues and who doesn't.

Identify specifically what a FEAP is and where the fall (staff, faculty, etc.)

Retiree benefits: Get something in there about emeritus faculty and what the process is, guidelines, and criteria. We can make sure there is something in there about Emeriti faculty.

12 month faculty hired July 1 and thereafter. Two classes of employees are exempt, should we know which two are exempt?

Last page, use of picture ID, I don't think we need them for the parking garage anymore.

Governance (General Information):

Should there be an org chart? Or a link to it?

Language "BOG is subject to the oversight to the HEPC" I don't know what that means. I think it may be undergoing change right now. There are a few places in there that HEPC is referred to as having oversight, if this document is accurate, then HEPC should have said something about Theater and Music. So, anywhere it says HEPC someone needs to clarify what they do and can do.

General Counsel: Our general counsel has stated in senate that she represents the Institution period. This section is not accurate in that way. It may be accurate in job description but there is an opportunity for conflict of interest. It needs to be flagged as being problematic.

Similar thoughts in different sections, and whether we needed an unofficial handbook and official. One that describes how things actually work. The question is how far do we want to go with explaining how things work v. how they should work.

If any part of this handbook is binding, it needs to be accurate and clear. If I have a grievance against the U, GC is not going to represent me, so it seems problematic. On this particular matter, a new faculty or faculty in general should just be aware, this language sounds like GC will represent you in course, but that doesn't seem to be the case. We need clarification.

Faculty role in governance: The section on "the BOG and administration" being required to

involve students and faculty in institutional level planning when those groups are effected. I can think of one recent event where that has not taken place. If that is in the handbook. I would like it to stay there, and we need to be following that shared governance model.

In 9D.2, it also refers to tutoring and testing center, it should also be LEAD center.

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities:

Academic Advising:

It talks about advising students with disabilities, but we aren't going to know if a student has a disability unless we have had them in class, because we wouldn't have seen the accommodation papers.

A few sections where it talks about priority registration but it was an incomplete list. It wasn't clear.

Veterans section says they have to take at least 1 on campus class as part of their 12 credits, I don't know if that's an us thing or federal thing, but, for student veterans with disabilities there is the potential during COVID that they can't be on campus and need the disability accommodation, what does that do to their federal status or federal money?

Accessibility Syllabus Statement, says it should be in the syllabi, but, we were told since it was on the web we don't have to put it in there.

Accreditation/program review. In terms of the way it's written it says the chair/dean write the thing, it doesn't say that chair/dean have to show it to faculty before it goes to next level. So, if you trust them, you're fine, if you don't you won't know until later. So, if we can change those now would be a good chance. It would be nice to put in a feedback loop before it goes to the first level. Senate has discussed that we should have some "body" that has some oversight in program reviews, just like we do with the creation of programs. This is an area that needs to indicate how shared governance is going to work.

So, we need a complete list of who gets priority registration as a separate area, clarification on advising veterans and what veterans requirements are. This may be something there are links to since it's a federal thing and now a FSU thing.

In commencement: it doesn't say we are actually allowed to miss because of life issues, so it needs to have added "unless granted dispensation to be absent by their Dean"

In final exam, it calls final exam week a week, and because of COVID/calendar changes it's not a week. It also doesn't say anything about the remote option, but classes where students won't be in the building to take the exam. The language also does not explicitly allow for individual student meetings in lieu of a full class meeting, and if possible should reflect the 21st century nature of learning today where many finals are projects completed outside of class.

In incomplete policy section, it says that there is a form for incompletes to be filled out and it goes to Dean, in Cola at least, there is a form and it only goes up the chain if the faculty member or adjunct leaves, so in Cola the point of the paper is so that Dr. Kast would know which students were missing what if the adjunct wasn't around. Whereas this one says it has to go up to the Dean. [verify that this should be a campus-wide procedure]

On the grade modification form, it's unclear that the signature can be electronic (And it can be).

With the section on International Students and us supposed to tell whether they are in class or not, we don't get a list of them and we don't know which are or aren't. We need some kind of notification if we have an international student. I was on the international committee last year, and the response was that we don't expect you to turn them in, but to know who they are.

Didn't understand sabbatical item 3, which was Deans have to certify sabbaticals will not require additional costs. I would assume adjuncts would do overloads, which is an additional cost. So, maybe clarify that it won't require additional cost in addition to what is in #2.

Attendance policy listed is the attendance policy for normal times, not Covid times. So, I don't know if we care about that, but I also teach remotely so it doesn't matter to me

Syllabus for remote classes would be electronic, so there is no first class to discuss them as listed in our responsibilities.

There are some dates in here, under Curr. Proposal process, where it has a curriculum change has to become effective at, must be approved by April 1. We should probably refer to this by "last senate meeting of the semester" because with the semester dates changing with the institution of winter term, having these hard dates it won't be possible. Connecting it to the process of senate is going to be clearer.

Under "Review of outside services" There should be Periodic review of outside services of administrators. I don't know what that means. If there is one, who does the review? Is it made public?

Sabbatical leave: sabbatical leave is in WV code, I would like to know what that code is, I would like a link to that code and how much leeway the I has before they can cut off sabbaticals.

The section on classroom equivalencies, when we get into the question of what a FEAP is, where they are in faculty we have coaching, private music lessons, this section needs some attention.

I hope at some point we will get more information about Travel since it is under review.

Of course, we have the email as the official form of communication, but we don't have access to a list serv which should be flagged.

Under the Veterans Section under disabilities, it says some are reluctant to register with accessibility services. I can't imagine not working with any student but, how is that fair to the students that when we do say you have to show me documentation or I can't make that accommodation. I don't know what to do with this language. It did strike me as potentially creating an unfair situation for other students. The question becomes why is that in here, and not just about any student.

Workload: Can we compare this with letters of appointment? Then, I want to register my dismay that the fact that chairs workload has been changed to 9 hours of teaching, they used to get 2 course releases, now they only get one. I think that is outrageous. I can speak for my chair, she is busy all the time doing the work of the department. I think it's outrageous that change was made. That they are now 50/50. I don't know when that change was made, I think it's recent. I think it's unfair and really puts chairs in a position that is untenable. On that point, It talks a lot about the differing workload of chairs but then outlines a blanket course release.

There are a number of places in this section that speak to program review. As we have been saying, that issue of who has oversight, shared governance in program review, there is language

that suggests that should happen. Again, this speaks to what the HEPC is supposed to be doing at this juncture. Looking at the code and mentioning the HEPC, this does not jive with what happened with theater and music to my mind (pg 5) so I want to make sure we have the right information.

Faculty classification and evaluation, classroom equivalencies. Our current allotment for load is that we get 2 hours for a 3 hour lab for majors, and 1 hour for a 2 hour lab for our non majors. That is not reflected in this load. So, I have asked out Dean if there is paperwork to support this if upper admin does a quick calculation of progress for promotion, tenure, etc. The answer is no. I would like to suggest adding a caveat like “or as determined by the Dean” as some accreditation also explicitly outline this (science, nursing, etc.)

Faculty Development and Awards:

At one point it talks about the teaching assignments being made by a meeting with the Dean. I don't know if that happens in other places, but in Cola it is department chair if it happens at all. So, that needs changing.

Other: when it talks about the scholarship of discovery, first paragraph says publication and presentations. Examples it only says publications. Given many of us don't have time to write, it would be nice to just have that double emphasis that presentations are useful for tenure as well.

Faculty Recognition award, it used to be two awards, it should now reflect that there is one. That sentence is not even necessary.

Under Service: second bullet point, greater prestige and usefulness in the community, state, and nation...lets be global!

Faculty Classification and Evaluation:

For bio/sciences we had some concerns over the FEAPs. I didn't even know what the acronym stood for, and it's not spelled out. So, clarify that.

Concern that FEAPs are falling through the cracks since they aren't really considered faculty, so are they considered staff? do they clock in/out? do they accrue leave? So, clarification needed.

I had a similar comment on what is their status, really, and should they have a seat on Senate if they are Faculty Equivalent? Someone mentioned earlier they may be moved to staff status. So, it's an open question.

Term Faculty: Be more explicit in the method for conversion to tenure-track. Right now the onus is not on anyone to try to make it happen. We shouldn't be hiring someone we wouldn't want to be tenure track. It should provide advice or counsel on how a faculty member might go about achieving that transition. Is there a section on moving a faculty member from non-tenure track to tenure track. It's worded in terms of what happens at the end of the first term, it doesn't say what happens after the second term or later. It doesn't say how many terms you can do, by not specifying that It's unlimited there is an opportunity to set the precedent that you're one term or two terms and you're done.

Do we need to add a section on how faculty should interact with new non-tenure track hires? A lot will say “You'll probably be converted” when the University is under no obligation to do that. I think that's a mistake we are all making, because a lot of fine faculty may look elsewhere if it is unlikely they will be converted. We should also consider maybe something for Deans, but as we

were informed earlier that Deans don't consider themselves bound by verbal or informal agreements by previous deans. Again, this is a situation where Deans are also saying things, not putting it on paper, and maybe faculty should be advised to get the terms in writing so that it's clear what those terms are. We are far too vague in this section, and giving far too little advice on how to proceed.

Under Standards for Academic Rank and Promotion

In multiple spots it will say something like "received national professional awards" why not international? Also delivered presentations at national awards, why not international as well?

Back to term faculty: The question of whether or not term faculty should be promotable, even if not up for tenure, that they should be able to be promoted to associate and full professor even if not tenured. If you go to the page it's on, the title of the section says application procedures, promotion, tenure, or both and suggests they are separate things. The way it is written it should be able to be that way.

I'm wondering if we should try to stay away from separating promotion from tenure. You can get tenured without a terminal degree, but you cannot get promoted without one.

Need explicit explanation of how classroom observations work for online only asynchronous (and synchronous) only instructors as far as P&T process. Does the Dean just log into your Blackboard over a period of time and track what you do?

Counting Advisees: One of the things that's interesting is that we don't have a specific date on the calendar to count the number per semester. They vary a lot by semester. So, if we have a standardized day everyone is compared on the same day.

For classroom equivalencies, student teaching didn't have a ratio but everyone else did. Student teaching supervision is not counted toward a course release, so not sure it is needed. [Note from Jason: I spoke to Sharon about this because it is not something that is happening. She thought this was removed, but said she would double check and/or make sure it should actually be removed]

Portfolio section needed to be revised to mention digital measures.

With Collegiality, if you're giving someone tenure they should be collegial, but, it also implies that if someone doesn't think you're collegial they can deny you tenure not based on your work, but because they decide you're uncollegial. I would also hope that if they aren't collegial they would have been fired.

The other thing that was interesting, was that in the awards section we talk about that model of Scholarship, but in tenure section we don't. So, if I were wanting to read about tenure, I might not read in the award section. So, we might want it both places. Maybe it can be its own section, and both refer back to it.

The other thing, do we actually have a specific date that the appointment letters go out, or not really? Is there any way we can get a date? .

Documentary Evidence: Specialized course materials, particularly those using instructional technologyI see no reason to privilege that.

Emeritus status and how that process works needs clarification.

Pg 12, reference to private music lessons.

Page 13, MFA for degrees in theater performance. I don't know if we want to remove them, but, they potentially may be out of date.