

Faculty Affairs Committee 2020-2021 Year-End Report

Members: Beauvais Lyons (chair), Julie Andsager, Thomas Berg, Cheryl Greenacre, Justin Jia, Brian Krumm, Mary McAlpin, Elizabeth MacTavish, Kai Sun, Jessica Westerhold.

Faculty Senate Bylaws:

Faculty Affairs Committee. Membership shall consist of nine faculty members. The Faculty Affairs Committee shall concern itself with the adoption and amendment of faculty governance policies and rules, including the development and refinement of criteria and procedures for faculty appointment, promotion, retention, evaluation, the granting of tenure, retirement, and discharge for cause. The Faculty Affairs Committee is responsible for reviewing proposed revisions and recommending changes to the Faculty Handbook and its appendices in accordance with the amendment's procedures set forth in the Faculty Handbook. The activities of the Faculty Affairs Committee shall be conducted at all times in a manner consistent with the Trustees' Policies Governing Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure, as the same may be amended from time to time and shall be guided by faculty governance best practices in higher education, especially those identified and promoted by the American Association of University Professors.

Posted Minutes from 2020-2021:

- [August 31, 2020](#)
- [September 28, 2020](#)
- [October 26, 2020](#)
- [November 23, 2020](#)
- [February 8, 2021](#)
- [March 8, 2021](#)
- [April 12, 2021](#)

Initiatives and Outcomes:

1. The committee worked closely with new Vice Provost Diane Kelly to ensure open communication and to help build a collaborative relationship regarding several initiatives that she has prioritized for the year. As reflected in our August meeting, these included (1) review of systems, process and workflow related to faculty affairs, (2) establish a task force to examine non-tenure track faculty titles and types of duties, (3) create a working group that focuses on APPR processes, including timeline, implications of COVID-19 on annual evaluations, and (4) strive to address the hiring and retention of under-represented faculty. Many of these efforts are ongoing and will continue into the 2021-2022 academic year. The committee also worked with Vice Provost Kelly on many of the topics outlined in this report, including a plan to review the handbook for style updates.

2. Help to bring the bylaws of all colleges and departments into compliance with the *UTK-UTIA Faculty Handbook*. [The October 10, 2020 audit](#) reflects some progress, but with changes to the *UTK-UTIA Faculty Handbook*, the rubric for the audit needs to be revised. Two key areas for revision are (a) the removal of references to the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*, and (b) establishing college and department-level criteria for the promotion of non-tenure track faculty. These efforts are ongoing and will continue into the 2021-2022 academic year.
3. The committee brought [a set of Faculty Handbook changes](#) to bring it into compliance with new BOT policies or editorial corrections impacting chapters 1, 3, 4 and 5. These were approved by the Faculty Senate in October 2020.
4. The committee brought changes to two handbook sections, the [“Other Policy Documents”](#) from Section 1.11 and [Appendix I](#) to the Faculty Senate for approval. These were adopted by the Faculty Senate at the February 2021 meeting.
5. In April the Faculty Senate approved [a series of handbook changes](#) (reviewed by the committee on February 8) that stem from new UT Board of Trustee policies adopted in December 2020 regarding 3.11.4.2 Extension of Probationary Period, and 3.11.4.6 Enhanced Tenure-Track Review.
6. The committee has sought to follow up on the [Resolution on Bullying](#) that was approved by the Faculty Senate on November 18, 2019. It was supported by a [Report on Policy on Bullying](#) and a document with [Bullying Language from Multiple Universities](#). Last year the Provost established a Task Force on Bullying to develop policy language, but the work of this task force was significantly delayed by COVID-19. The committee will continue to pursue this work and propose handbook language to be reviewed in 2021-2022.
7. The committee worked with the Office of the Provost to advocate for the discontinuation of the PPPR Policy. Chancellor Plowman made a case for reversal of the policy at the October 2020 UT Board of Trustees meeting. The process was suspended during the 2020-2021 academic year.
8. In coordination with Rachell Caldwell and Michelle Brannen from the Libraries and Technology Committee, we provided input into their white paper on [“Crediting Faculty for Open, Public Access to Research and Scholarship as Outreach Service in APPR,”](#) which was presented at the April 5 Faculty Senate meeting.
9. The committee met with University Ombuds Lisa Yamagata-Lynch at our March 8, 2021 meeting to consider areas where university policies may need to be addressed based on her experience. In addition to issues of invisible labor for faculty of color, one area of concern she identified was the lack of clarity and mechanisms for promotion to full professor. There was discussion of the role of the department head in this process, the need for clear criteria for rank, the rights of faculty to pursue promotion regardless of the recommendation of a department head.
10. Beauvais Lyons has been in communication with the Anne Langendorfer and Mark Stanley (co-chairs of the NTTF Issues Committee) both of whom are serving on the NTTF Task Force regarding issues including: (1) Dismissed without-cause under 5.6, (2) Dismissed for cause under “Code of Conduct” Section 3.12.3, (3) Non-

renewed for poor performance, and (4) non-renewal for budget changes, program flexibility, specifically “Reduction in Force” rules, which may have particular currency in the current budgetary uncertainties. (5) Another issue is compliance with the handbook in making sure NTTF letters of appointment include an assigned percentage of effort. This work will need to be pursued through the summer and into next year.

11. As part of the September 14 Faculty Senate Executive Council meeting committee chair Beauvais Lyons presented a paper on his [“Thoughts on the Importance of Retention Reviews During a Global Pandemic.”](#)
12. One item on our list of goals for the year was to explore if they university might pursue early retirement initiatives, especially in the context of COVID-19. This is something the committee was not able to pursue.

Areas of Continued Work for 2021-2022:

1. BYLAWS AUDIT: Work with the Office of the Provost to ensure college and unit bylaws remain in compliance with the *UTK-UTIA Faculty Handbook*. Recent changes eliminating the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* will require all bylaws to remove these references and ensure that college and department bylaws include criteria for rank for non-tenure-track faculty. It is hoped that the committee will have administrative support from the Faculty Senate GRA and new full-time administrator for this effort.
2. HANDBOOK REVISIONS: Work with the Vice Provost Kelly on handbook revisions as needed, including changes proposed by the Faculty Review and Promotion Taskforce.
3. NON-TENURE TRAKC FACULTY: Work with the NTTF Issues Committee on handbook revisions as needed. Jessica Westerhold will continue as a liaison for our committee to the NTTF Task Force
4. BULLYING POLICY: Advocate for progress by the Bullying Task Force and seek to include a policy on bullying in the handbook.
5. PPPR: Continue to work with the Office of the Provost to advocate for the elimination of the PPPR policy.
6. OMBUDS: Maintain strong communications with the University Ombuds.

Committee Membership in 2021-2022:

Beauvais Lyons has agreed to continue to serve as chair. As this will be his last year on the Faculty Senate, he will seek to prepare a member of the committee to succeed him in 2022.