

Faculty Senate Policy Committee

Meeting Notes

September 1, 2021

3pm – 4:30pm

- Members Present: Karen Armitage, Lee Brown (co-chair), Tito Busani, Robert Christenson, Matthew Hofer, Monika Nitsche, Jacob Ormsby, Karen Patterson (co-chair), Brandon Schmandt
- Members Absent: Min Young Ro
- Ex-Officio Present: Ami Levi, Vice President for Academic Affairs, HSC; Nancy Middlebrook, University Secretary; Barbara Rodriguez, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost; Brandon Toensing, Associate University Counsel, Office of University Counsel
- Ex-Officio Absent: N/A
- Guests Present: Jesse Alemán, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
- Staff Present: Felisha Martinez, Administrative Coordinator, Office of the University Secretary; Carol Stephens, Professional Consultant, Office of the University Secretary; Caitlin Wells, Operations Specialist, Office of the University Secretary

Meeting began at 3:00 pm with introductions by the membership, ex-officio members, and staff.

Quorum was achieved at 3:10 pm and the meeting was called to order by co-chair Karen Patterson.

1. Approvals

The committee voted to approve the agenda. The minutes from the previous meeting (June 4, 2021) were amended to correct a few typos and approved.

2. Updates

A61.2 “Faculty Senate Curricula Committee (FSCC)”

Updates to policy have been approved by the Faculty Senate Operations Committee. The policy was updated on the Faculty Handbook website and notice was sent out to campus.

A68 “Branch Community Colleges Council”

The policy was approved by Faculty Senate on August 24, 2021. The policy was updated on the Faculty Handbook website and notice was sent out to campus. The Council is beginning its work and starting to meet.

C07 “Faculty Misconduct and Progressive Discipline Policy”

The C07 task force met at 9 am on September 1, 2021, to discuss previous Board of Regents concerns with the policy as well how the policy relates to C70 “Confidentiality of Faculty Records.” The group agreed to revisions to address the Board’s concerns with the understanding that the Policy Committee would revise C70 this year. Carol Stephens will incorporate these changes into a draft and then the policy will be ready to go to the Faculty Senate for approval.

3. Discussion Items

D176 “Graduate and Professional Student Conduct and Grievance Procedures”

Associate Dean of Graduate Studies Jesse Alemán attended the meeting to discuss concerns about the informal resolution process in the current draft of D176. He noted that graduate students might be reluctant to submit a grievance when the faculty member they are grieving against is in a position of power over them, such as an advisor, committee member, or graduate director. Lee Brown suggested that the policy give students the option of meeting with the UNM Ombuds/Dispute Resolution Services for Graduate Students, as an alternative to meeting directly with the faculty member. This ombudsperson is a graduate student who is trained in mediation through the Ombuds office. Carol Stephens noted that the parallel policies for both staff and faculty do mention meeting with the UNM Ombuds office, so this would put the graduate student policy in line with those. There were concerns that this might overload the graduate student ombudsperson, who works 10 hours a week, but Alemán did not think this would be a problem. Stephens will work with Alemán to outline the alternate informal grievance process and bring it back to the Committee.

Previously, Amy Levi and legal counsel had voiced concern that D176 allowed HSC graduate students to appeal to the Executive Vice President of HSC, giving them an additional level of appeal not given to other graduate students. Carol Stephens removed this language from the policy and walked the Committee through the changes.

Carol Stephens will update the policy and bring it back to the Committee for approval. Because changes are both above and below the line, the policy will have to go out for campus comment.

The Committee discussed the comments from the Graduate and Professional Student Association President David Saavedra about how the policy does not cover non-degree professional/graduate students. Because non-degree students are covered by policy D175, they do not need to be included in D176.

C70 “Confidentiality of Faculty Records”

Karen Patterson and Carol Stephens provided an overview of C70 and why it is up for review. At this point, there are multiple files in different locations that contain faculty information. Carol Stephens encouraged the Committee to take a strong stance on faculty records and information, including what constitutes a personnel file, what can and cannot be documented, where the files must be kept, and who is allowed to create them, as well as the responsibilities of file keepers to protect the information in those records. Stephens noted that the collective bargaining agreements with UA-UNM specify what are considered faculty personnel records and that the Committee should review them while considering C70. As the Committee moves forward, Brandon Toensing will provide insight on the Inspection of Public Records Act and how that law might affect policy. The Committee will review the current policy and continue the discussion over the next few meetings.

Carol Stephens gave the committee an overview about why C70 came up in the course of revising C07. The Regents were concerned by a section of the policy that in the case of an unsubstantiated complaint, the faculty member would choose whether that information was included in their personnel file. This was replaced by the C07 task force on the condition that the Policy Committee define exactly what goes into a faculty personnel file.

A66 “Policy Committee”

There was a brief discussion about whether to amend the committees charge to allow review of bylaws, guidelines, and procedures, in addition to policies. Stephens noted that any changes to A66 would be “above the line” and have to go out for the full faculty comment and approval process. As the meeting time was coming to a close, the Committee has postponed this discussion for a future meeting.

5. Action Items

A53.1 “Policies Applicable to Faculty”

The Committee decided to postpone discussion and action on this item until the next meeting.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:33 pm.