

Faculty Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities (FRPR) Committee
October 8, 2013
Meeting Minutes

Present: Rick Hale, Kirk McClure, Mario Medina, Jerry Mikkelson, Amalia Monroe-Gulick, Jan Sheldon

Absent: Jim Thorp

The FRPR Committee met on October 8, 2013 at 2:00 pm in 4070 Dole Human Development Center.

Approval of Minutes from September 24, 2013 meeting

Jerry Mikkelson moved and Mario Medina seconded approval of the minutes from the September 24, 2013 meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Post-Tenure Review Discussion Update

Jerry Mikkelson provided an overview of the special Faculty Senate meeting that occurred on September 26, 2013, where there was a discussion of the draft of the post-tenure review process. Rick Levy who helped draft the post-tenure policy presented information and led the discussion, and many Faculty Senate members asked questions. Jerry indicated that the meeting was very productive.

Freedom of Speech Update

Jerry Mikkelson stated that other than the articles and letters to the editor in the Lawrence Journal World, he had no further information regarding Professor Guth and his situation. FRPR members reiterated their concern that freedom of speech should be protected.

Faculty Code of Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct

The FRPR committee worked for 2 years on researching faculty codes at other universities and drafting a new code, which had not been updated since 1971. The Faculty Senate approved the proposed code on May 3, 2012. It was sent to the Provost on September 6, 2012. FacEx received the Provost's edits in September, 2013. A few weeks ago, Jerry asked Chris Steadham, FacEx president, to send him a copy of the proposed code with the Provost's edits. Jerry passed out the code with the Provost's revisions. Jan indicated that Chris Steadham invited her to attend the October 22nd meeting of FacEx where the code will be discussed. Committee members asked Jan to ensure that FacEx is aware of the fact that we would like to be given the code officially so that we may comment on it.

After a discussion of the Core Curriculum, members emphasized that it is important to add a right to the Faculty Code indicating that the content of a course, definition of course assignments, and course assessment should be determined by the faculty member who is teaching the course.

Core Curriculum Charge

Committee members reviewed the first charge that was given to them by FacEx:

Gather information on the Core Curriculum course nomination, review, approval, and appeal processes. Consider how policies and procedures might facilitate implementation of the Core Curriculum while also ensuring that the Core is ideally compatible with academic freedom. Report findings and recommendations to FacEx.

Jan passed out materials describing the Core Curriculum, each goal, learning outcomes, criteria for evaluating courses, and assessment rubrics. Members briefly reviewed these materials and a discussion regarding the Core ensued. Members were concerned about the criteria for evaluating whether a course (or series of courses) met a learning outcome, and members felt that these criteria were too specific. For example, General Education Goal 2, Learning Outcome 1 states that “[e]ach of the two three-credit hour courses that meet this outcome must achieve all of the following: . . . 4. Evaluate the quality of students’ written communication, and use this evaluation for a supermajority of the final course grade.” In the School of Engineering, there are several required courses where students must analyze issues and complete a lengthy written paper. The “supermajority” of the final grade in these courses, however, is not determined by the grade on this written paper. Thus, this combination of courses would not meet the criteria for this learning outcome. FRPR committee members felt that these very specific criteria could, in fact, impinge on a faculty member’s right of academic freedom to determine the content of a course and the way students are evaluated in that course. Committee members felt that there may be concerns about substantive issues (i.e., content of a course and evaluation of students) and procedural issues (e.g., the approval and review process). Committee members also noted that faculty may not truly have the option of not having their course meet a core requirement since the number of students enrolled in a course is used for resource allocation including GTA assignment and faculty raises.

Members emphasized that it is important to add a right to the Faculty Code indicating that the content of a course, definition of course assignments, and course assessment should be determined by the faculty member who is teaching the course.

Chris Steadham sent Jan the names of three people, Ruth Ann Atchley (psychology), David Smith (sociology), and Judy Roitman (math), whom it would be good to invite to a discussion regarding the Core. Kirk McClure offered to call David Smith and invite him to our next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15.

Next meeting: Tuesday, October 29, 2013 at 2:30 pm in 4001 Dole