FRPR Committee FY2024 Final Report

<u>Committee members:</u>
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Kevin McCannon (Chair)
Eugene Parker
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The committee met two times (once in Fall 2023 and once in Spring 2024).

Several of the committee's charges were impacted by faculty unionizing efforts. The Ad-Hoc Committee organized by Faculty Affairs in 2022 to recommend guidelines for the Teaching Professor title series was put on hold indefinitely by Faculty Affairs. Similarly, the Ad-Hoc Committee that was working on the Procedures of the Faculty Rights Board for Hearing Cases Involving Dismissal of a Tenured Faculty Member was put on hold pending the union vote. Thus, the committee could not move forward with those charges.

In Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, the committee discussed the low response rate of Student Surveys of Teaching and the implications for Higher Learning Commission requirements and related faculty responsibilities to provide quality education. We learned from Sr. Vice Provost Roberts that this process is part of HLC Criterion 3.C. "The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services," subcomponent 4 "Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures" (https://hlc2025.ku.edu/). The University would provide two pieces of information as evidence that we meet this Criterion: an overview of the process that is used, a sample of questions, how and when the survey is sent each semester, and a description of how the results are used to improve teaching. Results are shared with both supervisors and instructors (faculty, GRA, lecturer) and are typically part of multiple evaluation policies depending on the instructor's career track.

We discussed barriers to student completion of the survey, including their perception of the lack of immediate impact on their current course experience, and effective strategies to improve response rates. It was agreed that it is not the responsibility of the faculty to increase the responses. We also raised the question of whether faculty should be responsible for measuring the quality of education for the University.

- **Recommendations**:
    - Communication to faculty and students reminding them of the Student Survey of Teaching, especially closer to the end of the semester, needs improvement.
    - Consider alternative forms of faculty teaching assessments that can be used for HLC purposes (e.g., faculty-created surveys of their own classes).

On the question of faculty intellectual property rights, the committee discussed if and how these rights are communicated to faculty, including what constitutes faculty intellectual property for faculty- vs university-initiated "mediated courseware," i.e., online courses. The committee was unsure of who was communicating this information or if it had and when.

- **Recommendation**: Faculty intellectual property rights need to be communicated clearly to faculty by the appropriate unit (e.g., Faculty Affairs) regularly to ensure all faculty know what rights they have to the content they create for their courses, in-person and online.

The committee discussed if existing academic misconduct policy was sufficient for protecting faculty rights to change past grades when academic misconduct is discovered on assignments already graded. We agreed that the existing syllabus policy is sufficient if faculty expectations for academic honesty are communicated clearly to students in the syllabus. The committee also discussed the implications of discovering student AI use that is in violation of class policies after grades are posted and agreed that the existing syllabus policy is also sufficient to protect faculty if expectations for AI use are clearly communicated to students in the syllabus. We further discussed the extent to which faculty interpret AI use as academic misconduct and observed that, while there is not a consistent approach across faculty, different interpretations are in line with academic freedom. It was suggested, however, that faculty could use more guidance on AI in general.

- **Recommendation**: Faculty need clear guidelines at the university level on acceptable student AI use.

Future Chair: Elizabeth Berghout volunteered to be Chair for the upcoming year.

Recommendations for the 2024-2025 FRPR Committee and Potential Charges

1. Continue to monitor and collaborate with Faculty Affairs and other relevant units on work regarding non-tenure track (contingent) faculty.
2. Continue to monitor and collaborate with the Faculty Review Board on work regarding dismissal of tenured faculty members.
3. Formalize FRPR communication with Faculty Senate to ensure the committee is aware of relevant discussions and are able to act accordingly.
4. FRPR should consider having a co-chair/chair elect to ensure continuity across terms.