

2020-2021 Academic Affairs Committee Report

- Faculty Handbook Changes Approved and Implemented for Fall 2020:
 - Chapter 2, Section IV – Change allows faculty applying for promotion to Full Professor to be ‘grandfathered’ under previous promotion guidelines for a 3 year period after guidelines are revised.
 - Appendix J – Change allows Affiliate members of the Graduate Faculty meeting all listed qualifications to chair committees for final projects of professional practice doctorates.
- There was discussion surrounding proposed changes to the Emeritus policy. The Emeritus policy is under review again because it was not officially presented to the Board of Trustees. Before it is sent forward, some changes were being made. The rewrite under discussion eliminated the inclusion of faculty in the process. The Steering Committee felt it necessary to include the faculty in the process based on existing precedent: Faculty are involved in all tenure, promotion and retention reviews. The Steering Committee will return the document to Vice Provost Joel Brouwer to ask that the original language and procedures be reinstated. Other changes to the document were minor and accepted by the Steering Committee.
- The committee was asked by the Provost to review the final exam schedule proposal recommendation. Courses have been added over the past years without final exam schedule revisions. Some evening courses have pushed some students into multiple finals on the same day. Some final exams have been shortened from 2 ½ hours to two hours with a 30 minute break in between instead of an hour. One hour between 12:30 and 1:30 would be scheduled for lunch. Exams would end at 8:30 PM instead of 9:30 PM. There would be five finals scheduled in a day rather than four exams. Overall the committee supported the proposed final exam schedule. The only suggested change would make the final exam more parallel with the student’s class schedule and for the taskforce to look at the suggested change to make sure there are no conflicts or problems.
 - The proposal was passed at the January meeting, but with reservations from many senators. Representatives from the registrar’s office presented at the February senate meeting and the senate voted again with stronger support.
- The committee met with Provost Han regarding the “Academic Misconduct Policy” changes. There are significant issues – student has five days to respond to complaint; student doesn’t speak English and doesn’t understand complaints and needs a University approved interpreter; when student doesn’t respond/ permission to move forward; student advisor accompany student into meeting.
- Met with Dean Messina to discuss first-year tenure-track faculty retention reviews which proposes eliminating first year reviews. This issue will go back to Council of Deans.
- The Committee presented proposed changes from the Office of Academic Affairs to the Leaves Associated with Distinguished Fellowships, Awards, and Grants Policy. OAA claims to have benchmarked revisions against policies across the country. The discussion included numerous comments and concerns from senators
 - Committee met with Joel Brouwer to discuss the proposal more in depth. It was then discussed at the March steering committee meeting and the committee agreed it would not pass a senate vote so it was decided we not move forward with it

Items for 2021-2022

- Continue following results of the General Education Task Force
- Address concerns about “piecemeal” faculty handbook changes
- Address faculty concerns with tenure/promotion requirement changes
- Follow up with Provost regarding compliance training policies for faculty