
PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

Minutes of 15 February 2023

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Professional Concerns Committee was called to order at 12:30 p.m. on 15 February 2023 via Webex conferencing by John Miller, chair.

Members in Attendance: John Miller, Timothy Palmer, Elizabeth Terrel, Rena VanDerwall

Member Absent: Karen Schieman

Advisory Members Present: Joseph Erskine, Kathy Mitchell

Ex Officio: John Jellies

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by Palmer, seconded by Terrel, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Jellies, seconded by Terrel, to approve the 18 January 2023 minutes as provided. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Miller updated PCC on the response rate to the survey designed to collect data from deans, unit heads, and directors about policies currently in practice that are associated with student conduct residing outside of Faculty Senate policies. Thirty-five units have responded. A follow-up request will be sent from the Faculty Senate for all units to respond. The intent is not for PCC to become involved in the content of unit conduct policies, but to ensure a review cycle is in place.

Ex Officio Jellies did not provide a report. The most recent meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Board held with President Montgomery did not include information pertinent to PCC.

Reports of University Representatives

Erskine reported that WMUx will have training associated with artificial intelligence and academic integrity (e.g., ChatGPT). GPT stands for generative pre-trained transformer, which is a program that can realistically write like a human. The focus will primarily be on how to embrace technology rather than contest it. Erskine reported that student misuse of products like ChatGPT is already covered under policies associated with student cheating.

Mitchell reported there is no news about filling the Ombuds position upon her retirement in early May.

Unfinished Business

Chair Miller and Terrel will prepare a report for the Faculty Senate on the activities and accomplishments of PCC.

Chair Miller updated PCC on the status of Memorandum of Action (MOA) 20/03 regarding a syllabus template. An ad-hoc syllabus committee (2019-20) formulated proposed guidelines for the creation of a syllabus template. Additional ideas were added by the Office of Faculty Development. The revised proposal was sent to the Undergraduate Studies Council for review in October 2022. USC recommended the specification of two categories, "required" and "recommended," with bulleted lists for each.

PCC considers that some items on both the required and recommended lists need explanation that could be provided by a glossary. Additionally, some items on the recommended list could be clarified through document editing. PCC members were asked to suggest edits to Chair Miller before the next meeting on 15 March 2023. PCC final edits will be returned to the Faculty Senate Executive Board, who will then forward the MOA to the Graduate Studies Council for review.

New Business

Chair Miller communicated with WMUx about the need for faculty training for processes associated with the Office of Student Conduct and the Ombuds Office. WMUx expressed interest in assisting in creating learning modules that could be delivered through e-learning.

A PCC subcommittee consisting of Chair Miller, VanDerwall, and Palmer, with input from Mitchell and Erskine, will discuss the content and format of potential modules.

Announcements

None

Adjournment

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 1:27 p.m. The Professional Concerns Committee will meet next on 15 March 2023 at 12:30 p.m. via Webex video conferencing.

Approval

Submitted by Timothy Palmer, Secretary

Minutes approved on 15 March 2023.