
PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

Minutes of 19 April 2023

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Professional Concerns Committee was called to order at 12:35 p.m. on 19 April 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, Eric McConnell (substitute for Kathy Mitchell)

Ex Officio: John Jellies

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Agenda

An amendment was made to add to the Unfinished Business survey findings.

[MOTION] It was moved by Palmer, seconded by VanDerwall, to accept the revised agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Miller, seconded by Jellies, to approve the 15 March 2023 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Miller did not provide a report.

Ex Officio Jellies did not provide a report.

Reports of University Representatives

Erskine reported that the number of student conduct cases is increasing, which is typical at the end of the semester. Approximately 20 faculty and students attended the panel training. Erskine updated the PCC about nationwide trends in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and ChatGPT. Higher education is dealing with misconduct associated with AI, no different from other forms of cheating.

McConnell announced his appointment to the position of University Ombuds as of 8 May 2023. The office will be staffed by McConnell and a graduate assistant. All relevant PCC correspondence should be routed to McConnell.

Unfinished Business

Chair Miller and Terrel were unable to meet to discuss Committee Practices and Effectiveness.

Chair Miller updated PCC on progress associated with Memorandum of Action (MOA) 20/03: *Syllabus Template*. As recommended by the Undergraduate Studies Council and discussed by PCC at the March meeting, Miller added lists of required and recommended elements of the syllabus to the MOA.

The MOA was revised to add the following recommendations:

1. Designate required topics that are relevant to all course offerings and suggest topics that are recommended by the best-practice literature; some of the recommended topics may not apply to all courses.
2. Provide an optional Syllabus Template to include examples of the required and recommended topics, with accessibility features implemented in its design.

[MOTION] It was moved by Jellies, seconded by Terrel, to approve MOA 20/03 as amended. The motion carried unanimously. The revised MOA and Course Syllabus Template will be forwarded to the Faculty Senate Executive Board.

The Faculty Training subcommittee met to discuss training modules to be facilitated by WMUx about processes associated with the Office of Student Conduct and the Ombuds Office. The subcommittee recommended three categories of modules that will require input from the Office of Student Conduct, University Ombuds, and Disability Services for Students. Categories of modules that were recommended include academic (mis)conduct, student concerns, including hardship and Disability Services for Students (DSS) accommodations, and syllabus issues.

New Business

Ex-Officio Jellies conducted PCC officer elections for the 2023-24 academic year:

1. Miller volunteered to continue serving as chair.

[MOTION] It was moved by Jellies, seconded by VanDerwall, to elect Miller as chair. The motion carried unanimously.

2. VanDerwall volunteered to serve as vice chair.

[MOTION] It was moved by Jellies, seconded by Miller, to elect VanDerwall as vice chair. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Palmer volunteered to continue serving as secretary. Since Palmer will be on sabbatical in spring 2024, Jennifer Bott will be his substitute on PCC and as secretary.

[MOTION] It was moved by Jellies, seconded by Miller, to elect Palmer as secretary. The motion carried unanimously.

[MOTION] It was moved by Jellies, seconded by VanDerwall, for PCC to meet virtually during the 2023-24 academic year. The motion carried unanimously.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m. The Professional Concerns Committee's next meeting date will be determined over the summer.

Approval

Submitted by Timothy Palmer, Secretary

Minutes approved on 20 September 2023.