
Professional Concerns Committee

Minutes of 20 September 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 20 September 2023, via WebEx conference by John Miller, chair.

Members Present: John Jellies, John Miller, Timothy Palmer, Rena VanDerwall

Members Absent: Michael Kahwaji (substitute for Elizabeth Terrel), Richard Meyer, Karen Schieman

Advisory Members Present: Joe Erskine

Advisory Members Absent: Eric McConnell

Ex Officio: Zeljka Vidic

Guests: Sarah Summy, Faculty Senate President; Sarah Meiser, Associate Dean of Students and Director, Student Rights and Responsibilities

Quorum

A quorum was present with five members in attendance, of whom five needed to establish a quorum.

Agenda

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

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Jellies, seconded by VanDerwall, to approve the 19 April 2023 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

President Summy presented the Professional Concerns Committee 2023-24 charges. President Summy encouraged PCC to review the charges and suggest additions and deletions if warranted.

President Summy left the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

Chair Miller reported that the year-end PCC 2022-23 report had been submitted to the Faculty Senate in April. He will forward the report to PCC for review.

Ex Officio Vidic did not provide a report.

Reports of University Representatives

Erskine reported that academic integrity cases are just beginning to be submitted. It is expected that cases this year will include issues associated with Artificial Intelligence.

Meiser indicated she will be accompanying Erskine to PCC meetings for the foreseeable future. Meiser requested that she and McConnell be given time on the October meeting's agenda to address PCC regarding trends associated with hardship withdrawal cases.

McConnell submitted a report electronically. The following were included:

1. Office of the University Ombuds has a new Graduate Assistant. The office is currently working on reviewing all physical appeals and informational forms as well as internet web pages to bring information up-to-date, improve accuracy, and better align with faculty-designed guidelines and University branding. McConnell will share proposed changes with Chair Miller. If warranted, Chair Miller will forward significant changes to PCC for discussion.

2. McConnell provided an update on faculty timelines associated with grade appeals. McConnell recommends giving the instructor 15 calendar days to return a request for a completed form or information before receiving a follow-up communication, then five business days before contacting the relevant department chair or program director. PCC supported his request for the unified communication timelines.
3. The Office of the University Ombuds is facilitating a formal grade appeal for a student whose relationship creates a conflict of interest with the Office of the University Ombuds. McConnell questioned whether having this appeal facilitated by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities was consistent with PCC guidelines.

[MOTION] A motion was made by Jellies, seconded by VanDerwall, that the grade appeal in question be adjudicated by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities as requested by the Office of the Ombuds. The motion carried unanimously. However, because the Ombud reports directly to the President's office, McConnell should also seek further guidance from WMU President Edward Montgomery.

Unfinished Business

Chair Miller discussed a process for finalizing Memorandum of Action (MOA) 23/XX: *Review Cycle for Academic Conduct Policies*. Chair Miller and Palmer will work on the MOA draft before the next meeting.

Chair Miller provided an overview of Elearning training recommendations identified last year associated with issues about hardship, Disability Services for Students (DSS) accommodations, and syllabus issues. It was proposed that WMUx will develop the modules. Representatives from WMUx and DSS will be invited to attend a future PCC meeting as their schedules permit to provide further guidance.

New Business

None.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Jellies, seconded by Palmer, to adjourn the meeting at 1:35 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Professional Concerns Committee will meet next on 25 October 2023 via Webex conferencing at 12:30 p.m.

Approval

Submitted by Timothy Palmer, Secretary

Minutes approved on 25 October 2023.