

# **Professional Concerns Committee Minutes for Jan 19, 2017**

**SU 109  
3:15 pm**

**Members in Attendance:** K. McErlane, K. Katkin, J. Farrar, S. Weiss, L. Wermeling, Y. Kim, A. Watkins, H. Ericksen, B. Buckley, M. Carrell, B. Mittal, S. Nordheim, M. Torres, A. Miller, K. Fuegen, J. Hammons, J. Gilbert, B. Zembrodt, B. Puente-Baldoceda

**Members Not in Attendance:** S. Alexander, K. Schwarz, K. Ankem, G. Newell, D. Dreese, K. Sander, S. Neely, T. Bonner, S. Finke,

**Guest:** Provost Sue Ott Rowlands, Kathleen Roberts

**1. Call to Order, Adoption of Agenda** – Agenda was adopted

**2. Approval of Minutes from PCC Meeting of Dec 1, 2016** – Minutes were approved

### **3. Chair's Report and Announcements**

Before the Senate meeting on January 23 at 2:45, two votes will be taken that are open to all faculty. The first vote will be for the new Faculty Senate Constitution. Changes include a new Handbook committee and a new Faculty Advocate position. The second vote will be to elect Senate officers for next year. Most offices are uncontested. Senate secretary is contested. Nominations can be taken on the floor.

The *New York Times* this week published an article on college affordability. The article contained a database with aggregate financial data about the wealth of the student body at many American universities, include NKU. The article revealed that NKU students have a median family income of \$84,000 per year. Less than 1% of students at NKU have moved from bottom to top quintile. The NKU data remains online at <<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/college-mobility/northern-kentucky-university>>.

The Provost is sponsoring a screening of "Starve the Beast," a film about political attacks on funding for public higher education. The screening will take place on Monday 2/13 at 6:30pm in the SU Ballroom. A panel discussing will follow the screening.

#### 4. New Business

- Discussion Item: **Consensual Relationships Policy** (Guest: Senior Advisor to the President for Inclusive Excellence & Title IX Coordinator Kathleen Roberts).

Kathleen Roberts presented a draft consensual relations policy and sought faculty input. As drafted, the consensual relations policy would be inserted into the current sexual misconduct policy (as section 7), rather than be promulgated as a separate policy. The draft would prohibit all romantic relationships between faculty members and students, except within marriage. It would also prohibit most romantic relationships between faculty members and staff members. Workplace relations between spouses and family members are governed by a separate nepotism policy.

Significant discussion ensued. Many PCC members expressed concern about the lack of clarity in the current draft about which relations between faculty and staff (or faculty and other faculty) are permissible, and which would be prohibited. The draft policy uses the phrase “power differential” but many PCC members thought this phrase was unclear, and some thought it was inappropriate. Some members thought the real problem involves power and control. Others thought it involved conflict of interest. PCC members debated whether consensual relationships were properly grouped with sexual misconduct, or, alternatively, whether a separate policy should be created. Several members proposed that Faculty and staff should have a way to report relationships reported with one another, so that workplace reporting arrangements can be revised to avoid conflicts of interest.

Because faculty and staff members can take courses at NKU, it was suggested that the draft policy’s definition of “students” needs to be clarified. Discussion also ensued as to whether graduate students should be categorized separately from undergraduate students under this policy. Several PCC Members suggested that if the policy goes into effect, it should make some provision for pre-existing relationships.

Kathleen Roberts said that she would redraft portions of the draft policy to reflect some of PCC’s discussion. She requested that PCC members with suggestions for inclusion should send written comments to her or to K. Katkin.

#### 5. Old Business

- Voting Item: **RPT Issues: Biennial Review**

PCC considered a proposed revision that would have changed the language in the faculty handbook to replace all references to one-year faculty contract terms with two-year faculty contract terms. Questions were raised about the impact of the proposed change on untenured faculty members currently in the RPT pipeline. Proposed solutions included delaying the effective date of the policy or letting those individuals opt for which review they preferred or letting them have an informal review on the interim year. K. Katkin said he would check with the

Provost to determine whether these proposed solutions would be acceptable to the administration.

There was a motion to table the vote so a solution for what to do with those in the pipeline could be found. Motion passed. Item tabled until the next meeting.

- Discussion Item: **Retired Faculty Participation on Sponsored Projects**

This item will be discussed at the next PCC meeting.

#### 6. New Business

- Discussion Item: **Statement of Solidarity – We Are NKU**

This item will be discussed at the next PCC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5PM