

**EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY**  
**2020-2021 Faculty Governance Committee**

The next meeting of the 2020-2021 Faculty Governance Committee will be held on **April 14**, at 3:00pm via video conference.

**MINUTES OF MEETING DATE:** Mar. 24, 2021

**PRESIDING:** Jeff Popke

**REGULAR MEMBERS ( X IN ATTENDANCE):**

Stacey Altman X, Cynthia Deale X, Michael Duffy X, Edwin Gomez X, Jay Newhard X, Jeff Popke X, Anne Ticknor X, David Wilson-Okamura X

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ( X IN ATTENDANCE):**

Crystal Chambers, Rep. of Chancellor X; Grant Hayes, Acting Provost / VCAA \_\_\_; Purificación Martínez, Chair of the Faculty X; Aundrea Oliver, Rep of Faculty Senate X; Mark Stacy, VCHS \_\_\_; Mike Van Scott, Interim VCREDE X

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Rachel Baker; Linda Ingalls for Office of the Provost; Lisa Hudson, Associate VCHS and Human Resources Administration Director; Wendy Sergeant, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Personnel and Resource Administration; Jocelyn Nelson, Music; Gail Ratcliff, Mathematics

**I. Call to Order, 3:00 pm**

**II. Minutes**

The minutes of Mar. 10, 2021 were approved.

**III. Continuing Business**

Recent changes to the language of fixed-term (FT) contracts that allow for early termination without due process.

Newhard: the new contract language addresses the university's business concerns, but not the welfare of its employees. Perhaps a cover letter could state that these measures could be taken but won't, and distinguish the new contract status from "at-will employment."

Van Scott: it's unlikely that the Office of University Counsel (OUC) would allow covering language that conflicts with the actual contract.

Newhard: true, but a cover letter could explain the contract language's intent.

Hudson: Health Sciences is concerned that our new language puts us at a disadvantage with other UNC institutions.

Popke reported a Health Sciences employee received a higher mortgage interest rate after the new contract language was shared with the bank.

Altman called on university administrations to revisit this issue.

Wilson-Okamura: with these new contracts, the university “manages its long-term risk” by transferring that risk to the 50% of our faculty that is most vulnerable. Among other things, the new contracts allow course loads to be reduced in the middle of a contract term. This was no doubt well-intended, but it could have the effect of pushing skilled, long-serving faculty members into part-time status without health insurance.

Chambers: how much of this new language was mandated by Board of Governors (BOG)??

Hudson: the UNC system office did not require this level of specificity.

Chambers suggested a review of the legal language by outside counsel.

Popke and Ticknor noted that midterm reduction of course loads was not mandated by UNC.

Martinez: to judge from my conversations with other faculty chairs, this new language is out of line with other UNC schools.

Van Scott suggested taking these points to academic council before going to the new chancellor.

#### Proposed rewriting of the grade appeal policy

Altman summarized: the latest draft incorporates suggestions made at the last meeting.

In Step 1, Wilson-Okamura suggested replacing “The parties are encouraged to seek common ground and come to a resolution” with “Many cases can be resolved at this stage by mutual listening.” This language encourages dialogue without setting the expectation of compromise. The suggestion was accepted.

Newhard moved to adopt the new policy as amended. Carried.

#### **IV. New Business**

##### Emeritus status in the Faculty Manual (FM): retiring vs. resigning

Depending on how they take retirement benefits, retiring employees have sometimes been classified as “resigning” or “separating” from the university, rather than “retiring”; this makes them ineligible for emeritus status.

George Bailey has suggested, via email, less specific language in the Faculty Manual’s description of emeritus status.

Ratcliff: parking and access to email are also linked with retirement status. We need to create another classification for faculty members (including fixed-term faculty members) who are resigning in lieu of requirement.

Van Scott: can we change the definition of retirement?

Ratcliff: retirement is defined at the system level, but the FM defines how post-retirement benefits are assigned.

Hudson and Sergeant made suggestions for navigating the bureaucracy in the short term.

Van Scott and Gomez: the crucial element is leaving professional life, not drawing an annuity.

Ingalls: the authority to confer emeritus status actually belongs to the trustees, who now delegate their authority to the chancellor. Retirement, however, is defined by statute and controlled through the state retirement system.

At Popke's suggestion, Ratcliff will take the benefits issue to the Faculty Welfare Committee.

Chambers suggested, to general approval, that emeritus status could be conferred on "a faculty member departing from university employ" rather than defining the specific circumstances of departure, as the FM does now.

Popke and Oliver cautioned: but we need to distinguish de facto retirements from someone who just quits after one semester.

Proposal from Martínez et al. to amend Faculty Manual, Part VIII with recommendations on contract length for each FT rank.

Popke summarized: these changes acknowledge the value of fixed-term faculty members and suggest a progression toward longer-term contracts.

Chambers suggested removing "budgetary...considerations" from the list of circumstances in which a line would be advertised as FT instead of tenure-track (TT), noting that sometimes we have hired someone as FT instead of TT because of timing rather than qualifications.

Ingalls: budgetary considerations were inserted by the trustees as a condition of their approval.

Nelson: to prevent "budgetary...considerations" from becoming a catch-all excuse, we could require units to explain the rationale.

Chambers: usually the units are requesting TT lines and getting turned down by a vice-chancellor.

Popke: budgetary considerations are real, and removing this phrase here won't change that.

Chambers: in many cases, however, the budgetary considerations are at the expense of strategic considerations.

Newhard: might we separate "budgetary" from "strategic considerations"?

Martínez: that would give "budgetary considerations" even more weight than they already have.

Chambers moved to replace “budgetary and strategic considerations” with “strategic considerations.” Carried.

Van Scott: this change probably won't get through. Another approach is to increase faculty representation on the academic council.

Popke summarized changes to the description of FT titles: duties are now described using the same language used for TT faculty members, and a contract term is now suggested for each title. These contract terms are calibrated to suggest a progression.

Chambers queried an insertion: “A faculty member may elect not to seek advancement in title during their career at East Carolina University.”

Popke: though we are suggesting a progression, we don't want to insist on it.

Chambers: but we also don't want to discourage research and service

Popke: we need to be clear, though, what counts toward the faculty member's workload.

Chambers: if a TT line opens, a viable candidate will need to have been engaged in scholarship, whether it's part of the FT workload or not.

Nelson added: in some disciplines, it's impossible to be a good teacher without also engaging in research. That work needs to be credited.

Altman: perhaps we might omit this problematic statement altogether.

Chambers: these scholarship and service activities need to be in the contract, though, and count toward the workload.

Popke: but units also need to be able to define what they actually need.

Nelson: historically, though, units have sometimes devalued FT faculty, especially women.

Nelson expressed concern about the university's growing class of permanently contingent labor: people who know our students and have a record of success in the classroom. FT faculty members need a path to become TT.

Hudson: if a position is initially posted as FT, a conversion to TT will require a new search.

Gomez: at my previous institution, Old Dominion, there was a process for converting someone from FT to TT status without a new search.

Hudson: in Health Sciences, we advertise our positions in a way that is open (TT or FT). This allows conversion later without a new search.

Nelson: diversity considerations can also facilitate conversion.

Sergeant suggested coordinating with OED on this issue.

Martínez: previously, the FM allowed for conversion when a FT faculty member was repeatedly rehired and was qualified for a TT position. This provision has been removed.

Altman: that removal is relatively recent. Our department was unsuccessful in petitioning for a conversion and lost a faculty member to a good institution.

Popke: let's look at what Chapel Hill does.

#### Teaching Instructor and Senior Teaching Instructor

Gomez suggested adding a third level of Teaching Instructor after Senior, perhaps "Master Instructor."

Wilson-Okamura added: the university can't run without FT faculty members who won't be eligible for a TT line because they don't have a PhD. Many of our best, longest-serving teachers are in this category. Rather than encourage them all to get a PhD, we should either have a third rank, or set the contract term for Senior Teaching Instructor at the level for Associate Teaching Professor: "typically...three to five years."

#### Research Instructor, Research Professor

Popke explained that Research Instructors and Professors are not usually hired with long-term contract expectations.

On the subject of staffing generally, Chambers observed: it's onerous for existing faculty members to get teaching status in a second department.

Popke agreed: if it's not an accreditation issue, we should try to make it easier.

Gomez: a workaround is to offer the course in the faculty member's home department and cross-list it in the second department.

Sergeant: transcripts for adjuncts are only required by SAACS if they aren't already on-file.

Discussion of the proposed changes terms will resume at the next meeting.

#### **V. Adjourned at 5:03 pm.**

Respectfully submitted, David Wilson-Okamura