

## **Report to NDSU Faculty Senate**

**May 20, 2022**

### **Faculty Affairs Committee**

*This report describes the activities of the Faculty Affairs Committee during the 2021-2022 academic year and plans for 2022-2023*

Faculty Affairs Committee Membership Fall 2021-Spring 2022

**Glenn Dorsam**, AFSNR

**Jessica Jensen**, AHSS

**Jeff Chen**, BUSN

**Lisa Arnold**, CSWF

**Jordi Estevadeordal**, ENGR

**Mark Strand**, HP

**Sara Crary**, HSE

**Jeff Johnson (Chair)**, SM

The Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) met a total of seven times during the 2021-2022 academic year. Meetings took place approximately monthly between October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Over the course of the academic year, FAC worked on the following policies:

- 1) Policy 361: Emeritus Title – in the Spring 2021 semester, FAC was asked to modify the existing Emeritus Title policy to more clearly enumerate the rights and responsibilities of Emeritus Faculty. This work continued into the following academic year as the policy proposal made its way through the approval pipeline. After undergoing a number of revisions, FAC was notified by the NDSU Internal Auditor that there were potential issues with a number of the enumerated rights. Ultimately, in a letter from the Provost's office, we were informed that any rights that involved a monetary value (e.g., wellness center membership, free or discounted attendance at musical events, etc.) would not be allowed. FAC discussed proposed modifications made by the Provost's office and agreed that they were reasonable. The policy modification proposal was resubmitted following our April, 29, 2022 meeting and is currently making its way back through the approval process
- 2) Policy 191: Data Ownership – in the Spring 2021 semester, FAC was charged with updating the NDSU Data Ownership policy. This work continued during the 2021-2022 academic year. Following submission of the policy change request, several questions and concerns arose from various sources, including Libraries, the NDSU Office of Research and Creative Activities, and Information Technologies. Following several discussions between FAC

members and Fred Hudson in RCA, it was decided to table the issue until the new Dean of Libraries was selected. This will be one of our main agenda items for the Fall 2022 semester.

- 3) Policy 159: Professional Liability Insurance – On the basis of concerns expressed by a former FAC member, in July, 2021, FAC members met with legal counsel from North Dakota United to get their input on whether NDSU faculty should consider purchasing personal professional liability insurance to protect against potential lawsuits from students or others related to classroom materials/content or other communications. Their opinion was that faculty would be covered under NDSU policy 325 in most such cases, assuming the content in question could be reasonably construed as being germane to the course or activity in question. It was decided that no additional action need to be taken on this.
- 4) Policy 325: Academic Freedom – In the Fall 2022 semester, FAC was charged with updating Policy 325 to incorporate new language that was added to SBHE Policy 401. These changes primarily strengthen the commitment to academic freedom and free speech rights granted to NDSU faculty, staff, students, and invited speakers/guests. Policy modifications were made and a policy change request form was submitted for consideration on 12/2/21. Policy 325 was reviewed by the Staff Senate in April 2022, who recommended some minor modifications to make sure Staff were appropriately included in some sections (e.g., the draft they reviewed did not acknowledge that Staff in a teaching role had the same protections as Faculty, which was an oversight on the part of FAC). The policy was approved by the Faculty Senate in its final meeting of the semester.
- 5) Student Ratings of Instruction/Student Course Experience Survey Transition Committee Recommendations – FAC was charged with following up on a set of recommendations related to the transition from SROs to the new SCES as a form of teaching evaluation. We made progress on two initial recommendations, including a suggestion to include additional statistics (e.g., median, and range, in addition to means and standard deviations) in the SCES report provided to faculty, and a suggestion to develop an alternate SCES form specifically tailored to lab courses. For the latter, we developed a survey that was circulate to departments that we identified as offering lab courses. The response rate to our survey was quite low, and several responses indicated that they didn't think an alternate form would be that useful. Nonetheless, on the basis of feedback received, we modified the form and will make it available to relevant departments to use as they see fit. Additional recommendations will be taken up and worked at the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester.
- 6) Policy 304: Post-doc hiring procedure – Dr. Sheela Ramamoorthy joined FAC for our March 25, 2022 meeting to discuss the possibility of a FAC-initiated modification of Policy 304. The concern was the time lag between receiving funding and on-boarding a suitable post-doc. Ultimately, Dr. Ramamoorthy and FAC Chair, Dr. Johnson, met with Alan Denton and Angela Fowler (Academic Personnel Coordinator), and it was decided that they would initiate a modification to the current post-doc hiring procedures. FAC will not take part in this going forward.

- 7) Policy 333: Class Attendance – In our final meeting of the Spring 2022 semester, FAC was joined by Patricia Dirk (Director of Student Health Services) and Emily Frazier (Assistant Dean of Students) to discuss proposed modifications to the NDSU class attendance policy. Following discussion, FAC approved the proposed modifications and Dr. Johnson submitted this policy change request form and associated documents on their behalf. We will continue to track its process through the pipeline in the Fall 2022
  
- 8) Travel Reimbursement Issue – FAC was asked to look into an issue that was brought to the attention of the Faculty Senate leadership by a faculty member who was denied reimbursement for a portion of a work-related trip they took during the Spring 2022 semester. This faculty member was denied a per diem and reimbursement for other expenses related to attendance at a remote workshop that took place two days following an in-person conference in Spain, on the grounds that the faculty member had sufficient time to make it home and attend the workshop remotely. The faculty's concern had to do with the fact that they had received initial approval for the travel and associated expenses following the regular pre-travel authorization process, and the possibility that other travelers, such as students or part-time faculty who might not financially be in a position to absorb the costs, could be denied expected reimbursement. After discussion with FAC, it was agreed that it would be useful for Dr. Johnson to meet with Lisa Ripplinger, the Controller in the NDSU Accounting Office, just to clarify current Accounting policies and procedures and to discuss whether anything could be done to prevent this sort of disconnect going forward. This meeting took place in Lisa Ripplinger's office in March, 2022. Lisa was familiar with the case and explained her office's reasoning and how it related to existing policy. One suggestion made by the faculty member who brought this forward, was for Accounting to review and approve travel authorization requests prior to travel. It was Miss Ripplinger's opinion, and Dr. Johnson agreed, that this would add an undue burden to her office, who would still need to review reimbursement requests following travel, and may still, in some cases, decline reimbursement. Dr. Johnson proposed that it would be helpful for the Accounting office to engage Colleges and departments to ensure that potential travelers are up to speed on current policies related to travel. Her office also agreed to research the policies and procedures in place at other NDSU peer institutions to see if any changes to current practices are advised. FAC expects to hear back from her later this summer and will report all outcomes to the Faculty Senate president as soon as this information becomes available.
  
- 9) Finally, Jeff Johnson and Sarah Crary served on the Ombud's Annual Review Committee, which met in October, 2021. Jeff will serve as the Chair of the Ombud's Committee in the Fall 2022, and Sarah Crary will continue as a member. Jeff reached out to the other members of FAC in search of a third member and will update Faculty Senate leadership once that individual is found.