

Faculty Town Hall on Faculty Handbook

March 25, 2021 at 11am and March 26, 2021 at 1pm

In March 2021, the Faculty Senate hosted two town halls asking faculty what they would like to see changed in the Faculty Handbook.

This document serves as a summary of the comments provided by faculty who attended the town halls or emailed the president. This summary will be provided to Provost Hale, Vice Provost Mathews, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and distributed to the Faculty Senate.

Navigating the Handbook

Problem

The handbook is large and related content is often in more than one section. It can be hard to locate relevant information.

Solution

Add a table of contents to the handbook.

Add an index to the handbook, so related content contained in multiple sections can easily be found. An index might also help recontextualize the handbook.

References & Links to Outside Policies

Problem

Throughout the Handbook references are made to outside policies and web sites.

Some of these policies, like the “Faculty and Family Care Policy” mentioned in 6.3.2 do not exist. Some of the web sites no longer exist.

Other referenced policies can be hard to find.

Suggestion

Someone needs to go through the Handbook and identify every time a reference is made to an outside policy or web site. These references need to be checked to see if the policy/web site exists. If the policy does not exist, then it needs to be created (i.e. Faculty and Family Care Policy) or removed from the handbook. Links to web sites need to be updated.

How the Handbook and College & Department Bylaws Relate to Each Other

Problem

The Handbook often defines things broadly and then leaves it to college and department bylaws to define things in more detail. Yet not all bylaws define or address these issues.

It can also be hard for faculty to find up-to-date versions of college and department bylaws.

Suggestion

A review of the handbook is needed to identify areas that should be further defined in college and department bylaws. Then guidance needs to be given to colleges and departments about how bylaws should be updated to address these areas. It would be helpful to have a menu of recommended sections for departmental bylaws. It might even be helpful to provide departments with templates or a table of contents for bylaws so departmental bylaws are organized in similar ways.

A web site (Provost's page?) needs to provide links to up-to-date bylaws for all colleges and departments.

RTP Related Content

Mid-tenure Review

There needs to be a more explicit definition of what should be included in a mid-tenure review.

Tenure

Criteria for tenure are very general / vague. Is this a good thing or a bad thing?

T/TT Promotions

There are few criteria provided for T/TT promotions – just references the criteria for appointment to rank. Would be clearer to list info in this section.

Guidelines for promotion to associate professor need to be clearer. It's usually tied to tenure, but there is wiggle room. Should there be?

NTT Promotions

There needs to be better guidelines (deadlines, procedures, etc) about NTT promotions and about length of NTT contracts.

Other

Modified Duties Agreement

The “UTC Faculty and Family Care Policy” (mentioned in the handbook) needs to be created and it needs to clearly state what modified duties agreement are, how long they can last, the amount of work expected to be performed, etc.

Workload

Need to spell out workload, while providing some flexibility.

Administrator Reviews

Administrators are not reviewed during their first year in a new position, and yet faculty are reviewed during their first year as a faculty member. First year reviews of administrators are important, especially for those serving on an interim basis and who may be considered for permanent appointment.

Contract Dates

Need to clearly state the start and end dates of 9-month contracts.

Library Faculty

The handbook lacks a definition of library faculty.

Office Hours Requirement

Often student / faculty interactions occur outside of set, in-person office hours (i.e. email, appointments, video conferencing, etc.). The policy needs to be updated to allow for a range of student/faculty interactions.