

AY 2023-24 Faculty Senate Handbook Committee Annual Report

Written by: Committee Chair Jaclyn Michael

Committee Roster: Jaclyn Michael, Carolyn Runyon, Nishani Vincent, Barry Kamrath, Thomas Huber, Julia Cummiskey, Matt Matthews

1. Regular meetings were held on the first Friday of the month: September 8, October 6, November (done by email), December 1, January 12, February (done by email), March 1, and April 5. Meetings were conducted in a hybrid format, with most members joining on Zoom. Meeting agendas and minutes are available on the Committee's SharePoint site: https://liveutk.sharepoint.com/sites/UTC_FacultySenateHandbookCommitteeAY23-24

2. The Committee's work this year started with checking all URL links in the current handbook for accuracy and validity. We then decided to focus on gathering input on Chapter Three by means of several Canvas discussion sections in October 2023. After review of this input the Committee generated two suggested revisions. The following revisions to the Senate Bylaws and Faculty Handbook were developed by, presented to, and processed by the Committee:

- **Chapter Three, Sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4:** insert “parental leave” as a reason why a faculty member may request a suspension of their probationary period (approved in the 3/21/24 Faculty Senate meeting 27-0-6).
- **Chapter Three, Sections 3.10.7 and 3.11.2:** insert the following language regarding votes on faculty reappointment and tenure (not presented to the Senate after conversations with University Counsel and the Provost)
 - No member of the departmental RTP Committee may abstain from voting. A member of the departmental RTP Committee is recused from voting on a candidate if they are serving on the college-wide Tenure and Promotion Review Committee as outlined in Section 3.5.1.3. Members should also recuse themselves in cases of a conflict of interest (perceived or real). Some common reasons to recuse include: a reviewer being a domestic partner or spouse of the candidate; a reviewer having a personal financial interest in the candidate's promotion; a reviewer being a direct relation to the candidate; if the reviewer has had a past or ongoing documented appeal, grievance, or formal complaint against a candidate or other significant past conflict, defined as a serious disagreement about a matter of importance to the candidate involved; if a candidate has had a past or ongoing documented appeal, grievance, or formal complaint against a reviewer. A potential conflict of interest should be discussed with the head of the RTP Committee and Academic Affairs prior to review of candidate materials.
- **Faculty Senate Bylaws:** update the process for the General Education committee regarding receiving student appeals to transfer GE credit. Appeals will no longer come from students; instead, they will need to come from the student's department. The change was approved by the GE Committee in February 2024. The Bylaws now read: “receive appeals concerning transferability of general education credit after review by the appropriate department.”

3. The Committee also took on the task of making the Faculty Handbook available online in a webpage format. Jaclyn and Carolyn took the lead on communicating our needs with IT, with Carolyn developing a mock site map for the developers to use. They will continue this work for the time being.

4. Unfinished business for next year's Committee includes:

- Completing the project of an online, searchable webpage based Faculty Handbook
- Revisiting the Handbook language regarding abstentions and recusals in voting procedures. The Provost is interested in the Committee developing and presenting two models for abstentions for faculty consideration, feedback, and a possible vote.
- Reviewing the specific recommendations from the 2023 Faculty Senate Ad-Hoc Committee on Faculty Wellbeing and Work/Life Balance and determining how they are addressed, or not, in the current Handbook

Respectfully submitted,



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