

Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee

Western Kentucky University

Report to the University Senate

Date: March 30, 2015

From: Dr. Patricia Minter, Chair

The Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee met on March 27, 2015 and submits the following report and agenda items for consideration to the University Senate:

Action Item and Background Documents:

1. Faculty Handbook Substantive Change: Recommendation for Board of Regents Approval of Faculty Handbook (supporting documentation attached; passed by University Senate in May 2014 but not approved by Provost) which was unanimously approved by this committee:

Other Items Considered and Rationales:

2. Field Trip Policy:
 - a. Policy 1.4180: Course-Related Field Trip Policy ([link here](#)) was tabled definitely at the Senate Executive Committee in March and referred to this committee for further consideration.
 - b. After further committee review, the Faculty Welfare Committee voted unanimously not to put the Field Trip Policy on the Senate's agenda for approval until the following information is provided:
 - i. Study Abroad/Study Away information: The Committee asks that Study Abroad/Study Away post relevant documentation regarding faculty code of conduct, rights and responsibilities, and terms and conditions of liability as soon as possible. We request that this link then be included in the proposed Policy 1.4180 so faculty members would have access to this relevant information when studying liability issues related to their field trip and study abroad planning.
 - ii. Terms and Conditions: The Committee thanks the office of Risk Management and Academic Affairs for providing risk management documentation showing individual coverage for \$5 million dollars per faculty member. However, the Committee believes that we need to have the Terms and Conditions of coverage in order to provide faculty with the information they need to perform due diligence in evaluating risk and responsibilities when planning field trips and Study Abroad/Study Away courses. We request that this be posted on the web and linked to the proposed policy.

3. Proposed Multi-Term Registration Policy

This proposed policy was referred to the Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee by the Senate Executive Committee at its March meeting. After a very lengthy and thoughtful discussion, the Committee unanimously voted not to recommend approval or adoption of this policy for the following reasons from the perspective of faculty work life concerns:

Reasoning for not pursuing multi-term scheduling:

- This policy would result in a decline in advisees; it would also create a communication gap between advisors and advisees since students would have no compelling reason to seek advisement each semester. Furthermore, it may lead to poor advisor/advisee relationships, which is ultimately detrimental to retention
- In departments in which this is already practice on a temporary basis, "it is a nightmare" for administrators, support staff, and faculty members
- Administratively, such a policy requires more back-end work
- Staffing concerns: if a faculty member leaves or goes on sabbatical, this would cause scheduling difficulties
- Multi-term scheduling leads to less flexibility, which creates a less satisfying work life for many faculty
- This plan creates more (and unnecessary) work for faculty who advise (e.g., overriding schedules, plan revisions, changing schedules constantly)
- For courses that frequently have waiting lists, this proposed policy is not feasible and will make it more difficult for students to get the courses they need
- While some faculty might prefer the long-term planning that such a plan affords, that can be accommodated at the departmental level on a case-by-case basis
- Department head issues: administrative nightmare
- Failed course scenario: this plan does not allow for deviation from plan or repeating courses
- Retention: while we agree we need to retain students, the committee unanimously believes that this will do nothing to fix that problem and in fact it could create complications that exacerbate retention problems

The committee suggests that better ideas for retention include scholarships, endowments for academics, and other funding solutions that improve student and faculty academic concerns.

Information Items:

- Faculty Work Life Survey: The survey is now complete and the results have been distributed and will be posted to the Senate website soon
- Title IX/Clery Act Subcommittee: The subcommittee continues to meet and will have a report for May to present to the Faculty Welfare Committee and to the SEC