

2018-2019 Year-End Committee Report

Committee:	Faculty Handbook
Charge:	revises the Northwestern University Faculty Handbook, which constitutes the contract between the faculty and the University.
Chair:	Richard Kieckhefer
# of Meetings:	We had only two formal committee meetings, by telephone conference call, but we exchanged ideas by e-mail before and after these meetings.

Completed Business and/or Accomplishments

We have submitted four proposals for consideration and adoption by the Faculty Senate and the Central Administration, following consultation with the deans. (1) We have set forth a new statement on academic freedom that extends protection to a wider range of individuals (especially NTE faculty) and activities (now including matters of shared governance). After an open forum on academic freedom, we crafted wording that respects both the concern to protect the right to use challenging and potentially troubling language in the classroom and the need to protect individuals from improper verbal attack. (2) We have introduced an entirely new statement on mentoring. (3) We have set forth a fully new section on public engagement. (4) We have proposed new formatting for the Handbook, with numbering of sections and subsections for ease in referencing, and with a clear distinction between a Part I that deals with routine faculty activities (and should be read carefully by all faculty) and a Part II that covers grievances, disciplinary actions, and appeals (which all faculty should be aware of in case of need).

Unfinished/Continuing Business

The Committee in future years will set its own priorities, but some items came to our attention that do need to be addressed, although we could not deal with them this year. (1) To safeguard the academic freedom of NTE faculty, the Handbook needs to take into account the ways non-reappointment and appeals are currently handled in the various schools, and the Committee will want to consider how these procedures might be altered and perhaps to some extent standardized. (2) Existing statements on conflict of interest should be reviewed to make clearer what the expectations and consequences are for concurrent employment at other institutions. (3) There are passages in the Handbook that could benefit from clarification, such as the statement that untenured faculty may ask at any time to be put up for tenure. (Does this mean that departments should respond to such requests by applying the normal criteria of readiness for tenure, or may department apply higher standards for "early" tenure?)

New Business for Next Year

Maintain dialogue with OGC and the Provost Office throughout the process of revisions set forth above.