Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities

Faculty Senate Committee Monthly Report

Members Present: Ashley Orehek (Chair); Kelly Reames; Rob Hale; Sara Pickett; Pinky Rusli; Xingang Fan; Ciin Lun

Members Absent: Kyla Mitchell; Kaylee ben Yosef; Jenny Burton; Aaron Wichman; Wendy Chelson; Stephanie Riehn;

Guests: Eric Reed

Agenda | Friday, 21 Nov 2025 | via Zoom

1) Meeting began at 3:07 PM CT.

2) Approval of minutes from previous meeting (Oct 2025)
    a. First – Kelly, Second – Pinky

3) Old Business
    a. 2024-25 annual faculty welfare survey welfare
        i. The report is still being worked on. No word on when it'll be completed.

    b. Compensation Conversations
        i. We revisited the Senate Resolution regarding faculty compensation (15 May 2025 Senate meeting). The question came up if this committee wants to keep its momentum going by submitting another resolution for April 2026 (we do). A goal of issuing an annual resolution for faculty compensation *is to consistently bring this issue into the light* and hopefully make a meaningful change eventually, because any changes that happen are at the very top of WKU.
        ii. A dataset was created to support the 2025 resolution and can be edited to reflect the 2026 resolution. Last year's dataset sourced from AAUP and other national sites. The goals of the supporting data is to keep it simple and use appropriate and comparable benchmark institutions. If WKU wants to be competitive, they need to be, because it seems WKU has gotten less competitive compared to other institutions lately.
        iii. Unfortunately, this resolution doesn't include part-time faculty (same with the announced flat raise from the President on 12 Nov 2025). The last time part-time faculty received a raise was in 2023 ([WKU Herald](#)).

4) New Business
    a. HR proposed policy revisions
        i. Policy 4.6402 (Bereavement)

1. **Committee is OK** with the proposed changes. No further comments.

    ii. Policy 4.8601 (Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy)
1. **Committee is OK** with changes, but would like clarification about the medical marijuana part because some may need it for pain management use during a workday on campus.

    iii. Policy 4.6002 (Employee Benefits Eligibility)
1. *One of the proposed changes is about changing the coverage timeline for when a subscriber's dependent turns 26. Currently the policy is that coverage cedes at the end of the calendar year the dependent turns 26. The proposed change is to cede coverage at the end of the birth month the dependent turns 26.*
2. The committee has some questions about the proposed changes. Questions include:
    a. Is this an equity issue, particularly around when the birth month of the 26th year is?
    b. What is prompting this change now?
    c. Would it be easier to maintain status quo for enrollment purposes?
    d. What happens if this change occurs mid-year to the subscriber? Can they change their coverage? Is this considered a qualifying event?
3. On 24 Nov, the Committee Chair emailed HR with these questions.

  b. Full-time Vs Part-time Faculty comparison report
    i. The committee member scheduled to discuss this was not present, so we will push it off until January.

5) Other discussions
  a. We decided to skip the December meeting due to our regular meeting day falls over winter break.

  b. TopNet Course Schedule Public Availability
    i. If instructors are not aware already, the [Course Search on TopNet](#) is freely available to anyone on the internet – the webpage is not protected by a firewall. It was noted that WKU is one of a few universities who make this course information freely available online.
    ii. With a rise of targeted attacks on higher education, concerns about this freely available information include:
1. The potential liabilities of course details being publicly available (i.e., course meeting time and location, instructors' personal cell phone numbers on syllabi); and

2. The protection of intellectual property (i.e., syllabi) – One committee member noted how they discovered someone at another institution using verbiage from their syllabus verbatim.

iii. It is a tad disturbing to know that anyone can simply just find identifiable course information [from this webpage](). Many instructors are probably unaware of this – at least a few committee members had just learned this during our meeting.

iv. On 24 Nov, the Committee Chair submitted a request to the Registrar's Office to put this webpage behind a firewall, even a simple NetID and password login like other protected WKU webpages have.

6) Adjournment. Occurred at 3:55 PM CT

Next meeting is Friday, 16 Jan 2025 at 3 PM CT via Zoom.

Report prepared by Ashley Orehek (24 Nov 2025).