

Faculty Handbook Committee

Summary & Highlights

Committee Meeting: September 6, 2024

Discussion Questions Posed:

1. What do you understand as the “big rocks” that the FHB should prioritize?
2. What are the most significant challenges or opportunities for the FHB committee?
3. How can the FHB committee’s work support faculty and the mission/vision of our campus?

The “Big Rocks”

- Evaluation Timeline: The problem is multiple letters and timelines based on faculty rank is inefficient and exhausting. Next Steps: Develop a consultation plan to gather feedback.
- Faculty Handbook Review: The FHB is now seven years old, and a lot has happened on campus. Is it time to take stock of what is working, needs improvement, etc.? Next steps: Faculty & Administration Survey.
- Standards & Criteria (including early tenure): The problem is that the current University Standards and criteria are a “laundry list” of to-dos that must be checked off rather than the characteristics of quality teaching, research, and service.
- Incentives, Morale & Merit: The problem is faculty morale, which is related to how faculty are recognized for their excellent work and connected to the evaluation system and merit.

Discussion: There was recognition that few resources are available and an argument that the FHB, specifically the evaluation system, further demoralizes faculty with the exceeds category. The evaluation system is a “zero-sum game” that inadvertently puts [some] department heads in the position of “being stingy” about rewarding good work and faculty in the position of “grade grubbing.” Also see: [Smallest Meaningful Pay Increases \(Mitra, 2015\)](#). “We cannot compete with pay; all we have is how we feel about our job.” How does the current evaluation system make people feel about their job?

- The Faculty Handbook: The problem is the FHB needs to be shorter, easier to understand, and more manageable. For consideration: How might the FHB be revised?

- The Faculty Handbook & Communication: The problem is that faculty and administrators may not understand how the Handbook is continually revised, how their voice may be represented in the process, and subsequent changes. How does the FHB committee communicate its work? Ideas:
 - Regular consultations with the University Senate
 - FHB committee representatives attend CRC meetings with updates and opportunities for consultation
 - Improved Website (i.e., posting simple agendas; see Policy website)
 - Regular email updates (e.g. 2x a semester)

Tensions to Navigate

1. Transparency/Confidentiality (internal/external communication)
2. Macro/Micro
3. Big Rocks/Small Nuanced Revisions
4. Autonomy & Flexibility/Accountability
5. Policy/Procedure