

MEMORANDUM

To: Lisa Wolfe-Wendel, President, Faculty Senate

From: Paul Johnson, Chair, Faculty Rights, Privileges, and Responsibilities

Re: Final Report

Date: May 15, 2009

We didn't get very much done. There were long delays in the gathering of information. The Committee met in the Fall to discuss the charges concerning non-tenure track faculty (NTF) and the possibility of a new revision of the Faculty Handbook.

There were disagreements among members of the committee on the meaning of our charges concerning non-tenure track faculty. Our discussion ranged widely from the disparate salary offered to the NTF, unevenness in their treatment, their possible over-use by the University (undercutting the tenure-track faculty), and to the question of their rights of freedom of speech and thought. In late November and December, 2008, we received information from KU's OIRP about the use of NTF. The data indicate fairly clearly that the use of NTF at KU is not on the "high side" among universities. KU has more credit hours taught by tenure track faculty, and fewer offered by graduate students and other NTF, than the AAU average. After that information was distributed, none of the members of the committee stepped forward to argue that there is an over-use of NTF at KU. We noted (with some sarcasm) that KU is also well within the norm on the job expectations of NTF. That is to say, no national standard exists and the enormous variance in salary and job expectations at KU is a reflection of universities across the country. Our discussion touched on the fact that there are substantial differences across departments and schools in the treatment of tenure-track staff. We also discussed the "realistic" fact of life that the Deans and Chairs are going to hire the people they want and pay them what the market bears, so there is very little that a committee like ours will be able to do to affect the situation.

The other item that we discussed was the long on-going project of eliminating or revising the Faculty Handbook. We were assigned to monitor that project and contribute where possible. Our committee had made a comprehensive proposal for revision of the Handbooks section on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities in the Spring, 2007. We later became aware of the possibility that the Handbook would be abolished altogether and that our revisions would either be forgotten or rolled into a single large package of amendments to the Faculty Senate Code. Later we learned that the Handbook might become an informal collection of tips and links to the new Provost's Policy Library, or that it might become a binding set of guidelines. As far as I can tell, it is still "up in the air". As this academic year comes to a close, I am aware of the fact that a draft of the Handbook exists, but I have not actually seen it and I do not know what role is being played by the revisions that we proposed in 2007.