

## **December 4 Faculty Meeting**

Hello! I stand before you today as Team Lead of the Faculty Handbook Workstream. The other members of this new workstream are Nick Walin, Evan Oxman, Matt Kelly and Tara Natarajan. My remarks here today are an update of what we have been doing, but I'm keeping this brief to allow for Q&A and discussion. Our shared goal is to be as transparent as possible with this work.

We began meeting in September and were given the following charge from FPPC:

### **Charge to the Task Force on the Handbook**

1. Carefully read and review the Faculty Handbook as it currently stands
2. Determine the role of the Faculty Handbook from a best practices perspective
3. Liaison with other committees and task forces as needed, especially those working on the Employment Handbook, Student Handbook, and College Catalog. Nominate sections of the Handbook that belong in other College documents
4. Develop proposals as needed to streamline, clarify, remove, and/or update sections of the Handbook as needed, recognizing that major changes would require a faculty vote
5. Report back to the FPPC

Thanks to some ITF work last year, we were given access to 25 faculty handbooks from peer institutions. Examining these documents provided us with additional questions but also clarity – WE DO NOT HAVE THE WORST HANDBOOK. One realization we came to was that the printed/PDF version of our handbook could be instantly improved by adopting an on-line format with hyperlinks that connect all of our handbooks and college catalog. Such a format would also allow for more timely revisions. We will work with ITS to figure out what this would look like for us.

Beyond mode of delivery, we have also agreed that revisions need to take place at 3 levels:

1. Line by line editing for clarity
2. Formatting/structure of the handbook
3. Changes to policies and procedures

**WE WILL NOT BE DRAFTING ANY SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES; WE WILL IDENTIFY RELEVANT SECTIONS AND REFER TO FPPC.**

The first real task we undertook was from the third item in the charge: **Nominate sections of the Handbook that belong in other College documents.** We all went through the TOC and identified portions that should be removed. Our decision making centered on a few questions:

1. Is this a policy that ALL employees are subjected to?
  - . Photocopying
  - . Minors on campus

2. Is the policy related to student issues?
  - . College Catalog or the Student Handbook
3. Do faculty *really* have control over this policy that a vote is necessary to make a change?
  - . Retirement contribution
  - . Parental leave policy

We agreed unanimously on what should be moved out of the Faculty Handbook and into other College documents. We will share the revised TOC and identify where specific policies will be moved before bringing this change to the faculty for a vote next year.

ANY AND ALL CHANGES WILL BE BROUGHT TO A VOTE.

How long will these revisions take? One of our peer institutions has been working on their handbook for 7 years – seemingly proudly so! Realistically, we believe that incremental but thorough revisions can be done in three years. For those of you who have been here a while, we have been using the model of how FFC changes were made: slowly, in consultation with faculty, and one item at a time.

ANY CHANGES WILL BE BROUGHT TO A FACULTY VOTE.

Many handbooks feature a philosophy or statement of purpose in the Faculty Handbooks. Should we have an explicit philosophy before making changes or will changes clarify the philosophy?

That's what we've been up to. I welcome questions and an open discussion. This is a shared document that sets forth who we are, but also what and how we do our work on campus.