**Report from the Faculty Handbook Committee**

**on the Draft Changes presented to the BOV on September 15, 2017**

Committee Recommendation: The committee recommends that the Faculty Senate not approve these proposed changes for the reasons below.

OVERALL COMMENTS:

1. The draft presented to the BOV by the Provost on September 15, 2017 was never presented to the faculty or Faculty Senate. This fact cannot be debated. To this day, the only reason the Faculty Senate even has access to this draft is because the FS President has access to the Board Book via the BOV SharePoint site. We thank the BOV for continuing to provide us this level of engagement.
2. Much work was done on *other* drafts and much effort was put in by all parties involved over the last year to obtain input from faculty and administrators alike. However, all that hard work was set aside in favor of a draft which had NO input from any parties other than the upper administration. As such, this represents a violation of SACSCOC shared governance policies.
3. We remain unclear why NONE of the changes proposed by the Faculty handbook committee and voted upon and approved by the Faculty Senate were considered by the administration and included in this draft. The committee’s work corrected numerous errors and inconsistencies, which now remain in the current version. These must still be corrected prior to our accreditation review.
4. The primary purpose of changes to the handbook is to ensure compliance with SACSCOC and SCHEV guidelines. We see no changes presented in this draft that help accomplish this goal.
5. We question whether it is appropriate for an outgoing President and an interim Provost to propose changes to the handbook which will have long-lasting implications.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

From the several comments below, we wish to draw especial attention to those in yellow.

**Preface:**

“All amendments are introduced and approved in accordance with the Faculty Handbook Amendment Process (Section IX).”

**Comment:** This is not accurate given that this draft has never been presented to the Faculty Senate or faculty at large.

“The University President has delegated the responsibility of interpreting the provisions of this handbook to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.”

**Comment:** Perhaps the outgoing president should not have the authority to delegate this authority to an interim provost? We felt it was important to draw the BOVs attention to this statement.

**Page 14:** Mr. Moore needs to be added to the list of Presidents of NSU.

**1.2 Mission:** Deleted entirely

**Comment:** Why is the university’s mission deleted? Should it at least not be replaced with something updated?

**2.1.3 Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer:** Deleted entirely

**Comment:** Is it appropriate for an outgoing President and interim Provost to make changes to the administrative structure of a historical institution such as ours?

**2.1.4 Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs:**

**Comment:** If deletion of the COO is approved, in the second line of this section it should read: “As COO, the Provost works with…”. Without this addition, it appears as though the role of COO is not defined.

**3.2.2 Criteria for Appointment: “**In exceptional cases, such as in the absence of an eligible or suitable candidate in the department in question as determined by the Provost, the department faculty, by majority vote and with explanation, may petition the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for an exception to the maximum length of service; or alternatively, the Provost can initiate a search to fill the department chair position.”

**Comments:** This change creates a conflict with paragraph 1 of this section which states that faculty elect their chair. Therefore, they must also have the ability to identify exceptional cases. In addition, the provost already has purview here to approve or deny the elected person, or approve or deny the requested exception. Therefore this change is not needed and does not make sense. (I.e.: the provost would not have to petition him or herself.)

As written, it appears that the provost could override the votes of the faculty and initiate a search for a new chair without buy-in from the department in question. This is not an ideal situation for shared governance and creates potential for conflict.

**3.5.1 Eligibility Requirements**

**3.5.1.1 Promotion to Assistant Professor**

1. An earned doctorate or terminal degree ~~from an accredited institution, with at least one graduate degree or related degree~~ in area(s) of primary teaching responsibility. A minimum of two complete years of full-time teaching at the college/university level, prior to submission of the application.

**3.5.1.2 Promotion to Associate Professor**

1. An earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution ~~with at least one graduate degree or related degree~~ in the area(s) of primary teaching responsibility ~~and terminal degree studies related to the area(s) of primary teaching responsibility~~.

**3.5.1.3 Promotion to Professor**

1. An earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited ~~institution with at least one graduate degree in the area(s) of primary teaching responsibility and terminal degree studies related to~~ in the area(s) of primary teaching responsibility.

**Comments:**

* These changes are not required for compliance with SACSCOC or SCHEV. The wording from both of those bodies is broader.

SACSCOC: “Faculty teaching baccalaureate courses: doctorate or master’s degree in the teaching discipline or master’s degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).”

SCHEV: “All instructional faculty members who teach in programs at the baccalaureate level shall:

a. Hold a master's degree in the discipline being taught or hold a master's degree in an area other than that being taught with at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline from an accredited college or university.

b. Exception to academic preparation requirements for instructional faculty may be made in instances where substantial documentation of professional and scholarly achievements and/or demonstrated competences in the discipline can be shown. The institution must document and justify any such exception.”

* The proposed changes add language that gives a much narrower definition of the qualifications for promotion. Other universities do not have such narrow language in their handbooks, as such we risk losing desired and valuable faculty we have worked hard to acquire at NSU.
* “from an accredited institution” should not be removed from 3.5.1.1

**3.6 TENURE**

“Faculty previously tenured at a regionally accredited institution prior to current employment at Norfolk State University, after review and approval by the Provost and the President, may be directly recommended to the Board of Visitors for immediate tenure. In this case, the appropriate faculty rank of professor or associate professor will be recommended in accordance with the guidelines in Section (3.4 ACADEMIC RANKS), and will accompany the respective tenure recommendation.

**Comment:** As written, the concern is that new hires could be given tenure based solely on administrative approval and without the review of the department in which they will be tenured. This arrangement is problematic if the person is hired in an administrative position but then is transitioned to a faculty position, as has been the case for some previous administrators. The faculty would request that their opinion and vetting remain part of the process.

**3.6.4 Tenure Review Summary**

**3.6.4.1 Assistant Professor**

An assistant professor must have the earned doctorate or terminal degree in the area(s) of primary teaching responsibility…

**3.6.4.2 Associate Professor**

An associate professor who is not yet tenured must have the earned doctorate or terminal degree in the area(s) of primary teaching responsibility and can…

**3.6.4.3 Professor**

The rank of professor is the highest academic rank and must reflect exemplary service. A professor who is not yet tenured must have the earned doctorate or terminal degree in the area(s) of primary teaching responsibility and can

Comments:

* These changes are not required for compliance with SACSCOC or SCHEV. The wording from both of those bodies is broader.
* The narrow language does not take into account the excellence of the faculty or their qualifications for the particular courses they teach or the research they were hired to do.
* This language could result in our losing highly qualified faculty from our programs and is potentially destructive if sought after faculty leave NSU for fear of their hopes of tenure being threatened by this restrictive language.
* Specific examples of faculty who might no longer be qualified for their positions based on this strict wording include:
  + Dr. Mikhail Noginov – 2015 Virginia Outstanding Scientist, PhD Physical-Mathematical Sciences. Teaches Optical Materials and Nanomaterials, but has no degrees or formal training anything called Materials Science.
  + Dr. Ganesan Kamatchi – Biology faculty member with nearly $1 Million in NIH and NSF funded grants, PhD in Pharmacology. Teaches Cell Biology.
  + NEED MORE