

**Committee on Policy Review (CPR)
Spring 2021 Semester Report**

Membership for 2020-2021

Chair: Cindy MacGregor, COE; Cameron Wickham, Faculty Senate Chair; Catherine Jolivet, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect; Cathy Pearman, Faculty Handbook Revision Committee Chair; Joshua Allen, Human Resources representative, *ex officio*; Chris Craig, Office of the Provost, *ex officio*; Angela Young, Office of the Registrar, *ex officio*; Rachael Dockery, General Counsel, *ex officio*; Mike Foster, COAL; Tom Dicke, CHPA; TBD, SGA Rep *ex officio*.

Membership (from Bylaws): The Chair of the Faculty Senate, the Chair-Elect of the Faculty Senate, and the Chair of the Faculty Handbook Revision Committee shall be members of the Policy Review Committee.

A minimum of three additional faculty members will be appointed by the Chair of the Faculty Senate, so as to provide representation from various academic colleges. These additional faculty members will serve a two year term and may be reappointed for up to two consecutive terms. One of these faculty members will be appointed by the Chair of the Faculty Senate to serve as committee chair.

The Student Government Association shall provide a representative to the committee who will be *ex officio* without vote. The Director of Human Resources, the Provost, a representative from the Registrar's office, and General Counsel will be *ex officio* members without vote.

Purpose (from Bylaws)

Shall meet up to twice monthly to discuss pending policies under consideration by university leadership and to review current content in the university Policy Library. Shall identify current and emerging content in the university Policy Library (excluding the Faculty Handbook) that should be reviewed by the Faculty Handbook Revision Committee or warrants further review by the faculty. Shall prepare and present periodic reports with recommendations to the Faculty Senate regarding policies being referred to the Faculty Handbook Revision Committee, pending operating policies (OP) under consideration by university leadership, and other Policy Library content that should be further reviewed by the faculty.

Policies Reviewed and Actions Taken

- *Study Away policy.* Substantial policy improvements have been made related to study away policies. Our committee was involved in the feedback and review process for these changes which have been approved by ALC and AC. Also worth noting is that the Study Away Office is changing to Office of Education Abroad. *For the spring semester our role was to be informed of the final status of these policy changes.*
- *“Sponsored dependent” language.* Our review of the study away policy, which included the current language of sponsored dependent, raised concerns about the possible need to adjust that language. Our committee’s discussion on this matter has stimulated university leadership to consider an update of the language to “domestic partner.” The plan is to update the Employee Handbook at June BOG meeting; “domestic partner” will replace

“sponsored dependent.” Next, work will begin with Web and New Media to fix other places where the language needs to be replaced. Then, FHRC will review, and potentially update, the *Faculty Handbook*. *It was the discussion of this committee that prompted these policy language updates.*

- *COVID policies.* Our committee was kept informed about changes to the temporary COVID policies used at the university. Rachael gave updates on three of the temporary COVID policies (events, masking, testing). Masking policy has been extended through May 31st, the testing policy has been extended through July 31st, and the MSU events policy has been extended through May 31st, and then will revert to City of Springfield policy through July 31st. *Our role in these policies was for information-sharing only.*
- *Return to campus work principles.* Rachael Dockery reported that Return to campus work principles, directed at staff, are intended to help MSU be ready for a fall in-person campus. Given the post-COVID workplace, telecommuting and flexible work policies in *Employee Handbook* need to be reviewed and updated. Engagement of faculty in “attendance” was added into the *Faculty Handbook* pre-COVID. *Our discussion led to the recommendation that FHRC explore relevant language in the Faculty Handbook now that “attendance” may need to be defined differently in a post-COVID workplace.*
- *Blackboard usage.* Cameron mentioned that there has been conversation at ALC about the possibility of making Blackboard mandatory for faculty. Chris reported the need to create a better presentation of syllabi and make course materials accessible. Perhaps common expectation of the use of the Blackboard shells? Display of grades? Could faculty agree to use Blackboard for a set of minimum activities? *Our discussion concluded with the possibility of a joint committee with Faculty Senate and the Provost’s office to developed acceptable, minimum expectations for course support using Blackboard or other platforms.*
- *Flagging students for dispositional reasons.* Our committee monitored the changes to a flagging process for students with dispositional concerns so such behavior can be considered as part of admissions. Examples of students who might be flagged: (1) Termination of employment via a separation agreement, (2) Students dismissed from the university via conduct process; and (3) Students banned from campus but not blocked from being admitted into graduate programs. Rachael Dockery reported that the flagging process is working. This prevents students from being admitted to the university (undergraduate or graduate) who have been flagged for dispositional reasons. *Our committee took no action on this matter, other than to be kept informed of the changes and their implementation.*
- *University solicitation policies.* In response to a mass email (Bears for Bernie) sent by a student, our committee discussed the university solicitation policies. A review of current policy discovered that current policy exists and prohibits email spam (Op. 12.02-4 Email Communications). Such email spam also violates state statutes which govern such activity for MSU members. Furthermore, such abuses are prohibited in *Employee*

Handbook (Section 9.4) and *Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities* (Article 4), but not *Faculty Handbook*. The general consensus was that the policies for the university were sufficiently in order regarding solicitation via mass email.

- *Academic Status Warning* (Registrar’s Office) – In March 2020 Shannon indicated that there was a proposed change to the academic status policy that our committee would review at our next meeting. Today Shannon reported on the proposed change. An additional academic status of “academic warning” was discussed; the spring changes to P/NP highlighted problems in the academic status of academic warning being made automatic; specifically, all passing grades would create an academic warning. Given this problem, “academic warning” will likely be a status available and assigned by deans but not automatically assigned. Language for the catalog will be brought to this committee to review when it is available. The essence is GPA below 1.00 triggers academic warning. *This item has been postponed by the Registrar’s office but is still under review.*
- *Reports from General Counsel.* MSU made the voluntary decision to increase minimum hourly wage for all employees (part-time and student) to \$10.30 effective January 1, 2021.
- *Faculty Handbook revisions.* CPR serves as an additional source of review for the Faculty Handbook Revision Committee (FHRC); any revisions brought forward to Faculty Senate by FHRC have been previously discussed by CPR. Work during the spring semester included the DEI subcommittee bringing several suggestions for revisions to the *Faculty Handbook*. These suggestions are being carefully reviewed by FHRC and then will be brought to this committee for additional review. Related to diversity issues, FHRC is looking at the terms “equity,” and “support” as used in the *Faculty Handbook*. *No actions have been taken by CPR because language changes are still being reviewed in FHRC.*
- *Disciplinary language in Faculty Handbook.* Prompted by Chris, our committee discussed the possible need to could include, in the *Faculty Handbook*, the type of behavior that constitutes minor or major infraction and disciplinary action. There is concern that the current language is outdated and not helpful. FHRC added this to their agenda for review. Disciplinary action and dismissal language in the *Faculty Handbook*. Chris met with Rachael regarding the disciplinary action and dismissal section of *Faculty Handbook* and how that language might differ from *the Employee Handbook*. Discrepancy analysis will take some time and need to be considered this summer. Cathy will add this to the FHRC agenda so that group can be included in the conversation. *Our committee will review any proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook.*
- *Mass email policy.* Cameron reported that the email policy did not include the allowance for Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) and the Chair of the Faculty Senate to distribute mass emails to the university. This appears to be an oversight in the formal

policy since informal policy has long allowed the Faculty Senate to email all faculty. Cameron proposed an edit to the operating policy; the policy has been changed and is updated in the Policy Library. *Our committee supported this change in the mass email policy.*

- *Cultural competence language.* Chris reported that university leadership is working on the language of “cultural competence” in the Public Affairs Mission. Discussions include the Provost’s Diversity Council and FHRC. *Our committee serves as an additional forum for discussion of any possible changes to the language.*