

Faculty Handbook Committee

End of Year Report 2021-2022

Co-Chairs – John Matsusaka and Jessica Parr

Members – Devon Brooks, Steve Bucher, Ruth Cislowski, Robert Filback, Larry Gross, Marco Papa, Robert Rasmussen, Than (Tammie) Ton, Alison Wilcox, Ruth Wood, Alexis Zoto

Provost Representative – Marty Levine

Overview of Activities

1. *Storing electronic documents.* Because the Handbook has increasingly incorporated by reference matters that are described in external documents (such as EETIX policies), the committee was tasked with preparing a recommendation for how to store such electronic documents. One concern was ensuring that policy changes incorporated in external documents would involve consultation with the senate. The recommendation is attached at the end of this document.
2. *Routine updates to the Handbook.* The committee worked through several relatively minor updates to the text of the handbook, the sort that appear routinely each year, largely relating to obsolete provisions, changes in terminology, and so forth. Those changes were completed and are ready to be reviewed by the full senate.
3. *Complaints, Investigations, and Sanctions (chapters 6-8).* The committee hoped to spend most of its time this year reviewing material relating to university policies and procedures on complaints, investigations, and sanctions, especially related to professional responsibilities. Unfortunately, those policies are still being drafted by university administrators and committees at this time, so we were unable to review them. This leaves the existing text in chapters 6-8 out of date and inconsistent with university practices. The committee was able to produce language relating to basic principles and procedures that appears at the beginning of Section 6, and it updated references in chapters 6-7 to reflect the university's published EETIX policies.

Recommendations for Next Year

1. Because the administrative did not approve last year's handbook revision and seems unlikely to approve the new version during the summer, we recommended to the Senate's President and Academic Vice President that the committee's recommended Handbook changes be presented to the senate in the Fall 2022. We have requested that the first read take place at the first Academic Senate meeting and the second read and vote on changes take place at the second Academic Senate meeting in the Fall of 2022. Delaying the first read from its normal spring schedule will allow the committee to update Chapter 6 over the summer if the policy changes being developed by the

Office of Employee Relations become available. The redline and edited versions of the Faculty Handbook will be shared with the Executive Board of the Academic Senate at least two weeks prior to the first meeting of the full senate. A table summarizing the changes and the rationale for the changes will also be shared at that time. The co-chairs will be prepared to present the changes at the first Academic Senate meeting of the 2022/2023 academic year.

2. We wish to express the committee's dissatisfaction with the administration's failure to approve last year's revision of the handbook. The most recent version is dated 2019. This is problematic on multiple levels. With an outdated handbook, faculty members are unable to access and understand university policies that apply to them, which is unfair, not good practice, and legally risky. Also, not adopting and publishing new policies that were developed by the senate and administration, and voted by the senate, undermines the role of faculty in shared governance of the university. This is something the senate leadership may wish to discuss with top administrators because it is not setting a collegial tone.

In closing, we would like to acknowledge the helpful contributions of all of the committee's members, and especially mention the efforts of Marco Papa, who was very helpful on storage of electronic documents based on his experience with how governments handle the matter, and Steve Bucher, Larry Gross, and Ruth Wood on complaints, investigations, and sanctions. Since the committee is likely to spend a good part of its time next year on complaints, investigations, and sanctions, we recommend inclusion of several members with experience on those matters on next year's handbook committee.

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Recommendation to EB:

Approach to Referenced Policy Documents in the USC Faculty Handbook

Background. Editions of the Faculty Handbook have made reference to policies of many different types that are described in external documents (ranging from the Strategic Plan to the Schedule of Classes to the Grading and Correction of Grades Handbook to the EEO-TIX policies). It has long been the practice for the President to consult with the Academic Senate regarding changes in the Handbook. The committee was asked to develop a proposal about policies that are not in the Handbook proper, but are referred to.

The committee recommends the following approach:

1. The Senate leadership will develop an informal understanding with the University leadership about the type of consultation that is appropriate for the various external policy documents referenced in the Handbook.
2. Part of the consultation will include an informal understanding about which external policy documents referenced in the Handbook will be maintained in a document repository as: (i) PDF files that are (ii) explicitly dated both in the document text and in the file name.
3. Such PDF files will be housed in a document repository maintained by the administration. If HTML files are posted for convenience, PDF files will be simultaneously posted and will be the official copies.
4. In an appendix, the Handbook will list the externally referenced documents that were developed in consultation with Senate representatives.