

**65th Session of the North Carolina State University  
Faculty Senate  
Academic Policy Committee (APC)  
Meeting Minutes  
September 4, 2018**

**Present:** RaJade Berry-James (co-chair), Richard Kotek (co-chair), Natalie Cooke, Deniz Eseryel, Beth Fath, Jeremiah Feducia, Kerry Havner, Min Liu, Doug Pearce

**Absent:** Robert Hayes, Helmut Hergeth

**Guest:** Roy Baroff, NC State Faculty and Staff Ombuds; Laura Demarse, Assistant Dean Graduate School

**Summary of Discussion:** There are approximately 500 postdocs at NC State. Postdocs are at-will employees who are selected by faculty mentors and receive an offer letter from the Department Head. Annually, approximately 20 postdocs have complained about their working relationship with faculty mentors. Complaints range in severity of issues like sexual harassment, imprisonment, authorship, research misconduct, relationship issues and career mobility. To address issues raised by postdocs/house officers, a new policy is proposed to address employment-related concerns.

With guests in attendance, APC members who were present reviewed the proposed new regulation “Dispute Resolution and Grievance Regulation for Postdoctoral Scholars and House Officers” as well as the “Postdoc Grievance Policy” flowchart.

The Academic Policy Committee recommends the following changes to the proposed policy and flowchart:

- I. Flowchart: The policy title should be renamed, “Postdoc Dispute Resolution and Grievance Policy,” on the informal, review and appeal flowchart.
- II. Flowchart: In the “Informal Resolution” area of the flowchart, the “Employee Relations Mediation” box should indicate that mediation is administered through the Employee Relations Mediation program.
- III. **Section 2.2 Consultation with Office of Postdoctoral Affairs**

Add “The OPA Program Manager should also inform the Department Head.”

Flowchart: In the “Informal Resolution” area of the flowchart, the Department Head should be involved in the discussion to resolve an informal resolution between postdoc/house officer and the faculty mentor.

IV. **Section 4.1.1 Formal Grievance Procedure**

Add “The Department Head should be notified when a formal complaint is received by the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School.”

Revise “Postdocs must file a grievance within 30 business days of the alleged action or event that formed the basis of the grievable issue. [Note: **Administrative Review through the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity 3.1** states, “For formal processing, complaints must be submitted to the OIED within 30 calendar days of the alleged action that forms the basis of the complaint, per guidelines set by NCSU POL 04.25.05.” Committee members believe strongly that the time period to report an informal or formal grievance should be the same.]

Flowchart: In the “Initial Review” area of the flowchart, the Department Head should be notified that a formal complaint has been filed BEFORE allegations violating policy have been found and before the Assistant Dean notifies the respondent.

- V. The proposed policy should specify instances when the postdoc dispute resolution policy is appropriate, see example of resolution policies for graduate students (see <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-11-40-02/>) and for faculty (see <https://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-05-25-01/>).

Suggestion Revision for **Section 1. Introduction and Scope**

*Add: Postdocs and House Officers may use the informal grievance process to discuss any employment-related issue. However, for allegations of discrimination, harassment and retaliation based on age, color, disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status (POL 04.25.06) postdocs and house officers should file a formal complaint with the Graduate School.*

- VI. Committee members encourage Assistant Dean/OPA Program Manager to include Roy Baroff as a neutral resource for the postdoc/house officer or faculty mentor.
- VII. **Faculty also question whether the grievance policy can be used after a postdoc/house officer has received a termination notice from his/her faculty mentor or department head (for teaching postdocs). Based on the proposed policy, the answer to the question remains unclear.**

Respectfully Submitted,

RaJade M. Berry-James  
Co-Chair APC