

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Office of the Faculty Senate  
Academic Policy Committee

October 1, 2019 Minutes

Attendance: RaJade Berry-James (co-chair), Paul Williams (co-chair), Lisa Bass Freeman, Kerry Havner, KL Murty, Russell Finchum, Fikret Isik, Richard Kotek, Min Liu. Guest attendee: Andrey Kuznetsov

The Academic Policy Committee (APC) of the Faculty Senate discussed the following item:

- I. Introduction of committee members for the benefit of those members attending their first APC meeting: Russell Finchum, Fikret Isik, Richard Kotek and Min Liu
- II. New Business  
None
- III. Issues of Concern
  - a. Most of our meeting was devoted to discussion of the IOC raised by Professor Andrey Kuznetsov. Professor Kuznetsov attended the meeting to explain more completely his actual issue of concern. The previous information the committee had about the issue consisted of a series of email exchanges among Professor Kuznetsov, his department head, an associate dean from his college and Chancellor Woodson. From the initial information about the IOC, the committee inferred that the issue was a technical one involving bridge support for graduate students using TAs. In a follow up explanation of the IOC provided by Professor Kuznetsov the APC came to realize the issue was not a simple technical issue but involved the process of forming departmental policy and the arbitrary adoption of policy by the Department Head. Professor Kuznetsov's explanation of what his IOC is became much clearer to the committee as he explained it. He had two graduate students as advisees that he has supported via a grant from Eastman, Inc. When his grant ran out he requested TA funding for his two students until he could secure additional grant funding. His department head had established a new policy of TA support that shifted the focus from students to faculty. Each faculty member was limited to one TA request. Professor Kuznetsov appealed to the College and the College provided two TA positions to his department to support Professor Kuznetsov's two students. However, the department head imposed as a condition of the students receiving the funding that they find different advisors. One student opted to do so and with three years invested in his graduate work will depart with a Master degree. The other student has opted to stay with Professor Kuznetsov at considerable hardship to himself since, as a non-resident student, he will have to pay out-of-state tuition.

The Committee discussed the IOC given the new information and expressed its concern for the students and how the University has failed to keep an implied promise when the students were admitted. The Committee also discussed what

the Senate could do about Professor Kuznetsov's current situation and concluded that we couldn't do anything to fix the specific situation. Professor Kuznetsov has enlisted the help of Vice Provost Stewart to investigate the current situation to see if there a path to helping his students out of their current predicaments. The Committee concurred that was the best process for dealing with the specific issue. The Committee also agreed that Professor Kuznetsov has the basis for a grievance; that will be up to Professor Kuznetsov to decide.

What the Committee will continue to pursue with respect to Professor Kuznetsov's IOC is the feasibility of university policy aimed at limiting the department head's arbitrary use of their authority. As one APC member noted the issue of department head quality has been a long standing issue. Provost Hall appointed the Faculty Senate Special Elect Committee on Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure in 2000 to develop an RPT process that would treat very faculty member the same through whatever door they entered N.C. State. The Special Committee learned from its research that there was wide variation in the quality of departmental management by Heads. Perhaps Professor Kuznetsov's issue should involve the Governance Committee as well. His issue is an issue of faculty governance. What are the limits of Department Heads to make decisions like the one that affected Professor Kuznetsov or personnel decisions or departmental policy decisions? The APC will pursue a remedy long term to see if there is some way to prevent such episodes from happening to other faculty or, if they can't be prevented, if there is better recourse for dealing with them via a specific policy.

IV. Old Business

- a. The Committee briefly discussed the ASA statement on the use of student evaluations of teaching. We discussed whether there was any more work to do on that issue beyond what the Committee accomplished last year. We decided that issue was not something we could do more about until we learn what the Evaluation of Teaching Committee is considering this year.

V. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 4:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paul Williams  
Co-chair Academic Policy Committee