

To: Faculty Assembly
From: Personnel Policy Committee
Date: September 3, 2024
Re: Proposed Changes to Handbook Description of the Role of PPC and PRC

This memo explains proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook's description of the roles of the Personnel Policy Committee and the Procedural Review Committee. These changes are primarily in Section II.E of the Handbook but also involve a change to one paragraph in Section III.C.

The Handbook Group learned that the PPC and PRC are heavily burdened by having to review policies from not just the Schools but also from all of the departments and programs on campus. The current regime is repetitive, time-consuming, and not always effective. Accordingly, we are proposing the following changes to implement feedback from the PPC itself. Specifically, the attached draft does the following:

- We have eliminated PRC responsibility to review personnel policies so that work is not duplicated at both the PRC and PPC level.
- PPC will continue to review proposed changes to personnel policies at the School level.
- We have defined "personnel policies" so that PPC knows what it is and is not supposed to be reviewing.
- We have removed vague language about "administrative feasibility" and more specifically indicated that the PPC should be reviewing policies to assess whether the unit complied with its own policies, as well as whether the changes are consistent with the Faculty Handbook and the State of Rights and Responsibilities.
- We have designed a regime in which PPC will only review department and program policies when there has been a petition by a faculty member or an administrator requesting such review.
- We have also included language to prevent a faculty member or administrator from repeatedly seeking PPC review of the same department or program policy.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

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E. SELF-GOVERNANCE OF THE FACULTIES

The following are the faculty committees that have been established to help formulate university policy and procedures and/or to negotiate and/or adjudicate in cases dealing with appeal, sanction, dismissal, and grievance.

1. The Faculty Assembly

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2. Procedural Review Committee

The Procedural Review Committee (PRC) shall be a standing committee of nine members; four shall be elected from the Faculty of Arts & Sciences, and one each from the Raymond A. Mason School of Business; the School of Computing, Data Sciences, and Physics; the School of Education; the Law School; and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science/Batten School of Coastal & Marine Sciences. Representatives shall be elected for three-year terms. Each School shall provide for means of electing members, and of alternates when needed.

The PRC shall attempt to mediate allegations of discrimination or violation of academic freedom in retention, tenure, and promotion cases (see III.C.1.d.i.); it shall conduct informal investigation and mediation of allegations of incompetence, neglect of duty, or misconduct (see III.F.3.b.), or of termination of an appointment for medical reasons (see III.F.3.c.); it shall adjudicate claims of failure to follow procedure in appeals of decisions against retention, tenure or promotion (see III.C.1.d.ii.), and it shall adjudicate claims of failure to follow procedure in appeals of major sanction, including dismissal (see III.F.5.a.), or in appeals of unresolved grievances (see III.G.1.).

3. Personnel Policy Committee

The Personnel Policy Committee (“PPC”) consists of the Deans of the Schools, the members of the Procedural Review Committee (see II.E.2), and the Provost, who serves as chair.

- a. The Committee reviews and ratifies all proposed revisions to the *Faculty Handbook* before transmitting them to the Faculty Assembly (see III.K.1).
- b. The PPC also reviews any proposed change to a School’s personnel policies, which this Handbook defines as procedures and standards governing the evaluation, retention, tenure and promotion of faculty members. Such review shall consist of an assessment of whether the unit complied with its own procedures when adopting the proposed

change and whether the proposed change is consistent with the Faculty Handbook and the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. The PPC does not review proposed changes to personnel policies of individual departments or programs, except as described in II.E.3.c below.

- c. Upon petition by an interested faculty member or academic administrator, the Committee shall review any proposed change to a department's or program's personnel policies.¹ Here again, the Committee will assess whether the unit complied with its own procedures when adopting the proposed change and whether the proposed change is consistent with the Faculty Handbook and the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities.

Policies in departments and programs become effective after adoption by the relevant faculty unit, and approval by the appropriate Dean or their designee. An interested faculty member or academic administrator may request PPC review of such a change at any time. However, the PPC will ordinarily not conduct review of a change in a department's or program's policy that it has already considered and approved.

4. Faculty Hearing Committee

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III. POLICIES AFFECTING THE FACULTIES

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C. PROCEDURES FOR THE EVALUATION OF TENURED AND TENURE-ELIGIBLE FACULTY

The university recognizes the fundamental principle that both faculty and administrative officers should participate in the evaluation of faculty related to retention, tenure, promotion and post-tenure review.² Deans or their designees shall conduct periodic evaluations of all faculty members in the Schools regardless of rank based on their unit's annual merit policies. Schools may elect to involve faculty in such evaluations according to procedures adopted for this purpose. The procedures and standards for evaluation followed by each School, department or program shall be adopted by majority vote of that unit and are subject to the approval by the appropriate Dean. Standards and procedures followed by each School must further be approved by the Personnel Policy Committee (II.E.3) for consistency with university policies. The standards shall be applied

¹ Interested faculty members shall include any faculty member with a full-time appointment within the unit that has purported to adopt the proposed change. Interested academic administrators shall include any Dean, Vice Dean, Associate Dean or other full-time administrator who also holds an academic appointment.

² See AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities (1966) (noting the "primary responsibility" of faculty for such matters).

in a manner that fosters each School's mission and serves to maintain the overall quality of the faculty.