

Framework for Collaborative Governance

Whereas Northwest Nazarene University (NNU) pursues the mission of personal transformation in the context of a community based on “covenantal relationships [that] express our love for God and others” (Faculty Policy Manual 1.2) in which all faculty members are called to be “exemplars by displaying habits of heart, soul, mind, and strength that demonstrate God’s creative and redemptive intent in the world. [We] must be individuals of the highest Christian character, excellent teachers, competent scholars, and servant leaders” (FPM 4.3);

Whereas the nature of covenants requires all parties to pursue the interests of each member in good faith and can only thrive in a context of mutual trust and a broad sense of obligation to one another;

Whereas academic freedom is a necessary component of our mission at NNU, "based on the conviction that each faculty member is a servant and minister of truth, and therefore, has the freedom to pursue the search for truth and its exposition" (FPM 6.11.2);

Whereas NNU "subscribes to the concept of tenure...for the benefit and protection of both the individual and the institution" (FPM 4.25);

Whereas the Administration has elected to lay off two tenured graduate faculty and four staff members in the spring of 2015, citing the layoff provision of the Faculty Policy Manual (4.25.11d) which permits layoffs as the result of declining enrollments within academic programs;

Whereas the cuts were justified by the desire to reallocate funds to other areas, including improving overall salaries and the university reserve, and whereas the university is not in a current state of financial crisis;

Whereas the faculty in the past demonstrated a willingness to work with the administration to reach budgetary goals by reducing operating budgets, accepting early retirement options, and deferring hiring, and other measures so that the fiscal health of the university might be maintained without such extraordinary measures as the layoff of tenured professors;

Whereas the faculty as a whole were denied the opportunity to share in the decision making and burden sharing surrounding these budget re-allocations;

Whereas these decisions were not made with the active participation of the departments in question, thus depriving these departments of a deliberative voice in matters concerning curriculum, program strengths, or the requirements of outside accreditors;

Whereas the faculty in the respective departments were not notified of the layoffs until either one hour before the Town Hall announcement (Counselor Education) or during the Town Hall announcement (Religion) and therefore had no opportunity to provide input into a decision that directly affected them and their departments;

Whereas the faculty member in Religion will not be allowed to teach a summer session class previously contracted, a course that is not tied to the reduction in any way;

Whereas these cuts took place in the context of a significant lack of confidence and trust in the administration, as demonstrated by the internal presidential review process among faculty and staff and the "Getting Well-Doing Better" survey;

Whereas the present layoffs have created an atmosphere where tenure offers little meaningful security for the faculty to pursue the search for truth and to exercise academic freedom;

Whereas the faculty seek healthy institutions of governance and policy-making which enable us to live fully into our covenant commitment to model creative and redemptive relationships for our students;

Now therefore, we, the elected Faculty Officers and elected faculty representatives to the Faculty Policy Council at Northwest Nazarene University:

disagree with the unilateral decision to terminate the employment of one of our most senior, accomplished, and tenured colleagues and the decision to eliminate a position in graduate counseling without due process or meaningful consultation with the individuals or departments involved.

disagree with administrative actions that could put our theology and counseling programs out of compliance with accreditation standards; we desire to honor NNU's commitment to professionalism by meeting or exceeding accreditation standards.

are saddened and hurt by this breach of covenant. Though perhaps legally and technically permitted, these actions reflect a lack of due process and consideration of faculty input, a lack of sensitivity and tact, and a complete disregard for the institution of tenure.

urge faculty and administration to engage in meaningful and actual shared governance in matters of program development, program implementation, program changes or cuts, and the elimination or reallocation of faculty and staff positions.

Meaningful involvement includes:

- a place at the table and a voice in matters concerning faculty positions, salaries, reductions, and layoffs;
- a place at the table and a voice in matters concerning academic programs and program changes;
- a place at the table and a voice in matters concerning faculty governance and shared governance; and
- a place at the table and a voice in matters concerning faculty policies and procedures.

We define "Covenant Community" as involving (but not limited to):

- timely inclusion in processes related to programs, positions, policies, and practices;
- commitment by all parties involved to follow both the letter and the spirit of policy as articulated in the Faculty Policy Manual;
- creating an environment of mutual trust and health, both individual and collective;
- establishing true dialogue and communication that is reciprocal and inclusive;

We pledge that the faculty officers and the members of the Faculty Policy Council will work together with the administration in an atmosphere of transparency to create and craft policies that will foster academic freedom, make tenure secure, engender a culture of servant leadership, and repair the covenantal relationships of the administration with faculty, staff, and students.

We resolve to engage in meaningful shared governance with the President and the administration.

We resolve to collaboratively work with the President, the President's Cabinet, and the academic administration to address these breaches of policy and process.

We resolve to assist the President and the administration in achieving the Board's directives with regard to the budget and financial outlay that include increasing reserves, reducing spending, increasing student enrollment, and prioritizing programs without the elimination of positions in graduate counseling and religion.

Signed this 10th day of April, 2015

NNU Faculty Officers

Rhonda Carrim, D.Min; Faculty Chair
Mike Poe, EdD; CAGS Faculty Vice Chair
Judy Marlett, D.A.; CAS Faculty Vice Chair
Susan Perkins, PhD; CAGS Faculty Secretary
Ben Earwicker, PhD; CAS Faculty Secretary

NNU Faculty Representatives to the Faculty Policy Council

Rhonda Carrim, D.Min; FPC Chair
Christian R. Esh, PhD; CAS Representative
Barry Myers, PhD; CAS Representative
Mollie Sweet, PhD; CAS Representative
Kevin Timpe, PhD; CAS Representative
Lawanna Lancaster, PhD; CAGS Representative
Mark Maddix, PhD; CAGS Representative
Michael Pitts, PhD; CAGS Representative
Heidi Tracht, M.S.; Academic Services Representative