

**NTID Faculty Congress**  
**Summary of activity September 2019 to March 2020**

**Fall Semester Major Topics:**

Due to the ambiguity regarding the required sign language level in the current Promotion and Tenure policies and how to best assess it, the Language and Communication Policy and the newly established Communication Task Force were the main topics of discussion during the September 10th and 24th NFC meeting. Promotion/Tenure Committees are struggling with determining “sustained effort” when one has an SLPI rating of Intermediate Plus. To alleviate the confusion and misunderstanding for the Promotion and Tenure Policy as it relates to communication, NFC requested the administration to use the current Language and Communication Policy until the new policy and procedures are adopted. NFC continuously provided assistance to the administration and the Language and Communication task force when promoting the task forum meetings and evaluating the overall results of the Qualtrics survey.

In addition, a “workload” survey was sent out to all constituents regarding faculty workload issues. 41 out of 180 (23%) constituents completed the survey. The data has been collected but other pressing issues prevented an in-depth look at the data. Future plans to analyze the data if we can get some statistical expertise are being discussed. The plan is to present the data to the administration.

During October and November, the main focus continued to be the changes to the Tenure/Promotion Policies. Major topics of discussion:

- There were several discussions with members of RIT’s Academic Senate confirming the faculty rights and responsibilities to review any changes in policy. We also confirmed that Academic Senate would need to review any proposed policy changes after a faculty vote and review by NFC occurs.
- Open faculty forums were set for 10/29 and 11/15 on both sides of campus. The goal of the Communication Policy Taskforce was for faculty to vote on the proposed changes by the end of fall semester. Any changes would apply to new hires. Current faculty will continue to use the language as stated in the policies. NFC will promote full faculty participation in the forums.
- NFC members expressed concerns regarding whether there were sufficient sign language courses and other resources to support the SLPI rating of “Advanced” as will be proposed in the policy revisions. Also, concerns were expressed about the SLPI testing and the applicability of the results to determine overall classroom communication, what is best for our students’ communication needs, and the fact that that ASL skill level is just one aspect of a teacher’s overall communication efficacy. Finally, concerns were expressed about the ability of new assessments (some yet to be developed) to adequately evaluate one’s overall communication skills were discussed and cautioned.

## Spring Semester Major Topics:

- In January 2020, Jessica Trussell (Chair) requested to step down as Chair due to newly-assigned responsibilities and become the Vice Chair for the remainder of the year. Mark and Jessica switched roles. Mark became Chair with the full approval of NFC.
- Katie Schmitz announced her additional role as the interim Liberal Arts Department Chair. She would also be working to identify someone from that department as a replacement for the previous department representative (J. Gravitz).
- NFC continued to work with K. Schmitz on the wording for the Qualtrics survey regarding the proposed changes in the communication policy for promotion and tenure. Contact information was assembled by Tom Weymann and passed along to Katie to set up ballots for the communication policy ballot.  
NFC emphasized the need for an NFC representative from Cultural and Creative Studies as P. Durr was on sabbatical. The NFC By Laws were amended to add the Department of Performing Arts to the list of departments. Luane Davis Haggerty joined the NFC as the representative of that department. NFC was excited to have Luane join.
- Dr. Buckley asked NFC to seek nominations for faculty to serve on the AAVP search committee. NFC representatives reached out to their constituents to gather a list of possible names (see 2/18/2020 minutes). While gathering names, constituents from several departments expressed their concern about the AAVP search being internal only. Some constituents said that they felt the selection was predetermined and therefore saw no need to serve on the committee. These concerns were forwarded to the administration.
- NFC was instrumental in encouraging faculty to vote on the new communication expectations policy language as well as ensuring the vote followed the procedures explained to NFC by RIT Academic Senate. There were several technical difficulties administering the survey, so a formal accurate vote never occurred. In the end, the new communication policy expectation vote has been put on hold while the university deals with the CoVid pandemic.
- NFC discussed rotating chairs. Some constituents are concerned that if the chair was constantly changing then confidential information and salary amounts will be known by various people. Some constituents are uncomfortable with this potential situation.
- Due to the pandemic, Mark R. has agreed to extend his term as At Large Rep as well as NFC Chair to the end of Fall semester. He will then begin his transition to retirement and not work spring semester. Other At Large constituents have approved his extended role as representative and NFC has approved his extended role as NFC Chair last spring (2195).
- Fall NFC work will include:
  - finding a new At Large representative
  - electing someone from NFC to serve as Chair starting spring semester
  - Identifying a new MSSE representative at the end of spring semester
- New NFC members include Mark Jeremy (replacing Tao Eng) and Stephen Aldersley (replacing J. Gravitz). Welcome to both and thanks to Tao and Jennifer for their fine service to their departments and NFC.

Final Comments:

- A reminder as we head into a new year, you can always bring concerns or ideas to your NFC representative or the NFC chair. See the NTID NFC website (<https://www.rit.edu/ntid/committees/nfc>) to identify your representative, read minutes of previous meetings, and review the bylaws.
- Workload issues were on the agenda for AY 2020-21 but with the reconfiguration of classes and teaching loads, we might need to focus on current issues as they arise and put the previous survey results conducted by Anne Hagar's committee aside?
- We are not sure we will be meeting in person or via zoom and will let NTID know as soon as plans are developed. The meeting schedule will be posted on the NFC website.
- NFC wishes all faculty well especially with the challenges we all face together this fall!