



TO: Senate Agenda Committee
FROM: Faculty Handbook Committee
DATE: February 25, 2026
SUBJECT: Final report for AY 2025-2026 Faculty Handbook Committee

The Faculty Handbook Committee (FHC) held 12 meetings during the 2025-2026 academic year (as of 2/25/2026) to address the specific charges assigned by the Senate Agenda Committee (SAC). Below is a summary of how each charge was addressed, along with corresponding recommendations and/or resolutions, along with a summary of further FHC collaboration and activities.

CHARGE 1: Work from the 2024-25 Faculty Handbook Committee Final Report recommendations on 2024-25 Charge 3 to update the grievance process sections of the Faculty Handbook to present to the Senate in January 2026. The committee and SAC liaison will work with the Office of the Provost and the Office of General Counsel to turn prior recommendations into granular resolutions that can be implemented. The committee shall also consult with the Senate Agenda Committee on complex grievance situations. Draft resolution language is provided in the 2024-25 FHBC final report. The following grievance process matters are top priorities for revision:

- **Grievance timeline and faculty member contract status at time of filing (1A)**
- **The role of the grievance committee (1B)**
- **The role, if any, of HR in the grievance process (1C)**
- **The role of the SAC liaison (1D)**
- **Clarify the process for grievances filed against the Provost or a member of the Provost's Office to address conflicts of interest (1E)**

Process: Review of FH, discussion, available information on the grievance procedure at other universities, feedback from the Ombuds Office, feedback from and discussion with SAC liaison. The current FH section on Full-time faculty Grievance Procedure page:

<https://faculty.northeastern.edu/handbook/governance/full-time-faculty-grievance-procedure/>

Subcharge 1A (Grievance timeline and faculty member contract status at time of filing)

- i. Current Status/Rationale: The Faculty Handbook (FH) timeline for the Full-time Faculty Grievance Procedure is cumbersome, and the section is in need of improved flow and clarity.

Related FH passages:

Full-time Faculty Grievance Procedure (the whole section).

FHC Recommendation: The Full-time Faculty Grievance Procedure section of the Faculty Handbook should be split into four distinct subsections with content updated and/or reorganized to improve clarity and flow. The proposed four distinct subsections are as follows:

1. Definitions and Eligibility
 2. Grievance Process and Details
 3. Typical Grievance Process Timeline
 4. Grievance Process Timeline Exceptions
- ii. Current Status/Rationale: The Faculty Handbook does not specifically address how to manage grievances that are submitted when faculty are not on contract (or they are on an approved leave) except for related language that filing a grievance (*Step One*) must still occur within three months after the grievant became aware of the grievable event(s) (2.a.1.) AND that the time limit for filing a grievance may be extended beyond three months with written agreement of the Provost, the grievant, and SAC grievance officer (2.e.1.a.) AND that the time limits for subsequent steps may be extended by mutual agreement if it is difficult to form an ad hoc mediation committee due to time of year (2.e.1.b.) AND that due to the potential difficulty in forming an ad hoc Mediation Committee during summer months, *Step Two and Three* of the Grievance Procedure will normally be suspended during summer terms (2.e.1.c.).

Related FH passages:

2.a.1. "A grievance must be filed within three months after the faculty member became aware of the grievable event. During this period, the grievant must attempt to resolve the matter informally."

2.e.1.a. "The time limit for filing a grievance as specified in section 2.a may be extended beyond three months with written agreement of the Provost, the grievant and the Senate Agenda Committee grievance officer."

2.e.1.b. "It is important that grievances be processed as rapidly as possible. The number of days indicated at each step shall be considered a maximum, and every effort will be made to expedite the process. However, the time limits specified may be extended by mutual agreement if it is difficult to form an ad hoc mediation committee due to time of year.

2.e.1.c. "Because it is difficult to form an ad hoc Mediation Committee during the summer months, the clock for Steps Two and Three will normally be suspended during summer terms. However, the filing of a grievance under Step One must still occur within three months after the grievant became aware of the grievable event(s).

Faculty Handbook Committee Recommendation: FH should be more explicit about how faculty grievant(s)' off-contract status or being on an approved leave at the time of filing the grievance affects the timeline.

Subcharge 1B (The role of the grievance committee)

Current Status/Rationale: The *ad hoc* Mediation Committee determines if the grievance falls within the definition of a grievance and/or whether it is insubstantial or frivolous. Throughout the grievance process, the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee serves a neutral, mediation purpose. The committee can suggest ways to resolve the dispute and invite input from all parties that could aid in resolving the conflict; however, it cannot make formal findings with respect to the grievance itself. As such, the role of the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee appears clear. However, there is an opportunity to improve contextual wording for better clarity and flow.

Related FH passages:

2.b.2. “The ad hoc Mediation Committee shall be neutral and impartial as it attempts to mediate the dispute. During this phase of the procedure the committee may suggest ways to resolve the dispute, but shall make no formal findings with respect to the grievance other than to determine whether the grievance falls within the definition of a grievance, and/or whether it is insubstantial or frivolous. The ad hoc Mediation Committee shall conduct the meetings in steps two and three.”

Full-time Faculty Grievance Procedure (the whole section).

FHC Recommendation: The role of the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee appears clear. The Grievance Procedure section and its wording associated with the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee should be updated for improved clarity and flow only.

Subcharge 1C (The role, if any, of HR in the grievance process)

Current Status/Rationale: Human Resources Department (HR) involvement in the grievance process is not explicitly mentioned in the FH, but its possibility can be inferred from wording allowing the grievant to “be accompanied by a member of the Northeastern University community” (2.b.3. and 2b.5.) AND the ad hoc grievance committee “may require the attendance of ... and any other persons who might be of aid in resolving the grievance” (2b.3.b and 2.b5.) At any meeting where the grievant is present, the grievant may be accompanied by a member of the Northeastern University community (2.b.3.). As such, FH does not exclude the involvement of HR in the grievance proceedings.

Related FH passages:

2.b.3. “At any meeting where the grievant is present, the grievant may be accompanied by a member of the Northeastern University community.”

2.b.3.b “As the mediation process continues, if the Committee deems it advisable, it may require the attendance of the person whose action occasioned the grievance and any other persons who might be of aid in resolving the grievance such as the Director of the Office of University Equity and Compliance, or the Director of the Disability Resource Center.”

2.b.5. “If no resolution has been formalized within ten working days of the last Step Two meeting, or if the ad hoc Mediation Committee feels that no resolution is forthcoming, and if the grievant wishes to pursue the grievance, the Chair of the *ad hoc Mediation Committee* shall arrange a meeting with the Provost (or his or her designee), the grievant, and the ad hoc Mediation Committee for the purpose of

resolving the grievance. If the ad hoc Mediation Committee considers it advisable, it may request the attendance of the party whose action occasioned the grievance and/or other involved individuals. The grievant may be accompanied by a member of the Northeastern University community.”

FHC Recommendation: FH should be inclusive but not limiting in who should be included in the grievance proceedings. The grievant should not be limited to only having one member of the Northeastern University community accompany them. Similarly, the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee should be able to request attendance and/or input by the party whose action occasioned the grievance and/or other involved individuals, who may help resolve the grievance.

Subcharge 1D (The role of the SAC liaison)

Current Status/Rationale: The Senate Agenda Committee liaison is not specifically mentioned in the Full-time Faculty Grievance Procedure of the FH. For clarity purposes, the “grievance coordinator” should be removed to minimize confusion about yet another inherent role for the grievance process vs. suggesting a process at discretion of the Senate Agenda Committee.

Related FH passages:

2.a.2. “A formal grievance is filed in writing with the Senate Agenda Committee. The Senate’s grievance coordinator will send to the Department Chair (or equivalent), Dean, Provost, and (if not one of these) the person whose action occasioned the grievance.”

Faculty Handbook Committee Recommendation: FH should include the role of the Senate Agenda Committee Liaison for transparency and clarity purposes. It may be helpful to include it under *Step One: Filing a Grievance*.

Subcharge 1E (Clarify the process for grievances filed against the Provost or a member of the Provost’s Office to address conflicts of interest)

Current Status/Rationale: The Faculty Handbook does not specify how to handle grievances against upper administration. When a grievance is filed against the Chancellor, an administrator within the Chancellor’s office, the President, or an administrator within the President’s office, the existing grievance involving the Provost’s role, see below, should be adequate. However, when a grievance is filed against the Provost or an administrator within the Provost’s office, the existing procedure is problematic, as the Provost’s office is an active participant in the currently stated grievance procedure.

Related FH passages:

2.a.2. A formal grievance is filed in writing with the Senate Agenda Committee. The Senate’s grievance coordinator will send copies to the Department Chair (or equivalent), Dean, Provost, and (if not one of these) the person whose action occasioned the grievance.

2.a.3. In the formal grievance, the grievant will state the exact nature of the grievance, against whom it is filed, and the remedy sought. At this point they may request resolution through the Early Provostial Review Option.

2.b.5. If no resolution has been formalized within ten working days of the last Step Two meeting, or if the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee feels that no resolution is forthcoming, and if the grievant wishes to pursue the grievance, the Chair of the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee shall arrange a meeting with the Provost (or his or her designee), the grievant, and the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee for the purpose of resolving the grievance.

2.c.1. If the grievant is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance at Step Two, or if no decision has been rendered within ten working days after the meeting with the Provost (Step Two) or within ten working days of receipt of a proposed resolution formally submitted by the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee to the parties, the grievant may request, in writing, to the Chair of the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee that the grievance be submitted to arbitration.

2.c.2. The Committee shall determine if (a) the claim falls within the definition of a grievance, b) the remaining issues beyond any settlement currently offered by the Provost are neither clearly insubstantial nor frivolous and (c) the remedy sought is within the power of an arbitrator. If these conditions are met, the Committee shall decide in favor of arbitration.

2.d.1. If the grievance is to be arbitrated, the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee will so notify the Provost and the grievant.

2.d.2. Within fifteen calendar days after the notification of the Provost, the Provost (or their designee) shall meet with the grievant for the purpose of explaining the process of filing a demand for arbitration with the American Arbitration Association. At the request of the grievant or the Provost, the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee's Chair may also be present at this meeting.

And 3. Early Provostial Review Option for Use in Case of Alleged Procedural Violations

FHC Recommendation: When a grievance is filed specifically against the Provost, an administrator within the Provost's Office, or the Office of the Provost, another party must replace the role of the Provost's Office within the typical grievance procedure. If a matter rises to the level of a grievance against the Provost, an administrator within the Provost's Office, or the Office of the Provost, then it is the responsibility of the Elected Senators as the representatives of the whole faculty body to officiate the grievance process. The Senate Agenda Committee (SAC) shall serve as the Mediation Committee. A three-member Elected Senator Grievance Subcommittee shall be appointed after a nomination and vote by the Elected Senators. Each Elected Senator Grievance Subcommittee member shall be from a different College, and none shall be from the grievant's College(s). SAC members are not eligible to serve on the Elected Senator Grievance Subcommittee, but they retain voting rights in the nomination process.

Resolution: Faculty Handbook Grievance Procedure Process, Timeline, and Exceptions to Timeline and related updates

WHEREAS The Faculty Handbook’s timeline for the Full-time Faculty Grievance Procedure is cumbersome, and the section is in need of improved flow and clarity.

WHEREAS The Faculty Handbook does not specifically address how to manage grievances that are submitted when faculty are not on contract or they are on an approved leave.

WHEREAS The role of the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee appears clear; however, there is an opportunity to improve contextual wording for better clarity and flow.

WHEREAS Human Resources (HR) Department involvement in the grievance process is not explicitly mentioned in the FH, but its possibility can be inferred. FH should be inclusive but not limiting in who should be included in the grievance proceedings, and such an opportunity and support should be offered fairly to both sides.

WHEREAS The Senate Agenda Committee liaison is not specifically mentioned in the Full-time Faculty Grievance Procedure of the FH.

WHEREAS Faculty-related grievances filed specifically against the Provost, an administrator within the Provost’s Office, or the Office of the Provost, are infrequent; they may happen, and as such, the FH should have a process in place for such instances, ensuring accountability at all levels of the University.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT The Full-time Faculty Grievance Procedure in the Faculty Handbook should have four distinct subsections: (1) Definitions and Eligibility, (2) Grievance Process and Details, (3) Typical Grievance Process Timeline, and (4) Grievance Process Timeline Exceptions, and shall be updated and amended as follows:

Full-time Faculty Grievance Procedure

1. Definitions and Eligibility

.... remains the same

2. Grievance Process and Details

a. Step One: Filing a Grievance

1. A formal grievance is filed in writing with the Senate Agenda Committee (SAC). The ~~Senate's grievance coordinator will send~~ copies of the grievance will be sent to the Department Chair (or equivalent), Dean, Provost, and (if not one of these) the person whose action occasioned the grievance. SAC may appoint a Senate Agenda Committee member to serve as a Liaison for each grievance. Normally, the SAC Secretary shall serve as the liaison to the grievance committee. Another SAC member shall be appointed as the liaison to the grievance committee when the SAC Secretary is unable to serve in this role, for example, due to a conflict of interest.
2. In ~~the~~ formal grievance, the grievant will state the exact nature of the grievance, against whom it is filed, and the remedy sought. At this point, they may request resolution through the Early Provostial Review Option (see 4.a for exceptions to process timeline).
3. When a grievance is filed specifically against the Provost, an administrator within the Provost's Office, or the Office of the Provost, another party must replace the role of the Provost's Office within the typical grievance procedure (see 2.e for the process).

b. Step Two: Mediation by an ad hoc Faculty Committee

1. The Senate Agenda Committee shall appoint an *ad hoc* Mediation Committee composed of three faculty members, with at least one member from the same faculty category. ~~4~~In appointing this Committee, the Senate Agenda Committee will normally appoint faculty members not involved with the grievant or their department.
2. The *ad hoc* Mediation Committee shall be neutral and impartial as it attempts to mediate the dispute. During this phase of the procedure, the committee may suggest ways to resolve the dispute, but the Committee shall make no formal findings with respect to the grievance other than to determine whether the grievance falls within the definition of a grievance, and/or whether it is insubstantial or frivolous. The *ad hoc* Mediation Committee shall conduct the meetings in ~~S~~steps T~~two and T~~three.
3. At any meeting where the grievant is present, the grievant may be accompanied by a member or members of the Northeastern University community.
4. After an initial meeting with the grievant, the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee may at any point, by majority vote, determine whether the grievance meets a threshold for mediation: that it is neither insubstantial nor frivolous and falls within the definition of a grievance.
 - i. If the Committee rules that the entire grievance does not meet this threshold, it shall so inform the grievant, the other relevant parties, the Provost (or another party in cases of Grievance against the Provost, an administrator within the Provost's Office, or the Office of the Provost), and the Senate Agenda Committee.
 - ii. If the Committee rules that only some of the issues raised in the grievance do not meet this threshold, it shall so inform the grievant, the other relevant parties, the

Provost (or another party in cases of Grievance against the Provost, an administrator within the Provost's Office, or the Office of the Provost), and the Senate Agenda Committee, also stipulating the issues which remain to be mediated. In this circumstance, mediation will proceed with respect to the remaining issues. Neither mediation nor arbitration will remain available for the issues deemed non-grievable.

5. As the mediation process continues, if the Committee deems it advisable, it may require the attendance of the person whose action occasioned the grievance and any other persons who might be of aid in resolving the grievance, ~~such as~~ including but not limited to the Director of the Office ~~for~~ of University Equity and Compliance, or the Director of the Disability Resource Center.
6. If mediation is unsuccessful without the participation of the Dean, the Committee ~~shall~~ may require the attendance of the Dean for at least one meeting to attempt to reach a resolution.
7. If the grievant wishes to pursue the grievance at the end of *Step Two*, the Chair of the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee shall arrange a meeting with the Provost ~~(or his or her designee~~ (or another party in cases of Grievance against the Provost, an administrator within the Provost's Office, or the Office of the Provost), the grievant, and the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee for the purpose of resolving the grievance. If the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee considers it advisable, it may request the attendance ~~of and/or input by~~ of the party whose action occasioned the grievance and/or other involved individuals, who may help resolve the grievance. The grievant may be accompanied by a member or members of the Northeastern University community.
8. If, after this meeting, no resolution has yet been reached, the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee may submit to the parties a proposed resolution to the grievance.

c. *Step Three: Request for Arbitration*

1. When determining, by a majority vote, ~~if~~ whether the grievance shall be arbitrated, the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee will not determine whether or not the grievance shall be upheld, but only whether the grievance shall be arbitrated. The *ad hoc* Mediation Committee shall determine if (a) the claim falls within the definition of a grievance, b) the remaining issues beyond any settlement currently offered by the Provost (or another party in cases of Grievance against the Provost, an administrator within the Provost's Office, or the Office of the Provost), are neither clearly insubstantial nor frivolous, ~~and~~ and (c) the remedy sought is within the power of an arbitrator. If these conditions are met, the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee shall decide in favor of arbitration.
2. If the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee decides that the grievance does not meet the criteria for arbitration, the grievance is closed.
3. If the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee believes that the grievance has revealed needed improvements in policies, practices, or procedures in the University, it shall recommend such changes to the Senate by forwarding such recommendations to the Senate Agenda Committee, or to the appropriate supervisory unit.
4. If the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee decides that the grievance shall be arbitrated, the Committee will instruct the Provost's Office to institute arbitration proceedings.

d. *Step Four: Arbitration*

1. If the grievance is to be arbitrated, the arbitrator shall be chosen from a list of arbitrators maintained by the American Arbitration Association, or a comparable arbitration agency acceptable to the grievant and the University. The arbitrator must be qualified for academic arbitration by virtue of current or previous service as a faculty member or academic administrator of a college or a university. The conduct of the proceedings shall be governed by the rules of the American Arbitration Association.
2. The decision of the arbitrator, within the scope of their jurisdiction, shall be final and binding on the parties to the dispute and the University; however, the arbitrator shall be without power to:
 - i. ~~M~~make a decision which requires the commission of an act prohibited by law,
 - ii. ~~S~~ubstitute their judgment on the professional qualifications of a faculty member for the judgment of the relevant academic committee, or
 - iii. ~~A~~add to, subtract from, or modify provisions of the Faculty Handbook or other relevant University policies and procedures.
3. The costs of the services of the arbitrator or arbitrator's associate shall be borne as follows:
 - i. If the arbitrator denies the grievance, the grievant will pay 1/3 of the fees of the American Arbitration Association (or comparable arbitration agency acceptable to the grievant and the University) and its arbitrator, and the University shall bear the remainder of such costs.
 - ii. Each party will pay for its own expenses, services and fees other than the costs of the American Arbitration Association (or comparable arbitration agency acceptable to the grievant and the University) and the arbitrator.
 - iii. To assure that the conditions of section (b) can be met, the grievant will place into a non-interest bearing escrow account in the Northeastern University Federal Credit Union, a sum equal to one-half of the American Arbitration Association (or comparable arbitration agency acceptable to the grievant and the University) processing fee plus one-half of one day's arbitrator's fee. Specific instructions for establishment of the escrow account are set by the Senate Agenda Committee and are available in the Faculty Senate office. The escrow account will be controlled by the Chair of the Senate Agenda Committee. Upon completion of the arbitration, with the signature of the Agenda Committee Chair and a copy of the arbitrator's decision, the deposited funds will be returned to the grievant if the grievance is upheld, or transferred to the University if the grievance is denied. If the arbitrator reaches a split decision on a multi-element grievance, the arbitrator will determine the proportional distribution of the AAA/Arbitrator costs and the distribution of the deposited funds.

e. Grievance against the Provost, an administrator within the Provost's Office, or the Office of the Provost

1. If a matter rises to the level of a grievance against the Provost, an administrator within the Provost's Office, or the Office of the Provost, then it is the responsibility of the Elected Senators as the representatives of the whole faculty body to officiate the grievance process (to decrease the possibility of appointing biased parties).
2. The Senate Agenda Committee (SAC) shall serve as the Mediation Committee.
3. A three-member Elected Senator Grievance Subcommittee shall be appointed after a nomination and vote by the Elected Senators.
4. Each Elected Senator Grievance Subcommittee member shall be from a different College, and none shall be from the grievant's College(s).
5. SAC members are not eligible to serve on the Elected Senator Grievance Subcommittee, but they retain voting rights in the nomination process.
6. The remainder of the process is the same as for 2.a-d.

3. Typical Grievance Process Timeline

- a. *Step One: Filing a Grievance*
 1. A grievance is filed **within three months** after the faculty member became aware of the grievable event. During this period, the grievant attempts to resolve the matter informally.
- b. *Step Two: Mediation by an ad hoc Faculty Committee*
 1. **As soon as possible after Step One** has completed, the Senate Agenda Committee shall appoint an *ad hoc* Mediation Committee, which shall conduct the meetings in ~~S~~steps ~~T~~two and ~~I~~three.
 2. **As soon as reasonably possible** after the establishment of the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee, its ~~C~~hair shall arrange for one or more meetings with the relevant parties in an effort to resolve the grievance.
 3. The *ad hoc* Mediation Committee may at any point **during Step Two**, by majority vote, determine whether the grievance meets a threshold for mediation.
 4. If no resolution has been formalized **within ~~ten~~10 working days** of the last *Step Two* meeting, or if the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee feels that no resolution is forthcoming, and if the grievant wishes to pursue the grievance, the Chair of the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee shall arrange a meeting with the Provost ~~(or his or her designee)~~ (or another party in cases of Grievance against the Provost, an administrator within the Provost's Office, or the Office of the Provost), the grievant, and the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee for the purpose of resolving the grievance.
- c. *Step Three: Request for Arbitration*
 1. If the grievance is not resolved in *Step Two*, the grievant may file a written request for arbitration to the ~~C~~hair of the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee **by the end of 30 working days** after the *Step Two* disposition and/or meeting, or the transmittal of the Committee's proposed resolution.
 2. The *ad hoc* Mediation Committee will, **within ~~ten~~10 working days** after receipt of the request for arbitration, decide by a majority vote if the grievance shall be arbitrated.

d. *Step Four: Arbitration*

1. If the grievance is to be arbitrated, the ad hoc Mediation Committee will ~~so~~ notify the Provost and the grievant, as per section 3.c.2.
2. Within ~~fifteen~~15 calendar days after the notification of the Provost, the Provost (or their designee) shall meet with the grievant for the purpose of explaining the process of filing a demand for arbitration with the American Arbitration Association.
3. The University must file such demand **within 15 calendar days** after this meeting, as long as the escrow requirement has been met, or **within 5 days** after University Counsel receives notice that the grievant has met the escrow requirement, whichever comes later.

4. Grievance Process Timeline Exceptions

The time limits specified may be extended by mutual agreement if it is difficult to form an *ad hoc* Mediation ~~C~~committee ~~due to time of year.~~ Consent to agreement shall not be unreasonably withheld.

If a grievance is submitted when faculty grievant(s) is(are) not on contract or they are on an approved leave, the timeframe for *Step Two and subsequent steps* should proceed as written in the Grievance Procedure unless the faculty grievant(s) ~~off~~ is(are) unable to fulfill such a commitment. In such a case, the faculty grievant(s) shall provide a written statement to the Senate Agenda Committee ~~grievance coordinator~~ and the Grievance Procedure should be paused (except for the formation of the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee) and resumed when the faculty grievant(s) is(are) back on, but no longer than ~~one full semester~~15 weeks.

A grievant shall have two weeks to respond after each grievance step. If they fail to respond by the end of two weeks, the grievance will be considered ~~as~~ waived. An involuntary delay such as illness ~~or failure of the mails to deliver~~ shall not be construed as waiving the grievance.

a. *Step One Timeline Exceptions*

1. The grievant may request resolution through the Early Provostial Review Option at the time that they submit their grievance to the Senate Agenda Committee.
2. The time limit for filing a grievance, as specified, may be extended beyond three months with a written agreement of the Provost (or another party in cases of Grievance against the Provost, an administrator within the Provost's Office, or the Office of the Provost), the grievant, and the Senate Agenda Committee grievance officer.
3. In the event that informal steps to resolve the situation are ongoing, the grievant may request, in writing, that the Senate Agenda Committee automatically grant postponement for initiating of the Step Two for ~~an~~ additional two months.

b. *Step Two Timeline Exceptions*

1. Because it is difficult to form an *ad hoc* Mediation Committee during the summer months, the clock for *Steps Two and Three* will normally be suspended during summer terms.

2. In the event that informal steps to resolve the situation are ongoing, the grievant may request, in writing, that the Senate Agenda Committee automatically grant postponement ~~of~~ for initiating the Step Two for ~~an~~ additional two months. At any time that the grievant is dissatisfied with the progress of informal steps, they may, in writing, rescind this request and resume the normal grievance process.
 3. The inability of a member of the *ad hoc* Grievance-Mediation Committee ~~member~~ to attend meetings during *Steps Two and Three* shall in no way change any prescribed time limits.
- c. *Step Three Timeline Exceptions*
1. If the grievant does not file a request for arbitration within 30 working days after the *Step Two* disposition and/or meeting, or the transmittal of the Committee's proposed resolution, then the grievance is closed.
 2. If the grievant files a request for arbitration and the *ad hoc* Mediation Committee decides that the grievance does not meet the criteria for arbitration, the grievance is closed.
- d. *Step Four Timeline Exceptions*
1. If the grievant has not met the escrow requirement within 90 calendar days of the demand for arbitration, the grievance will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

CHARGE 2: Draft a sustainable, regular Faculty Handbook update process and create a resolution/set of resolutions to bring to the Faculty Senate

Process: Review of FH, discussion, feedback from and discussion with SAC liaison

Current Status/Rationale: FHC carefully considered if FH should be reflective of a "birds-eye-view" guidance vs. be reflective of all granular changes to practice/process. FHC discussed the impact on workload for FHC and other committees, which should be considered in rolling out such reviews. FHC also considered a question if FHC has the expertise/know-how for knowing what is wrong with each section of the FH vs. if the FHC member representation from multiple colleges is a sufficient sample for "screening" of FH modules for clarity and aligning with recently passed FS resolutions. FHC members agreed that there should be some boundaries for the scope and roll out. Still, FHC members recognize the need for a routine "screening" review (each section of the FH q5 years: Governance; Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure (APT); Rights in Teaching, Research and Scholarship; Personnel Policies; and Academic Organization) and a priority-based review (coming from the prior year's screening review, survey results, and/or SAC) while considering the workload of FHC and other committees and potentially not enforce it through a resolution yet but rather suggest a pilot as a recommendation.

Related FH Sections/Passages: The whole FH.

FHC Recommendation:

FHC proposes a pilot "screening" review of each of the five FH sections (Governance, APT, Rights in Teaching, Research and Scholarship, Personnel Policies, and Academic Organization) on a 5-year review cycle with a primary purpose to address the section clarity, readability, and alignment with recently passed FS resolutions AND suggest the need for formal FH updates that should be charged to SAC-appointed committees (as relevant) for the following academic year. FHC proposes to start with the review of the first section of the FH on Governance during the academic year 2026-2027 (first section in

the FH with a plan for review of other FH sections following sequentially). In addition, the priority-based FH updates still need to happen and should be driven by specific FH concerns brought to SAC or FHC (e.g. FHC would suggest joint appointments to be reviewed/addressed in FH next year with SAC deciding to what committee(s) the charge would go to).

Resolution: None yet

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER COMMITTEES:

a) Academic Policy Committee

- Review of proposed language for the FH for the implementation of an approved APC Resolution #13 (approved by Office of the Provost, 5/3/2024) on active participation of faculty in their workload determination and collaborative process for workload adjustments
- FHC received drafted language to be incorporated into FH on December 9, 2025. The draft was discussed thoroughly and approved by FHC with minor modifications and sent back to APC on December 18, 2025. These changes were accepted by SAC, confirmed in an email by APC on January 7, 2026.
- The recommended language is **bolded** below, in the (unbolded) context of the original language on the faculty handbook work policy page (<https://faculty.northeastern.edu/handbook/personnel-policies/faculty-workloads>): The All full-time faculty members participate in some combination of instructional; research; scholarship; and creative and service activities that have been established to encourage the general development of Northeastern University students. Given that academic units vary in their contributions to the University mission, components of the workload policy will vary from one department or unit to another. However, each academic unit must have a comprehensive workload policy in accordance with criteria jointly approved by the University's provost and the Faculty Senate.² **Further, all full-time faculty will have the opportunity to discuss and negotiate their workload assignments with their department chair or unit head, where initial determinations and subsequent modifications are to be discussed and agreed upon to the mutual agreement and understanding of both parties, before implementation.** Each unit's workload policy must be approved by a vote of the full-time faculty of the academic unit and be approved by the College dean and the provost. Faculty workloads are administered by the appropriate academic unit head and/or college deans.

b) Global Education Committee

- Review of proposed language on Faculty-Led Programs (FLP) as a module for consideration for implementation into the FH.
- Request for review received on November 24, 2025. FHC reviewed the proposal thoroughly during a meeting on December 4, 2025, and a FHC member representative was able to attend GEC meeting on December 12, 2025. Further review and discussion was held during FHC meeting on December 18, 2025, with the following summary of recommendations sent back to GEC.

- The proposal as presented is too granular and more of a policy/procedure language. A brief concise section on FLP may be considered as an amendment to a specific FH section, as justified. Some questions to consider with the revision are: Are faculty-led-programs faculty represented in the FH, or are there exceptions needed (to wording in FH)? Does any language in FLP handbook violate the FH in any way (consider that FH is the overarching faculty governing bylaws/policy handbook, from which policies/procedures affecting/including faculty etc. flow)? It looks like the FLP Handbook could be shared as is with faculty it pertains to (or those it could potentially pertain to), though some language may need to be more general (may be helpful in guiding that). Could that be considered instead (or in addition to)?

FACULTY SURVEY: Priority-based FH issues

FHC reviewed responses from the Faculty Survey and specifically questions 25-1 and 25-2 posed by FHC. Question 25-1 had 97/591 substantive responses (16.4% substantive response rate). Question 25-2 received 424/591 responses (71.7% response rate).

Question 25-1 focused on Priority Issues related to FH that should be addressed in the next academic year with the following being most frequently mentioned: Promotion & Tenure clarity, NTT Faculty protections, Leave policies affecting sabbatical; Administrative accountability; Academic freedom. Note: some responses related more to specific policy issues vs. FH. (see Appendix for full theme analysis)

Question 25-2 focused specifically on joint appointments: "How important is it for the Faculty Senate to update procedures specified in the Faculty Handbook related to hiring, tenuring, and promoting faculty with joint appointments at the University?" From the faculty who responded to this question, 75.4% (320/424) consider updating FH in relation to joint appointments moderately (95/424), very (115/424), or extremely (110/424) important. (see Appendix for survey response summary)

FHC Recommendation: FHC would suggest to SAC to have faculty joint appointments as a priority-based item to be reviewed/addressed in FH next year and deciding to what committee(s) the charge would go to.

Respectfully submitted,
Professor Peter Desnoyers
Professor Oyinda Oyelaran
Professor Costas Panagopoulos
Professor Marketa Rejtar (Chair)
Professor Kristin Stankard
Professor Laney Strange

Appendix A
Faculty Survey Question 25-1 Priorities for FH Theme Analysis (Claude-derived)

Survey Statistics (Q25_1)

Response Summary:

- Total survey respondents: 591
- Responses to this question: ~97 substantive responses
- Response rate for this question: ~16.4%
- Blank/no response: ~494 (83.6%)

Major Themes & Frequency

1. Promotion & Tenure (35 responses, 36%)

Sub-themes:

- Clarity of criteria and expectations (12)
- Timeline and process issues (8)
- Mid-career/3rd year review needs clarification (3)
- Impact of factors outside faculty control (funding, budget cuts) (4)
- Department chair letter timing (2)
- Requirements by years of service (2)
- Collaborator letters (1)
- Teaching observations (1)
- General confusion about process (2)

2. Non-Tenure Track Faculty Issues (28 responses, 29%)

Sub-themes:

- Employment protections and job security (9)
- One Faculty Model implementation (5)
- Co-op faculty designation/distinction (4)
- Promotion procedures for NTT (4)
- Contract issues and workload (3)
- Administrative opportunities for FTNTT (2)
- Post-retirement benefits (1)

3. Academic Freedom & Free Speech (15 responses, 15%)

- Explicit mentions of academic freedom (8)
- Freedom of expression (3)
- Government/regulatory pressure concerns (2)
- Faculty safety and university support (2)

4. Administrative Accountability & Oversight (22 responses, 23%)

Sub-themes:

- Performance evaluations of administrators (7)
- Shared governance concerns (6)
- Faculty votes of no confidence mechanisms (3)
- Hiring and evaluation of leadership (3)
- Dean search committees (2)
- Chair search process (1)

5. Compensation & Equity (18 responses, 19%)

Sub-themes:

- Pay transparency (2)
- Equity review process and timing (3)
- Merit review inconsistencies (6)
- Cost-of-living adjustments (1)
- Salary raises with seniority (2)
- Summer pay (1)
- Resources for contract renewal raises (2)
- Overload pay policies (1)

6. Workload Policies (17 responses, 18%)

Sub-themes:

- Inconsistency across colleges/departments (6)
- Teaching load calculations (4)
- Joint/dual-appointed faculty workload (4)
- Part-time vs. 8-month vs. 12-month contracts (2)
- Service workload metrics (1)

7. Leave Policies (12 responses, 12%)

Sub-themes:

- Parental/bonding leave (4)
- Medical leave (3)
- Family leave policy outdated (3)
- Sabbatical eligibility after leaves (5)
 - **Critical issue: Medical/parental leave causing loss of sabbatical eligibility**

8. Artificial Intelligence Policies (11 responses, 11%)

- AI in teaching and research (8)
- Enforcement of AI restrictions (2)
- Faculty use of AI (1)

9. Grievance & Support Systems (12 responses, 12%)

Sub-themes:

- Grievance procedures inadequate/toothless (5)
- Support mechanisms for faculty facing retaliation (2)
- Peer-based support structures needed (2)
- Non-retaliation policy enforcement (2)
- Grievance committee composition (1)

10. TRACE/Teaching Evaluations (8 responses, 8%)

- TRACE concerns (reliability, misuse) (5)
- Alternative evaluation methods needed (2)
- TRACE results shared with students (1)

11. Network Campus Issues (6 responses, 6%)

- Boston-centric policies don't apply elsewhere (2)
- Faculty governance across campuses (2)
- Merger/acquisition faculty protections (2)

12. Clarity & Communication (11 responses, 11%)

- Vague language ("may" vs. "shall") (3)
- Typos and ambiguous language (2)

- Handbook too complex/long (2)
- Due dates unclear (1)
- Faculty unaware of handbook content (3)

13. Specific Policy Areas (smaller clusters):

- **Joint/Dual appointments** (6 responses)
- **Chair procedures & term limits** (5 responses)
- **Outside activities/conflicts** (3 responses)
- **Bylaws and procedures updates** (4 responses)
- **Immigration policy** (1 response)
- **IP ownership** (1 response)
- **Legal liability** (1 response)
- **Remote teaching options** (1 response)
- **Wellness days** (1 response)
- **Inappropriate workplace behavior** (2 responses)
- **Technology use policy** (1 response)
- **Identity politics** (1 response - critical)

14. Systemic Concerns (8 responses, 8%)

- Handbook lacks enforcement power (3)
- Rules not followed by colleges (2)
- Faculty unity needed over rules (2)
- Handbook is a "figleaf" (1)

Key Findings

Highest Priority Issues (based on frequency + intensity):

1. **Promotion & Tenure clarity** - Most frequently mentioned
2. **NTT faculty protections** - Urgent equity concern
3. **Leave policies affecting sabbatical** - Discriminatory impact
4. **Administrative accountability** - Governance crisis
5. **Academic freedom** - Political climate concern

Critical Equity Issues:

- Sabbatical penalty for medical/parental leave (potentially discriminatory)
- NTT faculty vulnerability and wage disparities
- Compensation equity process inadequate

- Network campus faculty exclusion

Emerging Issues:

- AI policies urgently needed
- Network campus integration problems
- Post-merger faculty protections absent

Tone Analysis:

- **Frustrated/Urgent:** 40% of responses
- **Constructive/Specific:** 45% of responses
- **Resigned/Cynical:** 15% of responses

Appendix B
Faculty Survey Question 25-2 Importance to Update FH related to Joint Appointments Survey
Response Summary (Claude-derived)

Survey Statistics - Joint Appointments Question

Question:

"How important is it for the Faculty Senate to update procedures specified in the Faculty Handbook related to hiring, tenuring, and promoting faculty with joint appointments at the University?"

Response Summary

Out of 591 total respondents:

Category	Count	% of Respondents	% of Total Survey
Extremely important	110	26.0%	18.6%
Very important	115	27.1%	19.5%
Moderately important	95	22.4%	16.1%
Slightly important	22	5.2%	3.7%
Not at all important	17	4.0%	2.9%
No Opinion	65	15.3%	11.0%
No response/Blank	167	—	28.3%
TOTAL RESPONSES	424	100%	71.7%

Key Findings

1. Strong Support for Updates (53.1% high importance)

- **Combined "Very important" + "Extremely important":** 225 responses (53.1% of respondents, 38.1% of total survey)
- This represents majority support among those with an opinion

2. Low Opposition (4.0%)

- Only **17 respondents (4%)** said this was "Not at all important"
- **39 respondents (9.2%)** rated it as slightly or not at all important
- Opposition is minimal

3. Moderate Support Group (22.4%)

- **95 respondents** found this "Moderately important"
- This middle group represents nearly a quarter of responses

4. Significant "No Opinion" Rate (15.3%)

- **65 respondents** selected "No Opinion"
- This may indicate:
 - Faculty without joint appointments
 - Lack of familiarity with joint appointment issues
 - Uncertainty about current procedures

5. Response Rate (71.7%)

- **424 responses out of 591** possible
- **167 people skipped** this question (28.3%)
- Higher engagement than the open-ended question (71.7% vs 16.4%)

Importance Score Analysis

If we assign numerical values to calculate a mean importance score:

- Extremely important = 5
- Very important = 4
- Moderately important = 3
- Slightly important = 2
- Not at all important = 1

Weighted Average (excluding "No Opinion"):

- $(110 \times 5 + 115 \times 4 + 95 \times 3 + 22 \times 2 + 17 \times 1) / 359 = \mathbf{3.83 \text{ out of } 5}$

This indicates **above-moderate to high importance** among faculty with an opinion.

Statistical Insights

Support Levels:

- **Strong support** (Very/Extremely important): 53.1%

- **Moderate to strong support** (Moderately/Very/Extremely): 75.5%
- **Any level of importance** (Slightly through Extremely): 80.7%
- **Opposition or disinterest** (Not at all/Slightly): 9.2%

Sentiment Breakdown:

- **Positive sentiment** (important): 80.7%
- **Neutral** (No Opinion): 15.3%
- **Negative sentiment** (not important): 4.0%

Comparative Context

This issue ranks relatively high compared to typical governance questions because:

1. **Large majority see it as at least moderately important** (75.5%)
2. **Over half consider it highly important** (53.1%)
3. **Very low opposition** (4%)
4. **High response rate** (72%) suggests relevance to many faculty

The "No Opinion" rate (15.3%) is notable and likely reflects:

- Faculty at single appointments who see this as not relevant to them
- Newer faculty unfamiliar with joint appointment complexities
- Faculty who haven't encountered joint appointment issues

Conclusions

Clear Mandate for Action:

The data shows **strong faculty support** for updating joint appointment procedures:

- More than **3 in 4 faculty** (75.5%) rate this as moderately to extremely important
- More than **1 in 2 faculty** (53.1%) rate this as very to extremely important
- Only **1 in 25 faculty** (4%) oppose updates

Priority Level:

This should be considered a **HIGH PRIORITY** item for the Faculty Handbook Committee based on:

- Strong majority support
- Low opposition

- Consistent with open-ended responses mentioning joint appointments as a concern
- High engagement/response rate

Recommendation:

The Faculty Senate has clear mandate from faculty to prioritize updates to joint appointment procedures in the Faculty Handbook.