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**WCCFT Membership Meeting  
April 8, 2015  
Minutes**

**1. Approval of minutes/approval of agenda**

The minutes for the February 4, 2015 membership meeting were approved.  
The agenda was approved.

**2. Brief Legislative Report – Mel Bienenfeld – Discussed the NYS budget and the increase in state aid per FTE.**

**3. Brief Negotiations Report – Judy Langer – The negotiating team is currently working on the nonmonetary issues with the administration. Several of the committees are dealing with chairperson's responsibilities and Faculty Expectations. Update will be given at our May 6, 2015 general meeting.**

**4. Statements of Candidates in WCCFT Elections – The candidates were given two minutes to say a statement about their intent to run for the WCCFT Executive Board. We discussed our reasoning for allowing the current VP and Dean of Student Affairs to be on the ballot for Executive Board. He is retiring in May as VP and Dean and going back to adjunct counseling. The official EB term does not begin until June 1, 2015.**

**5. Credentials Committee Proposal – After a short discussion the proposal was accepted with slight wording corrections. The original proposal is attached.**

**6. New Business – No new business.**

**7. Adjournment – Meeting Adjourned at 12:20pm**

**Minutes submitted by Rafael Rodriguez – WCCFT Secretary**

## **The WCCFT Credentials Committee Proposal & Rationale to Reform the Current Academic Credentials Eligibility Requirements as Written in the Current Collective Bargaining Agreement**

After extensive discussion and careful analysis, the WCCFT Credentials Committee is recommending that the current *Collective Bargaining Agreement's (CBA)*, **academic credentials structure, as to the eligibility to hold rank as stated, and as placed in practice, should be completely eliminated** (Please note that by “academic credentials” we specifically mean minimum number of credits to hold a given rank.).

Instead, we recommend that the college follow the structure commonly used in higher education: namely; **that once an individual is hired as a tenure-track faculty member, his or her academic credentials cannot be used to deny said member's ELIGIBILITY to be considered for promotion to any rank.**

Please note: it is NOT the position of the committee that further coursework within someone's service to the college should not be a factor in evaluating a person for promotion, but rather that such coursework be considered as professional development and be objectively evaluated at the departmental level in a manner consistent with that faculty member's discipline. But again, even at this level it should not be used as an absolute barrier for promotion to deny that faculty member eligibility.

There will be a number of important benefits if this proposal is adopted by SUNY/Westchester Community College as part of its new CBA between the WCCFT and the Administration:

1. It would empower faculty on the departmental level and specifically those who serve on search & screen committees. Currently, departments can establish the minimum qualifications only for the purpose of hiring, and not necessarily for future promotions, as they do not have a right, nor are in a position to engage in credit equivalency. With this proposal, departments will be able to hire with the potential long term career path of candidates in mind. They would no longer be placed in the embarrassing position of not being able to answer a question routinely asked by candidates; namely, “What is my potential career path at WCC?”
2. It would put an end to the discrimination faced by those whose disciplines do not traditionally terminate with a Ph.D. As a result, those standout faculty in the health sciences and fine arts fields, for example, will become eligible to compete for promotion to any rank.
3. It would empower faculty who serve on recommending bodies such as departmental committees and the Central Committee. Currently, these recommending bodies can only consider candidates who have received a signed B2 form to be academically eligible to apply for promotion. With this proposal, the B2 form will be eliminated, enabling these committees to have the power to consider more potential candidates for promotion.
4. It would allow the College to compete more effectively in the recruitment of highly qualified faculty, especially those educated at prestigious institutions here and abroad. The current CBA discriminates against those prospective

candidates who attended many of the leading institutions in the world, including most Ivy League schools. This new plan will no longer unjustly punish those who fall into that category.

5. It would circumvent many of the problems associated with determining “credit equivalency.” In the past, faculty members who attended some of the world’s finest institutions – especially ones from overseas, were required to obtain reports – at their own expense and often to their own detriment – from dubious credit evaluation agencies. With this proposal, faculty members with degrees from Harvard, Cambridge, and Oxford will not have to endure the demeaning process of justifying their academic credentials.
6. It would empower the WCCFT and would greatly reduce, if not eliminate, the arbitrary, capricious, and often unfair practice of denying promotion to higher academic ranks by using the academic credentials section of the CBA as a weapon against vulnerable faculty. In the past, Dr. Hankin would often (though not always) circumvent the flaws in the CBA by awarding faculty members the credits needed to be eligible to hold a given rank. However, with the recent departure of President Hankin, the College is in the midst of the greatest administrative transition in the last forty years. New perspectives and management strategies accompany new leadership. The hope, of course, is that the new administrative team will approach its dealings with the faculty with professionalism and fairness. However, the WCCFT in its role as the protector of the well-being of the faculty, must always be prepared for a “worst case scenario.” This proposal empowers the WCCFT to safeguard the prospective career paths of its membership.

Finally, it is important to note that this Committee, in accordance with its charge from the WCCFT Executive Board, has limited the scope of this reform proposal to address only the matter of the use of academic credentials as a means of determining eligibility to hold a given rank. Therefore, we have not explored the other components of the promotion process – particularly, the criteria that should be used in evaluating applications, or potential eligibility requirements such as years of service at Westchester Community College. Rather, through this proposed reform, we seek only to ensure that faculty members’ academic training does not exclude them unfairly from the right to compete in the promotion process.

Faithfully Submitted:

Gary Klein, Chair

Craig Padawer

Chad Thompson

Eryn Klosko

William Widulski