

## FACULTY AGENDA ITEM NO 16-4

Date: 1/15/2016 (revised)

Submitted by: Jennifer Ball, President, Faculty Senate, x1840

SUBJECT: Faculty Door Policy

Description: Faculty members with offices in Morgan Hall have been told they may not post anything on their office doors. The General Faculty requests clarification on the policy and supports a policy that allows faculty members to post signs, images, etc., on their doors.

Rationale: Some faculty members to whom this (apparently unofficial) policy applies have objected to it. It is unclear who has made this decision or why, and the General Faculty would ask the Administration to make clear what the policy is, as well as the reason for it. The reasoning would be helpful in possibly finding an alternate solution to whatever problem the posting on office doors is thought to cause.

Further, the General Faculty expresses support for a policy that allows faculty members to post signs, images, etc., on their office doors. Such postings are a visual way to convey positions on academic, political, and social issues. This policy prohibiting postings is standing in the way of the free exchange of ideas, which the court system has repeatedly defined as central to the concept of academic freedom. Moreover, faculty office doors represent the entry to their offices, spaces where faculty members set their research and teaching agendas.

Also, much of what faculty members post on their doors directly relates to their efforts to serve WU students—sign-up sheets, handouts, drafts of papers students have asked professors to read and provide feedback for, announcements regarding events and opportunities, etc. Thus, this (unofficial) door policy is standing in the way of Washburn's mission to serve its students.

Finally, faculty simply as employees of an organization should be allowed the freedom to express themselves and individualize their spaces, and this also lends a college "feel" to the hallways of our buildings, as opposed to their having a sterile aesthetic.

Recent academic literature addresses the importance of this issue. The first listed is specific to academia and includes references to other studies regarding this topic within the academy.

Gasman, Marybeth, and Edward Epstein, "Doorways to the Academy: Visual Self-Expression among Faculty Members in Academic Departments," *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 4:8 (2003). Available at [http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1244&context=gse\\_pubs](http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1244&context=gse_pubs) .

S.Y. Lee, J.L. Brand, "Effects of control over office workspace on perceptions of the work environment and work outcomes," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 25 (2005), 323–333.

Jon L. Pierce , Michael P. O'Driscoll & Anne-Marie Coghlan, "Work environment structure and psychological ownership: The mediating effects of control," *The Journal of Social Psychology* 144:5 (2004), 507-534.

Meredith M. Wells, "Office clutter or meaningful personal displays: The role of office personalization in employee and organizational well-being," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 20 (2000), 239-255.

Financial Implications: None.

Proposed Effective Date: NA

Request for Action: Approval by Faculty Senate/General Faculty

Approved by: *Faculty Senate on February 1, 2016*

*General Faculty on date*

Attachments Yes  No