

Professional Standards Committee

Minutes for the meeting of December 2, 2011

Members present: Alva Butcher (chair), Jennifer Hastings, Douglas Sackman, Kristine Bartanen, Andrew Rex, Geoffrey Block, Seth Weinberger, Leon Grunberg

The meeting began with the delivery of charges from the Faculty Senate to the PSC; the charges were delivered by Leslie Saucedo, the Senate liaison to the PSC. There was some discussion of the charges:

- 1) What is the definition/interpretation of a “supervisory” relationship in the various regulations dealing with romantic involvement between faculty members? Are the various policies concerning romantic relationships between faculty members (Faculty Code, Misconduct Policy, Harassment and Discrimination Policy, Shared Faculty Appointment Policy) consistent?
- 2) There was no expectation of imminent delivery from Human Resources of a Background Check Policy for the hiring of new faculty.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved with minor emendation.

Next, the PSC considered the memo from the IRB concerning the Scientific Misconduct Policy (SMP) and the need to reconcile the process established therein with the grievance process established in the Faculty Code. Concerns were raised over the discrepancies, such as the differing time lines and whistleblower protections. The discussion turned to the need for separate policies, and whether either policy could essentially encompass the scope of the other and thus replace it. For example, in the memo provided to the PSC by the IRB chair, the possibility was raised of broadening the scope of the SMP to cover “all research activities associated with the university, not just scientific research,” as well as changing the policy’s title to “Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research (rather than “Scientific”) Misconduct. However, broadening the policy to the whole faculty raised certain concerns including whether it was appropriate to adjudicate these disputes through a process not part of the Faculty Code. The PSC decided that if the SMP exists as a requirement for applying for and receiving federal grants (as is implied in the SMP itself, see the section on “scope” therein) that the SMP should only apply to people applying for or receiving relevant grants, while all other allegations into research misconduct should be dealt with under the grievance process in the Code. It was determined that relevant people (IRB chair, Associate Dean Ferrari) should be consulted to determine who needs to be covered by a separate SMP.

The PSC then turned to the question of participation in faculty evaluations and the various procedures of departments in order to determine which departmental evaluation policies are not in line with the developing interpretation of the code. This discussion concluded with a determination to, upon return to campus in the spring, prepare a code amendment to detail the role of faculty members in departmental evaluations and, assuming it is successful, adjusting departmental evaluations to ensure compliance.

The meeting adjourned at 2:59 PM.

Respectfully,

Seth Weinberger
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