

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee 10/05/07

Present: Bodine, Christoph, Edgoose, Fields, Goldstein, Share

Call to Order at 11:04 by Share who was chairing the committee in the absence of Tomlin.

The minutes of 9/21/07 were approved with one minor modification.

Edgoose reported that the Christoph-Edgoose subcommittee made significant progress on its assigned charges (for a list of charges and assigned subcommittees see the PSC minutes of 9/21/07) and that at least items 9 and 10 will likely be ready for consideration by the full PSC at the next meeting. Fields and Goldstein (item 5) and Bodine and Share (items 2 through 4) mentioned similar progress. It was agreed that subcommittees will brief PSC chair Tomlin on their progress before the next meeting.

The discussion turned to the Dean's proposed use of a designated Associate Dean to write evaluation letters for streamlined files.

Share first communicated a message from Tomlin asking the PSC to try to reach a conclusion, if possible, without waiting for his return.

It appeared that the following two questions needed to be addressed:

1. Does the PSC think that it is appropriate for an associate dean to participate in the streamlined evaluation process?
2. In case of a positive answer to question 1, how can such a change be implemented?

Briefly recalled was an earlier discussion of the PSC as described in its minutes from April 17, 2007.

PSC members unanimously agreed that the streamlined faculty review process has added substantially to the dean's workload and fully supported the dean's request for a designee to write evaluation letters for streamlined files. It was remarked that FAC members already have a very high workload which should not be further increased by being asked to write additional letters. PSC members agreed that the dean should have the flexibility to designate an associated dean to that task. We also discussed in this context who would "inherit" responsibilities of the dean in the hypothetical case of his/her prolonged illness, and the Associate Deans appeared to be the natural answer.

We next discussed possible disadvantages of such a proposed change. Evaluatee and head officer, having the option of a full review by the FAC, usually agree to a streamlined evaluation only if they are not aware of any significant problems in the evaluation file. As a worst case scenario in such a situation, a designated associate dean might detect a significant problem with the file. As outlined in Chapter III, Section 5, e in the Faculty Code "the evaluatee, the head officer or the dean may call for a full review under the procedures of Chapter II section 4 to be conducted during the subsequent academic year." In particular, since an associate dean is not eligible to call for a full

review, the dean needs to become involved in such a case and has to decide if the situation calls for a full review. PSC members did not see a disadvantage for an evaluatee caused by this procedure compared to the current practice of streamlined evaluation by the dean.

Having agreed upon a positive answer to question 1, the committee now turned to a discussion of possible implementations of such a change. One committee member noted that the most expeditious implementation would be a code interpretation by the PSC. However, other PSC members did not think that such an interpretation was in conformity with the current Code. In Chapter III, Section 5, d, the Faculty Code specifies “The dean shall write a letter of evaluation and forward it to the head officer” and these PSC members did not interpret this to mean “the dean or a designee”. In addition, the faculty code uses in Chapter 5, section 3, b, the language “The dean or the dean’s designee,” which seems to underline that the Code explicitly distinguishes between the dean and a designee.

After some discussion, PSC members unanimously agreed that a code amendment appeared to be required. Moreover, the PSC proposes to amend Chapter III, section 5, d., second sentence to *“The dean or a designated associate dean shall review the file, write a letter of evaluation, and forward it to the head officer.”*

We also agreed that part e in section 5 should not be amended (to include a designated associate dean) to make sure that the dean will continue to be involved in cases that might call for a full review.

We then turned to a discussion of the streamlined evaluations from Spring '08. The question was raised if it would be possible for evaluatees to volunteer to be evaluated by a designated associate dean instead of the dean. We were not able to find a fair procedure for such a process and decided to revisit this problem during the next meeting. In this context, some PSC members felt strongly that an evaluatee should know who will conduct the evaluation by the time he/she decides on a streamlined evaluation.

Although PSC members appreciate very much the thoroughness the dean has been giving to streamlined evaluation letters, we concurred in encouraging the dean to consider writing shorter evaluation letters for the time being.

We adjourned at 11:59.

Respectfully submitted,

Sigrun Bodine