

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee 2/12/10

Present: Beezer, Block, Butcher, Crane, Goldstein, Haltom, Wood

The meeting convened at 2:02 PM.

The minutes of the 2/5/10 meeting were approved as amended.

The OT/PT subcommittee reported that review of the document: Evaluation Criteria for Faculty Advancement of Tenure-Line and Clinical-Line Faculty is moving forward.

All subcommittees will report on their progress at next week's meeting.

The Committee next turned to the charge from the Faculty Senate to consult with FAC members regarding the possible effects that permitting open files for tenure has had on faculty participation in the tenure process:

The Chair directed our attention to data supplied by Dean Bartanen that included:  
The number of open and closed files since 2004/2005;  
FAC membership since 2004/2005;  
Year-end FAC reports to the Faculty Senate for the 2007/08 and 2008/09 academic years.

The PSC embarked on a discussion regarding the state of our knowledge of the actual significance of the number of tenure files that have been accessed since the open file policy was adopted. Concerns included:

How do we know if having access has helped, or hindered, the resolution of any disputes that may have arisen during tenure deliberations?

Has access to open files actually resulted in more "good" or "bad" decisions, or fostered more, or less, candid discussion and commentary during the process?

Have there been other, more intangible benefits created by the open file policy, such as promoting a better overall (university-wide) environment for consideration of tenure cases, in addition to any identifiable effects for specific cases since the policy was adopted?

The discussion then turned to specifics: how should we proceed? Which FAC members should we include in this process, and what specific questions should we pose to them? After considerable discussion, it was decided that we should proceed as follows:

The PSC will invite members of the 2007/08 and 2008/09 Faculty Advancement Committees to a meeting of the PSC, in an attempt to understand how many tenure cases they believe were actually affected by the open file policy. We would also wish to explore the meaning of, and actual evidence for, several references that were used in those end-of-year FAC reports, such as the phrase, "...increased

guardedness”, and “...general reluctance (to make a recommendation for or against tenure)” that characterized the FAC’s impression of a shift in the nature of tenure letters after the new policy was adopted. The PSC will use next week’s meeting to better formulate the nature and scope of these questions, and we will then forward those questions to the 7 FAC members (from the 2007-2009 FAC membership) prior to meeting with them in person, if they wish to, and are able to, attend such a meeting. If they are unable to attend such a meeting, written comments will be welcome. Finally, after some discussion, it was decided that due to her dual role as member of both the FAC and PSC, that we suggest that Dean Bartanen not attend that initial fact-finding meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Barry Goldstein