

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee
September 18, 2006

PRESENT: Kris Bartanen, Sigrun Bodine, Doug Cannon, Julian Edgoose, Karl Fields, Grace Kirchner, Don Share, George Tomlin

Share convened the meeting at 3:05 p.m. The minutes of September 11 were approved as previously circulated and edited. Share noted that once minutes are approved officially, an electronic copy should be sent to should be sent to facultycoms, PSC members, and Priti Joshi, PSC faculty senate liaison. A signed copy should be sent to Jimmy McMichael at the Associate Deans' Office.

Share noted that the Senate is reviewing the Bylaws and the PSC may want to make suggestions regarding its duties, which are noted in both the Bylaws and the Faculty Code. Tomlin noted that it might be more user friendly to have all duties listed in one place. Share observed that there happen to be two members from Education and two from P and G and wondered if it might be wise to require broader representation. No conclusions were reached at this time.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS. Share initiated a discussion of future agenda items. We agreed to move the three departmental evaluation guidelines to the top of our list. Share assigned subcommittee members as follows: Politics and Government: Bodine and Kirchner; Foreign Languages: Edgoose and Fields; Education: Share and Tomlin. Share charged each subcommittee with looking for inconsistencies between guidelines and the Code or other improvements that could be proposed to the departments in question. He noted that these exchanges with departments were almost always of a cooperative nature and that many of the changes now being put forward were quite minor anyway. Subcommittees were asked to report back at our next meeting. Share also volunteered to see if a "checklist" created at some point in the past, but which had not been seen in many years, might again be found and would be sufficiently current to assist us in this work.

Other items that we hope to consider this semester include the criteria for the consideration of early tenure, whether instructor evaluations can be administered by students at an off-campus site, and some questions regarding the streamlined reviews for full professors. We also hope to move forward some of the housekeeping or minor amendments to the Code that have been on hold since last year.

REVISION OF CODE CHAPTER III. There was discussion as to the disposition of our revised Chapter III, sections 6 and 7 of the Code that was discussed last year by the faculty but contained some changes that proved sufficiently controversial that the package was put on hold. Share questioned whether it is really the job of the PSC to campaign for this amendment; others noted that most of the amendment contained provisions that were completely noncontroversial, were clearly needed, and never provoked any discussion. Discussion turned to the nature of the controversial passages, which appear to revolve around three topics: the role, if any, of the hearing board once it

determines that there has been a violation of the Code, whether the decision of a department can be appealed more than once, and whether information learned as the result of an appeal must be kept confidential. There seemed to be general consensus that it was not fruitful for the PSC to debate these topics further because the faculty will eventually make the decision anyway. We also agreed that the faculty prefers to retain the current language about confidentiality rather than the language that last year's PSC proposed, but it is, unfortunately, not clear where the majority stands on the other two topics.

FUTURE ISSUES. The following issues were listed as outstanding:

- Definition of "tenure-line faculty";
- Relation between "formal" and "informal" challenges;
- Streamlined reviews
- Evaluation of teaching in non-departmental courses.

Share suggested we prioritize these at the next meeting. Bodine suggested we take up the PT question regarding student evaluations off-site next week as it is somewhat urgent. This was agreed.

ANNUAL MESSAGE ON ADMINISTRATION OF STUDENT EVALUATIONS. .

Bartanen reported learning of an inconsistency between the memo that we revised at our last meeting and another one on the same topic. She agreed to draft a combined version of both that reflects the changes we made at our last meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Grace Kirchner