

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee
September 25, 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 18 were approved as previously circulated and edited.

1. Chairs' access to teaching evaluations before grades are submitted

Dean Bartanen raised the issue at the recent chairs meeting. There was a general sentiment expressed that it was OK with the permission of the instructor or the permission of the Academic Dean, with, in the latter case, notification to the evaluatee following. The dean volunteered to work on language for a memo to affected parties.

2. Physical therapy department request to allow students to collect teaching evaluations for off-campus clinical courses

The committee agreed to suggest to the requesting department that it is fine as long as two students sign a form to be attached to the envelope containing the evaluations, confirming that all procedures have been followed. Dean Bartanen will work with Ann Wilson, acting chair, to create such a document.

3. Politics & Government Evaluation Criteria statement

The committee found some of the requested changes straightforward and not problematic. Concerns consisted of

a. The document is written were specific to an individual. The committee wondered if that creates an inconsistency among departmental evaluation criteria. The individual is a political scientist hired for environmental studies, not by the P&G department. (The position has now moved to the P&G department.) Should the individual's name simply be removed, and the position referred to instead (Professor of Environmental Decision-Making and Policy)?

b. The evaluation committee referred to is not defined.

c. On page 2, line 6, the broader term "professional growth" should replace the word "research" in the list of categories of evaluation.

d. The revised wording also mentioned the criterion of community outreach being given "more weight." The original departmental evaluation criteria do not mention community outreach, suggesting that no baseline expectation exists from which to expect more.

e. For the list of criteria on page 2, paragraph 6, it is not clear whether they are requirements or suggestions, and their relationship to a preceding list is also unclear.

f. Finally there was no explanation of the process for the group evaluating the faculty member in this position: would the two environmental studies faculty joining the politics and government faculty only write letters of evaluation, or would the entire group deliberate?

The committee agreed that in these cases of a special hire, it is better to have the specific criteria and process spelled out in detail in advance.

These concerns will be forwarded to Patrick O'Neil, chair of the P & G department.

4. Education and Foreign Language Evaluation Criteria statements

The revisions from these two both requested changes to the explicit status of instructors in the process of evaluations. The School of Education is requesting that full-time instructors in the MAT program participate in the evaluation of the MAT field director, and the full-time instructor in the counseling program participate in the evaluation of the director of counseling. The foreign language department request is to remove instructors from the deliberation process for tenure-line faculty.

PSC Chair Don Share raised the issue of how much latitude departments have in excluding faculty members from the evaluation process. In large departments it would be burdensome and unwieldy if everyone participated in every evaluation. Different schemes have been devised, and have received PSC approval in the past, to address this problem. Recently it was reaffirmed that even new tenure-line faculty must fully participate in the process (observations, letter, deliberation, vote). Perhaps there is a middle ground where participation is expected of some, without excluding the participation of others. The ultimate issue is, does the Code allow for the explicit exclusion of some faculty members?

PSC members were asked to reflect on this situation until next week, when the discussion will continue.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:01pm.

Respectfully submitted,

George Tomlin