

## **Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee**

December 4, 2006

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

Share convened the meeting at 3:03 p.m.

The minutes for November 27, 2006 were approved with the date of one document amended.

**New Business.** No new business was reported.

**Updates.** Updates were given on evaluation guideline approval process of African-American Studies, Foreign Languages and Literature, and Education.

**Draft Dates.** It was noted that some departmental evaluation standards submitted to the PSC had no date of approval or any other label signifying the iteration of the draft. It was agreed that submitted documents should be so identified with their approval date by the department and the PSC (where applicable). It was agreed that PSC members giving feedback to departments should ask for this information as part of formulating their feedback. This requirement will be added to the document "What to Look for in Departmental Guidelines" that Share created at the start of this year. It was also decided to ask that departments indicate the process by which their evaluation standards were approved.

**Communication Studies.** The PSC had some revisions to forward to the Communication Studies department from our reading of the African-American Studies guidelines, which had their origin (at least in part) in the same document. The subcommittee charged with looking at the new Communication Studies guidelines also has some additional questions which they address in meetings with Communication Studies. The subcommittee will then present recommendations for action to the PSC at our next meeting.

**Major Revisions on Guidelines.** It was discussed whether, if departmental evaluation standards are submitted for minor changes, the PSC could reply with suggested changes to other parts of the document. It was agreed that the PSC could do this as it serves to aid the gradual process of improving evaluation standards, and that it is wise in the absence of a periodic review cycle for departmental guidelines.

**Early Tenure.** Following from the discussion of this topic in the previous meeting, it was suggested that the PSC could issue either:

- a formal interpretation of the Code,
- an informal one, or
- no interpretation.

Further, it was suggested that this interpretation should be attentive to the two situations that might be called "early tenure":

- Situation 1: those for whom it is specified in their appointment letter that they will come up for tenure in fewer than six years from the date of hiring; and

- Situation 2: those who choose to try to gain tenure in fewer than the number of years specified in their appointment letter.

It was agreed that a formal interpretation was called for due to the ambiguity in the Code and in the 1987 formal interpretation (pasted below).

**Interpretation of Chapter IV, Section 2, b (4). Expectations for Early Promotion (Memorandum to Professional Standards Committee from Faculty Advancement Committee, 9 February 1987 requesting discussion and approval)**

Early promotion is an unusual and exceptional circumstance in the process of advancement. The schedule for advancement and tenure as outlined in the Faculty Code represents the agreement of the faculty on when its members ought to come up for evaluation. If, however, an individual has assembled a sustained record of achievement of exceptional merit in all the categories by which a faculty member is evaluated, he or she might request to be promoted or granted tenure before the usual time as stipulated by the Faculty Code. In such instances, the university might well wish to consider early promotion as an indication of its special appreciation for and commitment to faculty members of exceptional achievement. In any case, it is incumbent upon the faculty member and his/her department in cases of early promotion to demonstrate that the above-mentioned criteria have been met.

It was agreed by the PSC that in the case of Situation 1 (above) the normal standards for tenure apply (albeit at an earlier time). It was then agreed that in the case of Situation 2 exceptional standards apply. There was some uncertainty as to whether the 1987 interpretation applied only to Situation 2 or whether it also applied to Situation 1. PSC members agreed that it seemed that its main focus was early promotion not early tenure.

In preparation for a formal interpretation to be approved next semester, it was agreed that this interpretation should include:

- 1) That we are interpreting: Chapter IV, Section 1, e and f; Chapter IV, Section 2, b (4); and the formal interpretation of Chapter IV, Section 2, b (4).
- 2) That if a tenure or promotion evaluation in fewer than six years is written in to the appointment letter, then it is defined as a scheduled evaluation and is not an early evaluation.
- 3) That if someone requests evaluation for tenure/promotion earlier than scheduled in the appointment letter, then the higher standard applies.
- 4) That “exceptional merit in all the categories by which a faculty member is evaluated” as specified in the 1987 interpretation means a higher standard than is normally required to receive tenure and promotion.

The “phantom” reference on line 46 of page 23 of the Code (Chapter IV, Section 1, f) to “Section 5” should be amended in the next round of Code housekeeping.

The minutes show thanks to Don Share for his chairing of the PSC this semester and wish him well in London in the spring.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03pm.

Submitted Respectfully,

Julian Edgoose