

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee  
January 19, 2005

Present: Kris Bartanen, Bill Breitenbach, Karl Fields, Grace Kirchner, Sarah Moore, John Riegsecker, Don Share, Carolyn Weisz (chair)

PSC Chair Weisz called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

The minutes of December 7, 2005 were approved as revised.

REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Weisz encouraged members to attend the upcoming (January 23) Senate meeting during which potential amendments to our amendment of Chapter III, Sections 6 and 7 will be discussed. She will be forwarding our proposals to the Senate prior to that meeting.

Weisz announced that she will be in attending a professional meeting next Thursday, February 2. Breitenbach volunteered to chair the PSC meeting in her absence.

Share asked that we respond soon to the Biology Department's revision of their evaluation guidelines. He noted that their responses to our suggestions were constructive and thorough, and we can anticipate moving forward quickly to approve them. We agreed to make the Biology guidelines our next agenda item pending completion of current business. (It was also noted that the role of first-year faculty in evaluation, the definition of tenure-line faculty, and Faculty Code housekeeping are deserving of prompt attention.)

CONTINUING BUSINESS

The committee devoted the remainder of the meeting to a discussion of potential amendments to our amendment to Chapter III, sections 6 and 7 of the Faculty Code. To aid in our discussion, Weisz distributed a working document. We focused primarily on an issue from last week, the confidentiality of hearings. More specifically, we discussed which of the participants or parties to a hearing should be restricted from making what kinds of statements and what the scope of the restrictions should be. There was considerable variation in opinion as reflected in our minutes of December 7; however, we arrived at a consensus position that is reflected in a new proposal found under option 3. We recommend that the faculty be offered at least three options: what currently exists in the Code, our amendment as written, and a new proposal. These three options are as follows.

1. Amendment to Ch. III, Section 6.c.(8): *Hearing board members are to treat the proceedings as confidential.*

2. Existing code language (from Ch. III, Section 7. i. in the current code): *No person involved in the hearing shall make public statements, directly or indirectly, about matters presented in the hearing.*
3. New proposal: *Persons who learn confidential information as a result of the appeal or hearing processes shall not make public statements, directly or indirectly, about this information. As parties to an appeal, members of the department, school, or program or of the Advancement Committee may receive reports of confidential information as needed, but shall not make public statements about this information.*

Two items were carried over. At our next meeting we will determine whether there needs to be a timeline for reporting a decision regarding probable cause for a hearing. (The current timelines of 10 working days applies to apply only if probable cause is found.) We will also consider changes to the process that occurs after a hearing. After a brief discussion we concluded that there appears to be merit in separating appeals of departmental decisions from appeals of Advancement Committee decisions.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Grace Kirchner