

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee
November 2, 2005

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

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

The minutes of October 26, 2005, were approved as revised.

At our prior meeting the PSC “determined that in order to inform the Faculty Senate in a timely manner of the PSC’s work, revised and approved minutes will be sent to faculty.coms for posting and at the same time copied to Senate Chair Barry Anton and PSC Liaison Nancy Bristow.” According to the Bylaws, the Senate has 30 days to change Committee actions. We are now waiting to hear back from the Senate whether the “30-day clock” starts when minutes are posted on faculty.coms or when they have been received by the Senate chair.

The PSC continued the discussion from our last meeting, but was unable to resolve the question of whether or not first-year faculty should be required to participate in the evaluation process or whether an abstention constitutes a formal recommendation. Among the issues discussed were the Code's assertion that "Departmental colleagues participating in the evaluation write letters"; whether or not it is reasonable or even possible for first-year faculty members to make "substantive assessments;" whether letters reporting abstentions constitute "independent recommendations" required for evaluations involving change of status; the possible option of allowing first-year faculty to observe without formally participating in evaluations; and whether or not the recent amendment allowing open files in tenure evaluations creates an increased need for uniformity or clarity regarding the issue of first-year participation. PSC members expressed uncertainty about the need for an amendment or interpretation, but felt that these issues deserved further consideration. It was decided to gather information from department Chairs to get more data on departmental practices, which we believe vary considerably, and to determine if there are problems that arise as a result of this variation. Bartanen will also attempt to solicit responses from current FAC members on these issues.

Share and Kirchner will circulate a draft of the response to the Biology department evaluation guidelines.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Grace Kirchner