

Professional Standards Committee

December 7, 2005

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

PSC Chair Weisz called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

The minutes of November 30, 2005, were approved as revised.

Reports and Announcements:

Weisz announced that Sarah gave birth to baby Eleanor-5 lbs., 15 oz-and that mother and daughter are both well.

Weisz announced that the next PSC meeting will be Thursday, January 19th, from 2-3pm. Meetings next semester will occur weekly during this time slot.

This past week a member of the PSC received a copy of a memo that had previously been sent to some members of the Faculty Senate regarding certain allegations pertaining to the PSC. Copies of this memo were distributed to members of the committee.

Old Business

The committee devoted the remainder of the meeting to discussing responses from faculty during the December 6th faculty meeting regarding the PSC's proposed amendment of Code Chapter III, Sections 6 and 7.

The committee noted that four items were voted on and approved by the faculty as amendments to the amendment. These included:

1. Section 6.a.(2)(a). Add the word "conducted" to: "A formal appeal of the evaluation (conducted) by the department, school, or program is limited to"
2. Section 6.a.(2)(b). Add the word "conducted" to: "A formal appeal of the evaluation (conducted) by the Advancement Committee is limited to. . . ."
3. Section 6.c.(4)(a). In Section 6.c.(4)(a) change "Eight names shall be selected at random by the chairperson of the Faculty Senate and the chairperson of the Professional Standards Committee" to: "The chairpersons of the Faculty Senate and the Professional Standards Committee shall jointly select eight names at random"
4. Add to the motion the following statement: *Adoption of this amendment shall authorize the modification of Code citations so as to bring those citations into conformity with changes in the Code occasioned by the adoption of this amendment.*

The committee then turned discussion to concerns voiced about Section 6.c.(8) regarding confidentiality. The committee noted there is a university policy regarding confidentiality and it was suggested that the PSC ought to consult that policy as it considers recommendations regarding usage of the term "confidentiality" in the Code.

The committee discussed the potential domain for a charge of confidentiality. When is confidentiality an issue in the evaluation process? Does it cover letters? Departmental deliberations? Issues and outcomes of an appeal at that level? Advancement Committee deliberations, issues of appeal, and outcomes? Presidential recommendations?

The committee also discussed to whom these restrictions should apply. Ought it cover all but the evaluatee? Should the departmental head officer also be excluded?

A member of the committee suggested that there is no way to enforce whatever phrasing is ultimately agreed upon, whether it be couched in terms of confidentiality or proscriptions on public statements. It was proposed that the best we can hope for is to impose a norm of discretion, such as the following: ""The non-procedural matters of the appeal shall be treated as confidential."

Noting that this might unduly hamper the evaluatee, another member proposed the following: "All persons involved in the hearing other than the evaluatee shall treat the non-procedural matters considered in the appeal as confidential."

It was also noted that another option would be simply to leave the wording as it is (which would also require an amendment).

The committee also discussed what the procedures of a hearing might entail and whether or not one could imagine a challenge of the procedures.

Regarding Section 7.i. and j. on the longevity of a hearing board, the committee discussed the possibility of dividing the section into two separate statements in order to parse the issues of two types of appeals.

Finally, the committee noted the proposal of one faculty member during the faculty meeting that the faculty senate chair assume the tasks currently assigned to the PSC chair in the appeals process. The committee concluded that there is merit in the current division of labor and that the PSC does have an important role to play in the appeals process

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karl Fields