

Professional Standards Committee Minutes

November 4, 2004

Members present: Bill Breitenbach, Kris Bartanen, Sue Hannaford, Grace Kirchner, Sarah Moore, John Riegsecker, Keith Ward, Carolyn Weisz

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM.

Minutes for the October 21 and October 28, 2004 meetings were approved with revisions.

Bartanen announced that the spring semester teaching schedules of the committee members would allow the PSC to meet at 11 AM on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday. Despite some protestation from the chair, who seemed to prefer an 8:00 AM time, the committee decided to consult their schedules for the spring and come to the next meeting prepared to select the best day (MWF) for an 11:00 AM meeting.

Breitenbach and Riegsecker reported to the committee about the Faculty Senate's initial response to the PSC memo regarding informal interpretations of the code. The Senate considered the issue at the 11/1/04 Senate meeting. According to Breitenbach and Riegsecker, senators appreciated the need to balance confidentiality with the desire for transparency in PSC actions. Several ideas were advanced, including the possibility of some sort of informed consent (i.e. if the individuals involved are willing, the PSC could share the process and reasoning behind its interpretations). The Senate will continue its discussion of the questions raised in the PSC's memo at a future meeting and respond to the committee.

Several members of the committee mused about what other possibilities exist to make the work of the PSC more transparent to the campus community without compromising confidentiality. Committee members noted that the PSC must respond to specific inquiries in short order, and given this time constraint, it is not always possible for the committee to explore the broader issues raised by the individual inquiries. One suggestion that emerged was to make a point to revisit such broader issues at a later date. Separating such a discussion from specific inquiries could help preserve privacy while also allowing for better policy. The committee agreed to return to the issue after it receives further input from the Senate.

Breitenbach then turned the committee's attention to subcommittee reports. Ward and Weisz reported that they had forwarded the committee's questions about the IPE evaluation criteria to that department.

The committee next considered the issue of adequate classroom visitations. This issue, originally raised by an inquiry to Dean Bartanen, centers on the frequently cited standard that a minimum of two visits by more than two faculty members is needed to constitute adequate classroom visitation. The committee noted that this interpretation appears in the

appendix to the faculty code (Chapter III, Section 4, a (1)(b)) which states that “an evaluation without a reasonable number of classroom visitations by members of the evaluatee’s department, school, or program is in violation of the code”. The words “visitations” and “members,” both in the plural, suggest that at least two visits by at least two faculty members are required. Committee members agreed that given that this formal interpretation of adequate classroom visits already exists in the code’s appendix, it is not necessary for the current PSC to reaffirm this interpretation through a further formal interpretation. However, committee members noted that because this issue is likely to surface repeatedly during the ongoing process of faculty evaluations, it might be appropriate to put the information in a more accessible place (i.e. the “buff document” -- Faculty evaluation criteria and procedures – which is distributed to the faculty by the PSC each fall). Specifically, some committee members commented that it might be important to stress that while the 2 by 2 rule constitutes a *minimum* number of classroom visits, this number may not necessarily amount to *adequate* consideration. Final determination of this pattern rests with the head officer and the Faculty Advancement Committee. Dean Bartanen also noted that with the introduction of the alternative process allowing for evaluation of a senior faculty member by only the head officer and the dean (Chapter III, Section 5), the PSC may want to revise the buff document to include some guidelines for what constitutes adequate classroom visitations under the streamlined process. Committee members concurred and agreed to revisit the issue in the spring semester when they will craft the 2005-2006 version of the buff document.

Breitenbach then reported that he will continue to revise a draft of an interpretation regarding delaying a scheduled evaluation.

With the hour nearly up, the committee agreed to continue with its consideration of the definition of working days at its next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susannah Hannaford