

PROFESSIONAL STANDARD COMMITTEE
December 4, 2014

Present: Geoffrey Block, Tiffany MacBain (chair), Mark Reinitz, Kris Bartanen, Betsy Kirkpatrick, Amy Spivey

The meeting convened at 8:30 am.

The minutes from November 30 were M/S/P with one abstention.

1. Last year, the PSC recommended to the Senate a change to the faculty evaluation schedule such that the third year Associate review, as well as all 5-year reviews of full professors, become “streamlined reviews” as is currently in place for alternate 5-year reviews of full professors. As is the case for current streamlined reviews, an evaluatee, the head officer, or the Dean could request a full review. The FAC has apparently sanctioned the proposal, and chair MacBain will bring it to the Senate on Dec 8. In further discussion, the committee observed that the recommendation, if adopted, might preclude a new junior faculty member who joined a department of full professors from ever seeing a review before his or her own three-year review. In that unusual situation, the head officer for earlier reviews within the department would be encouraged to make sure that the junior faculty member participated in those departmental streamlined reviews.
2. In light of clarification of our charge from Derek Buescher, our Senate liaison, we again discussed the charge to reconsider the requirement for more than 10 days lead time for external letters to be submitted to a department. The committee reiterated its feeling that 10 working days should be sufficient for incorporating an external letter, especially if these letters could be electronically posted confidentially so that all faculty could have simultaneous access. Moreover, the committee felt that there could be negative consequences to asking for an earlier deadline, such as not giving letter writers sufficient time to submit their letters.
3. The committee next considered the issue of the head officer in an evaluation being the sole arbiter about the phrase in the Code, “...and from other sources if they seem relevant” (Faculty Code p.11, line 47, and in the interpretation from 12 May 2000 on p. 47, lines 47-48 and p. 48 line 10). There are two issues under consideration. First, the committee feels that it should not be the purview of the head officer alone to determine if an external letter is relevant. Second, the Code is vague about whose responsibility it is to solicit external letters, and while the subsequent interpretation suggests that the responsibility rests with the evaluatee (p. 48, lines 4-7), the Code does not preclude the head officer from soliciting external letters (p. 11, lines 45-52). The committee recognizes that both of these issues are part of the Code, not part of interpretations of the Code, and therefore, we can bring these ambiguities to the attention of the Senate. We can also change the interpretation on p. 48 line 10 to say “...if they seem relevant to the criteria of the evaluation.”

4. Subcommittee assignments.

Original subcommittees will meet early in next semester to review chair MacBain's summary of the changes we have made and to compare the Buff document language revisions with the Code language. In addition, Tiffany solicited a volunteer for helping her to draft the language for the larger changes indicated by Michael Benitez, Cindy Matern, and Nancy Nierath to the Appendix pp. 41-42 and 49. Volunteers were also solicited to be on subcommittees for reviewing departmental evaluation guidelines. Reinitz and Kirkpatrick volunteered to serve on those subcommittees.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Kirkpatrick