Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee

October 8, 2015

Present:Mark Reinitz (Chair), Amy Odegard, Kurt Walls, Garrett Milam, Kris Bartanen, Matt Warning, Jennifer Neighbors

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 pm.

The minutes from September 17, 2015 were approved.

Upcoming new business relating to the coverage in the Faculty Code of the practice of writing addenda for faculty evaluations was brought to the attention of the committee.

The working group assigned to review course assistant guidelines for Occupational Therapy (OT) reported to the committee. They found no significant issues with the guidelines but noted a few minor issues which will be relayed to the OT department. These guidelines were approved by the committee pending these minor modifications.

The working group assigned to review faculty evaluation guidelines from Biology reported to the committee. After some brief discussion regarding minor issues of wording, the guidelines were approved, with the understanding that suggestions regarding clarified wording will be sent to the Biology department.

During the discussion of the Biology guidelines a question was raised regarding the lack of measurable benchmarks within evaluation standards university-wide and the potential impact on faculty evaluees, particularly for tenure decisions. It was noted that this is a very large and challenging question to address, given the diversity of scholarship and professional development across departments and disciplines. A suggestion was made to perhaps inquire at a future date of the Faculty Advancement Committee as to how they assess such issues as a method of perhaps taking a step toward encouraging departments to define and communicate these expectations more specifically in their guidelines.

The committee returned to the discussion of the changes to the Title IX interpretations in the faculty code. Proposed wording changes were agreed upon relating to sections discussed in the previous PSC meeting. A committee member raised an issue with the existing policy governing consensual sexual relationships between faculty and students, both in the Faculty Code and the Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Sexual Misconduct. It was noted that the existing policy does not explicitly prohibit consensual sexual relationships between faculty and students.. Examples of such policies, which varied in their approach, were provided from peer institutions including Oberlin, Connecticut College, Reed, Whitman, University of Portland, Occidental, and Willamette.

The committee discussed the range of issues raised by a prohibitive policy, how they may be addressed to incorporate exceptions, and to what degree exceptions would be warranted. The committee agreed that these issues warranted further consideration and that the decision regarding changing the current policy regarding consensual sexual relationships between faculty and students should be put before the full faculty at a future date.

Given these outstanding issues, approval of the changes to Title IX interpretation was postponed to a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45.

Respectfully submitted.

Garrett Milam