

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee
October 15, 2015

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

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 p.m.

The chair shared two new charges that the PSC received from the Faculty Senate. The first regards the potential for student bias in course evaluations. The PSC has been asked to evaluate and recommend to the faculty studies that could help inform further faculty discussion of the issue. One committee member asked whether the committee could be aided in this task by one of the research librarians at Collins. The second new charge was to consider whether students with accommodations should get extended time to complete course evaluations.

The minutes from the October 8, 2015 meeting were discussed. Some minor changes were proposed. The minutes were then approved.

The working group examining the Philosophy Department's faculty evaluation guidelines reported to the committee. Some concerns were raised regarding vague language. The working group also noted additional service activities that Philosophy might consider highlighting. The chair will communicate those concerns and suggestions to the Philosophy Department.

The rest of the meeting was devoted to discussion of the issue of consensual faculty-student relationships. A committee member introduced potential draft language for inclusion in the Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, language that would prohibit sexual and/or intimate relationships between faculty/staff and students. The committee discussed this draft as well as policies from other institutions. It was suggested, to general agreement, that any proposal the PSC considers should provide more specific language regarding investigating and imposing sanctions in response to reported violations of the policy. The committee also discussed the degree to which such a proposal should engage with ideas of power dynamics and consent.

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 PM, asking a subcommittee of three members to consult with the Dean for Diversity and Inclusion and legal counsel over the issue of faculty-student relationships.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Neighbors