

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee  
January 21, 2016

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

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m.

The chair informed the committee that Mark Reinitz and Jennifer Neighbors will be attending the February 8 meeting of the Faculty Senate to present the PSC's proposed changes to the Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.

The committee reviewed a request from the School of Physical Therapy to conduct a trial run of electronic course evaluations during spring semester of 2016. Students would be asked to bring an appropriate electronic device to class, where they would receive the evaluation form electronically and then be allotted twenty minutes to complete the form. The School of Physical Therapy proposed to have either a back-up laptop or a podium laptop available. Two committee members raised concerns as to whether all students would have laptops and whether this process would be uncomfortable for those without the economic means to own a laptop. Another committee member thought another concern might be having multiple students forget to bring a laptop with them. Given those concerns, the committee voted to approve the proposal under two conditions: first, that paper copies of the evaluation need to be available on-site, and second, that the online evaluations and paper evaluations need to be identical. The PSC will also ask the School of Physical Therapy to report back on how well the online evaluation process worked.

The committee reviewed the draft of a proposed "Campus Animal Control Policy," created in response to allergy concerns, animal phobias, and the burdening of administrative staff with animal care, and not intended to apply to animals covered by ADA provisions. After discussion of the complexities of balancing the benefits of emotional support animals against the potential harm to students, faculty, and/or staff with animal-related health concerns, the PSC decided to ask the drafters of the policy to make several revisions and take several actions: first, that in the case of emotional support animals, people seeking permission to bring such animals to campus must have both a prescription and a verifiable disability that has been documented by a doctor or other medical professional; second, that the drafters of the policy seek feedback from those on campus who will be affected by the policy; third, to clarify whether the policy on emotional support animals applies equally to students, faculty, and staff; fourth, to clarify what animals are covered under the policy and whether the policy applies to fish; and fifth, to clarify the processes and mechanisms for enforcement and sanctions. After those issues have been addressed, the PSC will ask the drafters of the policy to bring it to the Faculty Senate.

The remainder of the meeting focused on a discussion of the committee's agenda for spring term. The committee will address interpretation of the role of service in promotion to full professor but will await tabulation of the responses to the survey distributed to department and program chairs last term. The committee will also consider the issue of

bias in student evaluations. A brief initial discussion centered on whether the committee could do anything to mitigate the impact of such bias and/or whether the committee could create a document (to be distributed to faculty who are evaluating colleagues) that explains what sorts of biases are found in evaluations, to better prepare such faculty to read and assess evaluation forms.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Neighbors