

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee

Professional Standards Committee Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2016

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

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:00 PM.

The chair informed the committee that he and Jennifer Neighbors presented the committee's proposed changes to the Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Sexual Misconduct to the Faculty Senate on February 8, and that the Senate supported the changes.

The committee approved the minutes from the minutes from Feb 5, 2016 PSC meeting.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to continuation of the discussion of what information faculty may take into account when evaluating colleagues, and whether clarifying language on this issue is needed in the Faculty Evaluation Procedures and Criteria. The question was whether materials not included by an evaluatee in their file can be discussed in their review; it arose from a request for clarification by a faculty member who wished to reference class materials that were not part of an evaluatee's file.

A committee member gave a detailed reading of sections of the evaluation procedures, bringing attention to the elements requiring that all colleagues review the same materials and that all have equal access to those materials, reinforcing the notions of fairness and adequate consideration that are central standards in the evaluation procedures. Other committee members noted that class visits are components of evaluations, yet all colleagues do not review the same classes (although it was also noted that the equal access criterion would be satisfied because all colleagues *could* have visited these same classes). Similarly, a committee member remarked that attendance at an evaluatee's performances is a key part of evaluations in their department and that it is rarely the case that all colleagues visit the same performances. One committee member drew our attention to sections of the Code that indicated that evaluation of an evaluatee's professional development is to be based on their objectives and philosophy *both* as outlined in the file *and* as demonstrated in practice.

A key tension in the discussion revolved around the possibility of, on the one hand, an evaluatee misrepresenting themselves in their curation of file materials, and, on the other, a colleague misrepresenting the quality of an evaluatee's work, either in their letter or in the departmental deliberations, by selectively commenting on materials or "evidence" not in the evaluatee's file (and that the evaluatee might not have

an opportunity to respond to if the comments were not noted in the summary of colleague letters or departmental deliberations). Dean Bartanen stated that the Advancement Committee is able to discern when a file contains an “outlier” letter, and that there are Code procedures in place (Chapter I, ethical concern; Chapter 3, challenge and appeal processes) to protect faculty from unethical or unfair practices.

It was clear from the discussion that the concerns--or lack thereof--of committee members reflected the practices of their respective departments. One member worried that, without clarification by the committee, junior faculty might come to believe that the norms of their departments were the rules of the university.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:50 PM.

Minutes prepared by Matt Warning.