

**Professional Standards Committee
Minutes for October 4, 1995**

Members present: W. Breitenbach, D. Potts, J. Riegsecker, K. Rousslang, T. Taranovski, L. Wood

Wood informed the committee of its official charges as drafted by the Senate. The charges for 1995/6 academic year are:

1. Continue examination of departmental standards and criteria and their relationship to the Faculty Code and to Committee documents.
2. Continue study of the general issue of the role and responsibilities of instructors.
3. Participate in any general review of University retirement policy by drafting appropriate changes in the Faculty Code.
4. Review as needed departmental statements of Standards and Criteria for Evaluation.
5. Develop policy regarding conflicts of interest (suggested by a faculty member).

The last, being a new charge, was briefly discussed by the committee, which agreed that the committee would work to review existing code provisions regarding this issue and complement them by drafting a policy statement that would encompass other potential conflicts of interests involving faculty members (for example, instances in which a faculty member would need to recuse himself or herself in a particular decision or deliberation).

The committee then continued its discussion of tenure procedures. Dean Potts presented a draft chart of evaluation procedures at departmental level (total of 23) that was prepared by his staff. An examination of this chart disclosed a number of discrepancies between departmental procedures that could potentially make the University legally vulnerable. One of the discrepancies, for example, was that certain departments do not require classroom visitations of an evaluatee by the departmental faculty, an apparent violation of the code. The issue was raised of whether the University should introduce common tenure evaluation procedures for all departments (with provisions for exceptions such as may be required by the nature of the discipline or the size of the department).

The discussion involved both substantive and procedural matters. The committee arrived at a consensus that any standardization and clarification of procedures would best be undertaken through a process of Committee interpretations of the appropriate sections of the Code and, when found necessary, proposals for editorial revisions in the language of the Code itself. The Committee agreed to begin by examining the appropriate provisions of the Code (Chapter III, Sections 1-4 and relevant previous interpretations) for potential problems and ambiguities. The overall objectives of this process would be to focus on improving the objectivity of the evaluation process itself, assure accuracy and thoroughness of feedback, look for potential conflicts of interest, and scrutinize the issue of confidentiality.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
T. Taranovski

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 11, at 3:00 p.m. in Shelmidine Room