

# Professional Standards Committee

## Minutes for November 8, 1995

**Members Present:** Block, Breitenbach, Potts, Riegsecker, Rousslang, Taranovski, Wood.

The chair called the meeting to order at 3:00.  
Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Taranovski distributed a chart that for each evaluation described the participants, the purpose of the evaluation, Potential Action, and where the evaluation is defined in the Faculty Code.

We continued our discussion of the Breitenbach/Taranovski memo beginning with item #5. The discussion centered on conflict of interest. If two people come up for tenure at the same time or for similar promotions, should they recuse themselves? Should there be full disclosure of friendships or hostile feelings? It was pointed out that declaring in your letter that you were an enemy of the person you were writing on would hardly contribute to departmental harmony. We concluded that since we do not have a quota system for tenure or promotion, two people up for tenure or the same promotion would not automatically be in positions of conflict of interest. We also concluded that everyone participating in the evaluation should write a letter.

We next discussed outside letters. Should the Code say that outside letters are permissible, or should we allow the Code to remain silent on the matter? Should letters from outside the department go to the chair or to the FAC? There was support for having all letters go to the same place so there was a single file, but in the end we concluded that the candidate should use their discretion to decide if letters should go to the FAC or to the chair of the department.

We discussed items #5, #6 and #7 as one item. Since some departments do not meet as a group to discuss the candidate, this would require them to change their methods. Should letter writers be required to make an unequivocal yes/no decision for promotion or tenure? Should letter writers be allowed to revise letters after the meeting? One position was to disallow any changes in letters to avoid the group-think mentality that can put pressure on people to change their views to conform with the majority. Another proposal was to allow minor changes, or to submit the original letter with changes as an addendum. Finally, there were those who believe that what went before is unimportant, and the only thing that matters is the final letter. We did not reach a consensus.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00

Respectfully Submitted  
John Riegsecker