

University of Puget Sound
Professional Standards Committee
February 18, 2013, 8:00, a.m., Wyatt 225

Members present: Kris Bartanen, Doug Cannon, Jennifer Hastings, Andreas Madlung, Doug Sackman, Kurt Walls, and Seth Weinberger (chair).

I. Announcements

Next week's PSC meeting (2/25/13) will be in the Misner Room in the library.

II. Approval of minutes of 2-11-13

Minutes were approved unanimously upon the removal of the Appendix: Academic Department Administrative Assistants Comments.

III. Business

After the review by legal counsel, the interpretation (below) was unanimously approved.

Interpretation of Chapter I, Part C, Section 3, Chapter 1, Part D, Section 2 (e), and Chapter I, Part D, Section 4. Professional Ethics of Faculty and Relationships of a Consensual Sexual Nature.

It is in the best interest of the university and all individuals associated with the university that there be no real or perceived bias in situations where one individual exerts influence over another colleague or staff member. Situations of direct supervision or when one has the ability to advance, promote, recommend, or in any other way directly influence the academic or work status of the colleague are the times when transparency is required.

The existence of a consensual sexual relationship constitutes a conflict of interest, and can create a real or perceived bias. Therefore, it is the policy of the university that such relationships should be disclosed when there is any possibility of a supervisory or career influencing role between the parties. When faculty or staff members enter into a consensual sexual relationship where one party has supervisory or career influence over the other, each party is required to promptly disclose the relationship to his/her superior(s) so that reassignment, alternative supervision processes, or other arrangements can be facilitated and documented.

The following scenarios are presented as examples where a faculty member must disclose the existence of a consensual sexual relationship. They are not intended to be exclusive, and faculty members should exercise judgment when faced with a similar situation.

- The evaluation process is clearly a career-influencing relationship. No faculty member should participate in the evaluation of another faculty member with whom he or she is involved in a consensual sexual relationship and all faculty members, including head officers, are expected to recuse themselves from such situations.

- Hiring decisions are also understood to involve the exercise of judgment and may result in a work- or career-influencing relationship. No faculty member should participate in the search or hiring process when a person with whom he or she is involved in a consensual sexual relationship is an applicant and all faculty members, including head officers, are expected to recuse themselves from such situations.

- The responsibilities of serving as department chair or program director may also, at times, require supervising or making decisions about the academic or work status of other departmental members. Departmental chairs should be aware of when their duties place them in a career-influencing relationship to a colleague with whom they are involved in a consensual sexual relationship. If and when such situations should arise, chairs should take care to put alternative processes in place to avoid conflicts of interest or other improprieties.

This policy aligns with the university's conflict of interest provisions in the Code of Conduct as well as Section II, Part E ("Consensual Sexual Relationship") of the Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.

If you have concerns regarding obligations under this policy, please refer to Chapter 1, Section 4 of the Faculty Code ("Professional Ethics"), and/or speak with your Department Chair or the Dean.

The discussion turned again to the initial Senate Charge to the committee, **"Clarify (a) expectations for junior (tenure-line) faculty participation in evaluations of departmental colleagues, and (b) if a written recommendation is required of junior faculty in a change of status review (promotion, tenure)."**

After much discussion, a colleague agreed to draft a response to the charge to assist the committee's deliberations at our next meeting.

IV. Future Committee Business

1. Review the EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR THE POSITION OF Director of the Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching document

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57am.

Respectfully submitted,
Kurt Walls