

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee Friday, March 27, 2009

Present: Kristine Bartanen, Sigrun Bodine, Julie Nelson Christoph, Julian Edgoose, Barry Goldstein, Bill Haltom, George Tomlin (Chair), Lisa Fortlouis Wood

The meeting was convened at 1:00 P.M.

1. **Announcements:** The committee congratulated Professor Christoph on her Fulbright Award.
2. **Minutes:** The minutes of 6 March were approved as slightly amended.
3. **Charge #2:** The committee continued its discussion of the status of tenure-line faculty after trustees have decided not to confer tenure. Members of the committee sought to distinguish two issues: 1) the more tractable matter of adding wording to existing code language so that already tenured and promoted faculty are not literally and technically excluded from the definition of tenure-line faculty; 2) the thornier matter of defining the ethical responsibilities and duties of tenure-line faculty not awarded tenure. Although one or more colleagues had requested an interpretation of the *Faculty Code* on these matters, the committee found little or no language that might plausibly be interpreted to cover the two matters.

Concerning the first matter, the committee concluded that the PSC subcommittee [Professors Edgoose and Fortlouis Wood] might suggest the addition of a few words to Section 1 of PART B of Chapter I of the *Faculty Code*: “Tenure-line faculty members are those appointed to the ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, or professor, who are eligible for reappointment and promotion to higher rank, and who are eligible for tenure consideration.” <http://www2.ups.edu/dean/facgov/docs/faculty-code-jul2008.pdf> one suggestion was that the phrase “those tenured and” might be added after “Tenure-line faculty members are ...” and before “... those appointed to the ranks of”

Concerning the second matter, the committee asked the subcommittee to draft a statement regarding ethical and practical difficulties that may associate with continued participation in departmental matters of those who have not been awarded tenure and who soon will receive a terminal contract. This statement will then be reviewed by the PSC to see if it would be suitable for inclusion in the *Faculty Evaluation Criteria and Procedures* – a.k.a., the “buff document” – or might be referred to the Faculty Senate for other action.

4. **Charge #5:** The committee concluded its discussion of consistencies and inconsistencies in definitions of “professional development” across schools, departments, and programs with the publication of guidelines that schools, departments, and programs have composed and the PSC has approved on “the internal web” at the University during summer of 2009.
5. **Charge #10:** The committee determined to send to University lawyers “The Research Misconduct Policy” of 1997 and reflections of the subcommittee [Professors Christoph

and Goldstein] on that policy [appended to these minutes]. Written long ago to satisfy a requirement of grants from Public Health Services, “The Research Misconduct Policy” may conflict with the *Faculty Code* or with other policies.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:04 p.m.

Submitted respectfully,

William Haltom

Appendix – Report of the “Research Misconduct” subcommittee

PSC 2008-09 Charge #10: Research Misconduct

Subcommittee members Julie Christoph and Barry Goldstein

This charge relates to the document titled “University of Puget Sound Policy for Responding to Allegations of Scientific Misconduct,” dated May 1997. The document applies specifically to misconduct by “all individuals at the University of Puget Sound engaged in research that is supported by or for which support is requested from the Public Health Service (PHS).”

Our concerns in reading the document are as follows:

- It is unclear at many points how the document interfaces with the Code and with campus IRB procedures.
- We are concerned about the precedent the document sets for other instances in which faculty receive funding from outside agencies: Will there, then, need to be a proliferation of such documents?

Possible courses of action:

- We could note that in reviewing the document we affirm that all research activities of Puget Sound faculty are governed by the guidelines in the Faculty Code, including the guidelines for professional conduct and ethics. If we pursue this course, it would be useful to revoke the status of this research misconduct document, if that is possible.
- We could amend this document, revising the introduction to indicate that the Code is the governing document, and cutting most of what follows the existing introduction.
- We could go through this document, making specific changes throughout—i.e. indicating consistently throughout that “scientific misconduct” refers to “scientific misconduct in research that is supported by or for which support is requested from the Public Health Service (PHS)”; making sure that the policy does not contradict the Code or the IRB guidelines in relation to the constitution of hearing boards, timelines for reporting and inquiring into reports of misconduct, and so forth. This approach would be very time-

consuming and would likely not be a good use of PSC time, unless perhaps if there are multiple research projects that would fall under these guidelines.

Further reflections:

- The benefit of a document like this one is that it considers how misconduct might be reported to an external grant agency. Is there a reliable existing channel through which such information might be reported? We can imagine situations in which a grant recipient might be found through the procedures in the Code to have violated professional ethics, but in which the granting agency might not receive this information. Is it clear whose responsibility it is to report? The grant recipient? The Dean? The PSC?