

**Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee
Friday, January 25, 2008**

Present: Bodine, Christoph, Edgoose, Fields, Goldstein, Share, Tomlin

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM

- 1) **Announcements:** There were none.
- 2) **The minutes of the meetings of 11/30/07 and 12/7/07 were approved.**
- 3) **Adjustments to the Housekeeping Amendment List, to be presented for a second reading at the 1/28/08 faculty Meeting**

Tomlin presented a revised list of the PSC's proposed housekeeping *Code* amendments, incorporating feedback from the first reading of the proposed amendments at the 12/4/07 Faculty Meeting and from the PSC meeting of 12/7/07. The revised list includes amendments to the *Code* itself and not to formal interpretations of the *Code*.

The PSC approved the revised list.

- 4) **Charge #5 – The evaluation of 3-year visiting faculty.**

The PSC reopened the questions about 3-year visiting faculty evaluations that were unresolved during the PSC meeting of 12/7/07. We looked again at the proposed text for the Buff Document and considered ways to clarify the review process in order to offer a procedure that might apply equitably to the circumstances of the variety of visiting faculty positions across the University.

We agreed that the evaluations of 3-year visiting faculty serve two purposes: to provide the evaluatee with feedback on teaching early on in the appointment, and to provide the head officer with a basis for the decision about whether the department should reappoint the evaluatee in cases where the department has need of a second three-year position. We determined that because the review does not serve as preparation for a tenure review, a complete file is unnecessary and that the review process should be comparable to the process for the first- and second-year evaluation of tenure-line faculty (with the exception of a letter being sent to the Faculty Advancement Committee). We agreed, also, that evaluation should occur prior to the third year of the appointment, to enable both the visiting faculty member and the department to plan appropriately for the conclusion of the initial three-year appointment.

After deliberations, the PSC composed the following text to be inserted into the Buff Document between the guidelines for “Evaluations in the First and Second Years” and “Evaluations of Instructors.”

Evaluation of 3-year Visiting Faculty

For those visiting faculty members whose appointment is renewable and continues beyond the second year, an evaluation normally occurs at the end of the first and second year and is made by the head officer of the Department, School, or Program. A copy of the report is sent to the individual evaluated and to the Dean. At the end of the first year, this document is for informational purposes and no further action is required; however, the Professional Standards Committee urges evaluatees to initiate interaction with the head officer and/or colleagues for constructive utilization of this evaluation process. At the end of the second year, this document serves as the basis for renewal of contract, when applicable. Chapter II, Section 5 of the *Faculty Code* authorizes the university to determine not to reappoint faculty without tenure for any reason not forbidden by the *Code*.

The PSC voted to approve this language.

To differentiate the guidelines for first- and second-year reviews of visiting faculty from those of tenure-line faculty, the PSC will retitle the guidelines for tenure-line faculty as “Evaluations in the First and Second Years for Tenure-line Faculty.” We would also like to devise a suitable title for “Evaluations of Instructors” to clarify that those guidelines are for instructors who are in appointments of indefinite length.

5) Charge #19—Distribution of first- and second-year tenure-line faculty evaluation letters

Patrick O’Neil, Chair of the Politics & Government department, has asked whether a chair may circulate among department faculty members a draft version or the final version of a new members first and second year evaluation letters. The question arose as the department drafts new guidelines for first-, second-, and third-year reviews of new tenure-line faculty, in an effort to “improve our mentoring.”

The PSC applauds the P&G faculty for seeking to improve the mentoring of new faculty. We should encourage the voluntary exchange of information between evaluatee and colleagues during the first two years of appointment and beyond. We believe in permitting the chair to seek input about the evaluatee from other colleagues. We have found nothing in the Faculty Code forbidding either of these exchanges of information.

We see this exchange of information as being especially important in the first two years, so that an evaluatee who has received positive first- and second-year reviews from the head officer is not surprised by more critical results when

evaluated by the full department in the third year. Circulating a draft or final evaluation letter could, however, work against the evaluatee's interests. These first two evaluation letters are described by the Code as formative ones among the Chair, the evaluatee, and the Dean. In order to best foster professional growth and improvement of teaching, we felt the evaluatee should have a buffer between the outcome of a formative evaluation and colleagues knowing all the details.

The evaluatee should retain the option of seeking guidance from colleagues, including the Chair, such as by sharing student evaluations, to receive colleague help with interpretation. The evaluatee should also retain the option of showing the final evaluation letter to whomever the evaluatee chooses for their insight. The evaluatee should not be put in a position of having an involuntary sharing of the letter take place.

Chapter III, Section 2 (b) of the Code specifies to whom the evaluation letter in question is to be sent. It does not explicitly prohibit dissemination of the letter to department colleagues. If that alone, though, were to be a reason for allowing dissemination, then there would be nothing in the Code to prohibit dissemination of the letter in question to students, which, we felt, would be universally held to be undesirable.

The separate, special process for first- and second-year evaluations of a new faculty member, we believe, was established, at least partly, to provide some protection and privacy to the evaluatee in preparing for the department-wide third-year review.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:57.

Submitted respectfully,

Julie Christoph