

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee  
November 27, 2006

PRESENT: Kris Bartanen, Sigrun Bodine, Doug Cannon, Julian Edgoose, Karl Fields, Grace Kirchner, Don Share, George Tomlin

Share convened the meeting at 3:02 p.m.

The minutes of November 20 were approved as distributed by Bodine, via email, in their second draft.

Share announced that he had sent to the School of Education the Committee's response to their evaluation criteria and is awaiting their response. Perhaps we can give final approval in our next meeting.

Share distributed the latest draft of the Committee's response to the Department of Foreign Languages, subsequent to their meeting with us. After a few revisions, particularly favoring the phrase "ongoing full-time" (rather than "permanent"), the Committee agreed that Share should send the response without delay.

The Committee turned to the revised draft of evaluation criteria for African American Studies, which Dexter Gordon had provided with an accompanying memo. Share pointed out that all matters the Committee had mentioned had led to revisions. There being no other issues raised about the revised criteria, the Committee approved them by acclamation.

The evaluation criteria for Communication Studies comprised an original of which the African American Studies document was a revision. For that reason, a number of Committee criticisms will apply as well to this original. The subcommittee (Tomlin and Cannon) was charged with identifying any further issues in the Communications criteria or matters peculiar to them that the Committee has not yet discussed. The aim is to send a single, comprehensive reply to Jim Jasinski, chair of Communications, so that he can respond all at once.

The Committee turned to a discussion of Dean Bartanen's memo, dated June 2, 2006, which raises the question what standards are to apply to candidates who are considered for tenure or promotion early. The memo calls attention to Section 1.e(1), Section 1.f, and Section 2.b(4) of Chapter IV of the Faculty Code, but also to the Committee's 1987 interpretation of Section 2.b(4). In clarification of the notion of early consideration, Dean Bartanen contrasted two hypothetical cases: (1) A faculty member whose initial contract specifies that tenure consideration will occur in (say) the 5th year, rather than the normal 6th year. (2) A faculty member with a normal contract, who asks for the tenure consideration to occur in (say) the 5th year. The issue is whether the standard for granting tenure will be higher than usual in both cases or only in the second case.

The Code speaks in Section 1.e(1) of granting tenure earlier "for relevant previous experience or exceptional achievement." In discussion it was suggested that, in the judgment of the Academic Vice-President who drew up the contract in the first case,

“relevant previous experience” had justified the early tenure calendar, so that the phrase concerning “exceptional achievement” should have no application. Only in the second case would the higher standard, expecting exceptional achievement, come into play.

The question arose whether a formal interpretation of the Code was needed on this matter. The alternative of an informal interpretation was suggested. Some discussion ensued as to what that meant and how it would be carried out.

With time exhausted, Share suggested that this discussion be continued next meeting.

At that, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00, p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Cannon