

Minutes of the Professional Standards Committee

October 14, 2010

Present: Kris Bartanen, Bill Beardsley, Geoffrey Block, Alva Butcher, Julie Christoph, Andy Rex, Michael Spivey, and Lisa Wood (presiding chair)

The meeting convened at 3:00 p.m. in Wyatt 226.

The minutes of October 7, 2010 were approved as amended.

The committee then turned to the Criteria for Evaluation, Tenure and Promotion from the Department of Politics and Government. The discussion focused on the portion of this document that deals with professional growth. Prior to delving into a more detailed discussion, the committee recognized that there is a range of norms in the departmental guidelines across campus.

One member had examined the criteria of other departments that were more specific in noting the means by which excellence in professional development could be demonstrated. That member noted that the Politics and Government document was preferable in that it enabled faculty to pursue professional growth in different ways. Another member had also looked at other departmental guidelines and felt that more detail about the kinds of evidence that would demonstrate professional growth was preferable.

The question was raised about the statement in the P&G criteria that reads: "At a minimum, the Department expects members to remain current in their sub-fields and especially in their specializations." The language in the Code specifies that "mere satisfactory performance is no guarantee of promotion." Is "at the minimum" consistent with the Code?

The guidelines state: "The Department values research and publication. Each member will be assessed for quality, quantity, and impact of research." It was not clear to the PSC if the expectations for professional development within the department would be clear to a junior faculty member. If clarity depends upon interpretation by a department chair, as chairs rotate, faculty members may receive different messages about expectations. What was the relationship between this statement and the discussion in the earlier paragraph in the document that deals with currency? The PSC could see that satisfactory performance would be achieved by maintaining currency in the field, but that excellence was less clearly established with regard to scholarly contributions. Although these aspects of professional growth may very often overlap, minimal currency in the discipline would not by itself establish a record of excellence. This problem in the description seemed especially clear when we compared language in the professional growth section to the standards and values expressed in the section on teaching.

The committee discussed some modest editorial changes to the document. These will be reviewed at the next meeting and communicated to the chair of the P&G Department in writing.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alva Wright Butcher