

**Professional Standards Committee Minutes
February 7, 1997**

Members Present: Block, Breitenbach, Cooney, Goldstein, Miller, Sorensen, Taranovski

The meeting was called to order at 2:08 p.m. and the minutes of January 31, 1997 approved.

The meeting was devoted to continued discussion of possible conflicts of interest involving faculty or administrators in matters pertaining to their responsibilities under the provisions of the Faculty Code. The previous meeting agreed on three areas of potential conflict of interest: the process of evaluation, issues involving spouses/domestic partners, and the role of the Dean in appeals. The issue of spouses and other family members is already provided for in the Faculty Code (see PSC interpretations on pp. 32 and 34 of the Faculty Code).

The members of the Committee then addressed potential conflicts of interest in the process of mutual faculty evaluation and concluded that they are adequately handled by the existing procedures and levels in the process of evaluation itself and do not call for recommending additional safeguards such as mandatory disqualification or recusal. The Professional Standards Committee contended, and was reassured in its conclusion by the Academic Dean, that the absence of tenure quotas in the University minimizes the potential conflict of interest when two or more faculty members are simultaneously involved in the process of mutual evaluation (while conflict of interest may or may not exist in any case of mutual evaluation, the Committee focused its discussion on instances involving tenure and promotion, perceived to be the most likely and significant case in point). The Committee concluded this portion of its discussion of the issue by reaffirming the existing code procedures as safeguards against conflicts of interest potentially inherent in the structure of the evaluation process. The Committee intends in its annual letter to the faculty about evaluation to urge department chairs and faculty members to be cognizant of any such issues as may arise and to weigh any potential conflict of interest appropriately during the process of the evaluation itself.

The role of the Academic Dean in matters of potential conflict of interest will be addressed at the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Theodore Taranovski