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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee Meeting, Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Arts & Sciences Professional Standards Committee

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Professional Standards Committee
Approved Minutes from April 17, 2007
12:30 pm CSS 249

Next Meeting: TBA Fall 2007
Introduction/Preliminaries

The meeting was convened at 12:30 pm in CSS 249 by the chair, Wendy Brandon. Faculty members present were: Don Griffin, Maria Ruiz, Mario D'Amato, Ron Larned, Alicia Homrich, and Paul Stephenson. Associate Dean Deb Wellman was also present.

1. Agenda Items

A. Old Business

Approval of 2/27/07 and 3/22/07 minutes
New Members
CIE Issues

B. New Business

Executive Committee Meeting Update
2007-2008 PSC Goals
Remaining Work?
End of Year Report
PSC Chair

2. Old Business

I. Approval of minutes (2/27/07 and 3/22/07): The 2/27 minutes were approved as amended and the 3/22 minutes were approved as submitted.

II. New Members: The composition of next year's PSC was discussed.

The four elected (at large) representatives will be: Wendy Brandon, Alicia Homrich, Fiona Harper, and Alberto Prieto-Calixto

Four divisional representatives have not all been elected (appointed?): Currently Mario D'Amato is serving as the representative from Humanities.

Three representatives (one from each) are still needed from: Expressive Arts, Social Sciences, and Science & Mathematics

III. CIE Issues: This spring the CIE was formatted with comment boxes that required students to write something before they could proceed to the next question. Discussion arose in the PSC about how this policy of requiring student comments came about and the pros and cons of having required comments. A letter from Paul Harris was presented to the PSC which clearly stated the drawbacks of forcing students to write comments. It was the consensus of the PSC that requiring student comments was adopted in response to faculty requests for such a provision made at the December 6, 2006 Faculty Meeting.

D. Wellman noted that faculty can (and should) inform students that if they do not wish to write comments they may simply type "no comment" (or even "x") and move on to the next question.

D. Wellman noted that the PSC is free to re-think having forced student responses on the CIE.

There was discussion among members of the PSC regarding the ethical issues of requiring written responses.

W. Brandon pointed out that some people may use CIE data for research purposes.

M. Ruiz noted that the CIE must be re-normed constantly and that if you anger the students there will be a significant impact on the instrument.

It may be desirable in the future to not force student responses. The rationale for this is, in part, because students may be frustrated (irritated) by the forced comment box and therefore give responses that are not helpful to evaluation.

A letter from student D. West was presented to the PSC which requested that the time cut-off (10 p.m. each evening) be eliminated as it prevents students, who have limited free time during the day to complete the CIE, from accessing the CIE at night.

M. D'Amato stated that he disapproved of the time limit at night. Since the point is that students should be completing the CIE under the same conditions under which they study, he felt it was valid to have the CI available until late in the evening when students are typically studying.

The PSC decided not to change the time cut-off for this semester.

W. Brandon reiterated that faculty should be notified to tell students that if they do not wish to write comments they may simply type "no comment" (or even "x") and move on to the next question. In addition, the start date for the CIE should be posted along with the academic calendar and final exam matrix in the schedule of classes booklet. This will give faculty plenty of time to plan and know when to discuss the importance of completing the CIE with their students.

3. New Business

I. Executive Committee Meeting Update: W. Brandon informed the PSC of recent topics in the Executive Committee.

Due to by-law constraints Dexter Boniface will not be Vice President (since he is not tenured). Instead, Barry Levis will act as V.P.

Objections and concerns for the process of bringing the FEC slate to the faculty were discussed.

Concerns about FEC members and conflicts with candidates were raised. How FEC members recuse themselves under these circumstances was addressed.

Training for the FEC was also discussed. Of particular importance to PSC was the training of FEC members in the proper use of the CIE and Diversity issues.

D. Griffin commented that there has been an ongoing problem with the role of FEC in respect to the Departmental Evaluation of a Candidate. Whether the FEC is essentially a committee that ensures a candidate has met the Departmental guidelines for tenure or whether the FEC has a broader commitment to ensure that only comparable candidates in all departments are awarded tenure. The mission of FEC has changed with its composition. There should be a campus wide discussion, including the president, and Dean of Faculty about this. For example scholarship...there is a problem with the evaluation of candidate's scholarship due to lack of expertise. The candidate and the Department must make the case for scholarship. This needs to be revisited from the perspective of new faculty so it is clear that the process be fair and uniform for new faculty.

W. Brandon raised a concern about the language for professional evaluation. There appears to be a need for PSC to review phrases such as formal/informal review and ensure that the terms are used uniformly and make sense.

The PSC discussed the requirements for informal vs. formal reviews of faculty candidates for tenure. Apparently, the By-Laws use the term Formal Review whereas, the Dean's letter to faculty uses the term Informal Review for apparently the corresponding review period. No decision regarding changing phrasing was made other than to address this in the future.

The PSC also discussed the designation of the faculty Appeals committee and the slate of candidates.

II. 2007-2008 PSC Goals: The goals for the next academic year were outlined by Wendy Brandon as follows:

1. Clear up the misunderstanding about phrasing of informal vs. formal review for tenure.
2. Address the Purpose and Role of the FEC and implement a training session to create the best possible

FEC. This session should focus on proper use of the CIE in evaluation, Diversity, Scholarship evaluation and differences in refereed journals.

3. Education aspects of the CIE. Meeting with Departmental Chairs, Jr. Faculty, and Administrators to discuss best practices with the CIE.
4. Faculty development. The PSC wants to facilitate the means by which faculty obtain funding from the college. The goal is to create a Story Board that clearly maps the sources of funding within the college, how one applies for funding and what aspects of faculty development these funds cover.

III. Remaining Work:

A. Homrich is working on the International/Petters grants criteria. The criteria for obtaining this funding are looser than those established for Critchfields and Ashforth grants. In some cases it is not clear who is eligible to utilize these funds. That is something that needs to be clarified. There also is a need for a centralized location (webpage?) that has links to all available sources of college funding.

P. Stephenson suggested that whoever administers the Petters/International grants sit in with PSC when they review Critchfield/Ashforth Grants to enable communication between PSC and this individual. This would better meet the funding needs of faculty since during the past two years of grant review many faculty have requested funds through Critchfield and Ashforth grants that may be more appropriately derived from Petters funding.

W. Brandon asked how the International funds are administered. How is this passed on? She proposed that faculty be elected to administer these funds.

D. Griffin proposed that applications for Internationalization/Petters funds be available twice a year. Having rolling applications was not helpful.

W. Brandon stated that the current means for applying seem obscure and somewhat anti-egalitarian. Also the distinction between Petters grants and internationalization grants seems confusing. How do faculty figure out the difference?

W. Brandon stated that she would bring these issues to the attention of the Executive Committee.

W. Brandon asked the PSC for suggestions of other work that may need to be addressed.

D. Griffin responded that the role of the Dean of faculty in Tenure evaluation needs to be clarified. The position of the Dean with regard to FEC needs to be clarified.

IV. End-of –Year Report: The PSC discussed with W. Brandon what would go into the end of year report.

V. PSC Chair:

W. Brandon will remain as Chair for academic year 2007-2008

4. **Adjourn** The meeting was adjourned (1:45 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Stephenson, Recording Secretary