

Faculty Senate

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Faculty Grievance Committee

Annual Report

Membership

Deborah Pence '08, Chair	Mechanical Engineering
Loretta Rielly '08	Valley Library
Matt Cannon '09	Animal Sciences
Jay Sexton '09	Forest Science
Janet Nishihara '10	Educational Opportunities Program

Alternate

Tom Wolpert '08	Botany and Plant Pathology
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Summary of Activities

A total of five faculty members contacted the chair of the Faculty Grievance Committee to determine whether or not the faculty grievance procedures were the proper avenue to address their particular concerns. After consultation, two faculty members indicated that their most appropriate avenue of pursuit was not obvious from the faculty handbook posted on the university website. Ultimately, one grievance was heard during the 2007-2008 academic year. All members of the committee were in attendance.

Recommendations

(1) Based on this year's activities, we agree in part with the 2001-2002 recommendation of the Faculty Grievance Committee to hire an ombudsperson. However, rather than restrict this individual's role to assisting faculty with grievances, the committee believes that an ombudsperson should be hired to help faculty members find the proper avenue for resolution of any potential issue (e.g., affirmative action, faculty grievance, research misconduct, etc.) and, if appropriate, to serve as an interim mediator.

(2) Although we as a committee feel that the procedures for initiating and following through with a grievance are well-defined, we feel that in the absence of experience or knowledgeable advice, these procedures can be overwhelming and confusing to a potential grievant. To help the grievant navigate the faculty grievance process more effectively, we propose that a checklist which includes a representative timeline be prepared and made available in the faculty handbook and posted on the university website. Development of this checklist would be a goal for the Faculty Grievance Committee during the 2008-2009 academic year.

(3) The committee further recommends that the Research Office's procedures for handling research misconduct be more clearly delineated. For example, a clear indication needs to be provided as to whether informal complaints will be investigated or if it is necessary for a faculty member to lodge a formal complaint in order to seek resolution. In addition, clear procedures for lodging official complaints of *plagiarism* need to be presented, as does a list of actions that will be taken by the Research Office in the course of investigating and resolving this type of research misconduct. According to the Office of Research Integrity webpage¹ as of August 22, 2008, the document that will provide an outline of the policies for addressing such allegations is still under preparation and will be titled the Collaborative Research Projects Policy. We urge timely completion of this document.

(4) According to the current Research Misconduct Policy, research misconduct allegations are handled first by an inquiry conducted by the unit head and/or Vice President for Research and, if necessary, followed up with an investigation conducted by a Misconduct Investigation Committee appointed by the Vice President for Research. To avoid any perceived conflict of interest by having the university administration overseeing both the inquiry and investigation into these types of allegations, we propose the creation of a Faculty Senate Research Misconduct Committee to replace the current ad-hoc process. This committee would serve a role similar to the Faculty Grievance Committee. Following an unsatisfactory resolution with the unit head, the

complainant could write an appeal to the proposed Faculty Senate Research Misconduct Committee requesting that an inquiry be conducted. The findings of the proposed Faculty Senate Research Misconduct Committee inquiry would be reported to the Vice President for Research. Also, for *all* research misconduct allegations requiring an investigation, three of the five members on the Misconduct Investigation Committee would be members of the proposed Faculty Senate Research Misconduct Committee. The remaining two members, who require “professional expertise in the area of the alleged misconduct”¹, would be appointed by the Vice President for Research.

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1. <http://oregonstate.edu/research/ori/miscon.htm>

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