

Annual Report to the School of Education Policy Council

From the Bloomington Grievance Committee

April 2010

Chair: Barbara Dennis

Members: Donna Adomat, Phil Carspecken, Lynn Gilman, Rebekah Kaletka, Diana Lambdin,
Gerardo Lopez, Margrethe O Connor

Date: April 20, 2010

The committee formed 5 panels in response to formal grievance filings thus far. The committee is in the process of convening one informal mediation session between a student and faculty member.

The committee met as a group one time and will meet again before the end of the semester.

The committee decided to change its practices slightly. These changes do not reflect policy shifts. They include changes toward increased transparency and reflection.

Regarding Transparency

As a committee, we call for increased transparency as the consistent course of action in the grievance process. As we understand it, this request does not reflect a change in policy, but rather a change in practice within the currently existing set of policies. The previous practice has been for a panel of the grievance committee to submit a report to the Executive Associate Dean /Dean who then has, at times, made a decision without sharing the panel's report with participants in the grievance. We wish the norm to be changed so that the panel's written report will be shown to all parties involved in the grievance process, except in unusual circumstances. In addition, the committee would like to receive information back from the Executive Associate Dean or Dean informing us of any actions taken. This change in practice will require participation from the Dean/Executive Associate Dean and might be thought of as an attempt to reach some consistency with respect to transparency across shifts in membership either with respect to the Grievance Committee or the Dean's office. Specifically,

(1) after submitting its report and recommendations, the grievance panel would like a response from the Dean/Executive Associate Dean regarding whether or not and to what extent the panel recommendations were followed, with an explanation when recommendations were not followed – these should be provided to the panel no later than when those involved in the hearing are informed of the decision; and

(2) the committee would like the report it provides to the Dean/Executive Associate Dean on its hearings to be shared with all the participants named in the particular hearing.

There might be times when exceptions to the above courses of action would need to be made, but we would anticipate these are few and are related to needs of the participants. Panels will write their reports as if they are to be shared with all parties. If it seems to the panel that a report should not be shared with all participants in the grievance then the panel will specify this and give reasons for it. If the Executive Associate Dean /Dean decides that a report should not be shared with all parties, then the panel would like to have reasons given for this decision and, if deemed necessary, a discussion of these reasons.

Regarding Reflection

The Committee decided it would be important to meet at the end of the academic years to review the panels, recommendations, and administrative decisions so that lessons might be learned regarding the effectiveness of the process and of the recommendations themselves.