

Professional Ethics and Academic Freedom (PEAF) Committee
Vanderbilt University Senate
Report for Academic Year 2008-09
Chair: Dan Reschly, Peabody (2010)

Committee members: Dan Reschly (Peabody), Chair; Frank Bloch (Law), Robert Bodenheimer (Engineering), Brian Christman (Medicine), William Collins (Arts and Science), Paul DeHart (Divinity), Howard Kirshner (Medicine), Jack Roberts (Medicine), Virginia Sheperd (Medicine), Claire Smrekar (Peabody).

1. Actual Grievances Heard. The prime charge of the PEAFF Committee is to hear faculty grievances against the University except those related to promotion, tenure or termination. Virtually all of the Committee's actual time in consultation and meeting this year was taken up with responding to actual grievances.

- a. The Committee deliberated and completed one grievance case during 2008-2009. PEAFF Committee decisions are advisory to the Chancellor. The Chancellor concurred with the PEAFF Committee decision. No meeting with the Chancellor was necessary since the Chancellor and Committee agreed concerning outcome of this grievance.
- b. Discussions between the PEAFF Chair and two faculty members required a considerable amount of time. To this date, neither has filed a formal grievance, although one potential grievant expressed intent to file early in 2009-2010.

2. Due Process Protections in Investigations. An anonymous faculty member requested that PEAFF examine the due process protections observed when the Opportunity Development Center (ODC) investigates charges of faculty misconduct. Initial inquiries were made, but no further action occurred. Further consideration of this issue by PEAFF is recommended pending the appointment of a permanent Director of ODC. Connected to this inquiry is the issue of the communication of misconduct findings to committees considering faculty members for promotion and tenure. Apparently, misconduct findings are not routinely communicated to promotion and tenure committees.