

Preamble to Ben Edelman Reports

Ben Edelman's case is the first that we will discuss under the new Faculty Review Board (FRB) process. The materials you have been given to read include reports from the subcommittee and the FRB. Given the new process, this preamble provides a short reminder of how the new process works, and some background on the case in question.

HBS Community Values and the FRB Process

The FRB "Principles and Procedures for Responding to Matters of Faculty Conduct" note that under HBS's Community Values, faculty members (as well as other stakeholders) agree to abide by the School's Community Standards:

- Respect for the rights, differences, and dignity of others
- Honesty and integrity in dealing with all members of the community
- Accountability for personal behavior

Additionally, faculty members are expected to contribute actively to the HBS community, to help foster an environment conducive to the work of others, and to advance the School's mission and those activities that support and foster it. Faculty members at HBS bear a responsibility to adhere to the highest standards of collegiality and conduct, understanding that activities or behaviors that undermine the academic environment or damage the standing of Harvard have a wide-ranging impact.

The FRB was created to review situations when a faculty member is alleged to have failed to uphold the School's Community Values or standards of collegiality. The FRB's procedures were designed to be flexible, recognizing the need to weigh multiple factors such as the kind of behavior alleged and the seriousness of the allegations.

When questions arise about whether a candidate for promotion has failed to uphold the School's Community Values and therefore might not meet the School's promotion standards, the FRB is asked to review and collect evidence on the allegations, and to prepare a report that summarizes its findings. In this situation, the Subcommittee is asked to review the work of the candidate on the criteria *excluding* collegiality (scholarship, course development, and teaching). The reports of the FRB and the Subcommittee are then provided to the Standing Committee to allow a comprehensive review of the case.

Background on Ben Edelman Case

Professor Edelman's case for tenure was first reviewed two years ago. Given questions that had arisen at the time about whether three different incidents—a Blinkx blog posting, his interactions with a local Chinese restaurant, and his interactions with staff—had violated the School's Community Values, the matter was referred to the FRB. The 2015 FRB report and Professor Edelman's response are included with the set of materials you have received. The



2015 FRB report concluded that Professor Edelman "did not uphold the School's Community Values, and his conduct ... did not meet the criteria for 'Effective Contributions to the HBS Community.'"

The Standing Committee during that year, which reviewed both the initial FRB report and Professor Edelman's response as well as the Subcommittee Report, recommended that the School provide Professor Edelman with a two-year extension during which time he might provide evidence as to whether he had learned from and was able to act on the lessons from his behaviors that had been raised to the FRB. This recommendation was reviewed by the FRB and the Dean, both of which accepted the recommendation.

As a result, based on the advice of the FRB, Dean Nohria and Professor Healy developed a set of assignments for Professor Edelman over the subsequent two years. These included:

- Joining the Leadership and Corporate Accountability (LCA) teaching group during 2015-2016—because Professor Edelman had no prior teaching group experience, this was viewed as a means of evaluating his effectiveness in interacting with (new) colleagues around a course.
- Teaching LCA during 2016-2017—this was seen as providing a way to assess if Professor Edelman could listen to and navigate situations where students expressed different moral perspectives.
- Relocating his office to the 4th floor of Morgan Hall—this provided a way to engage with new faculty colleagues (e.g., a "fresh slate" of interactions).
- Joining the Academic Technology Steering Group—this offered Professor Edelman a structured opportunity for engaging with staff.
- Access to coaching resources (if he chose to do so).

Professor Edelman agreed to these assignments. It was discussed with him, and he acknowledged, that he would be expected to demonstrate, through his actions, that he had learned from his experiences and shown evidence of improvement in his actions and interactions, and not simply that he could avoid repeating misconduct. In other words, the absence of new misconduct would not in and of itself be sufficient.

Fast forward two years, and the case is now re-appearing before the Standing Committee. Included with his submitted review materials, Professor Edelman provided the FRB with an update of how he perceived his actions demonstrated he had learned from the prior feedback, as well as the names of people at the School who the FRB could interview to collect evidence on this question. The FRB conducted a thorough review, interviewing people from the names suggested by Professor Edelman and others to assess whether Professor Edelman had shown sufficient evidence of improvement. The 2017 FRB report describes its deliberations and conclusions. You have received the full 2015 and 2017 FRB reports, including Professor Edelman's statements and responses, as well as the Subcommittee's report on the case. The Subcommittee updated the 2015 report after requesting additional external reviews and updates/new letters from internal reviewers.

You are requested to review the full package of materials (admittedly heavy reading) so that when we meet we can discuss and then vote on whether Professor Edelman meets the standards for promotion to Full Professor.