

Procedures for the College of Arts and Sciences Tenure and Promotion Committee

1. Dossiers are distributed to the committee members for review on their own when the committee convenes for the year or as soon as the dossiers are available in the Dean's Office. Committee members will have shelf space in the conference room in which they may store their dossiers. Committee members need to be sure to keep their copies separate from those of others. Committee members may take their copies of the dossiers to their faculty offices or homes. Special care is urged to maintain the confidentiality of the documents. Committee members are free to mark and make notations on their copies of the dossiers and to make notes (a helpful guide to reviewing the dossiers is distributed for those who wish to use it).
2. The identity of the committee members is open information but it is not information that the Dean's Office distributes routinely, for the protection of the committee.
3. With rare exception, committee meetings are held in the Dean's Office conference room (Holden 202). Discussion of applicants and their dossiers should be limited to the Dean's Office during official committee meetings.
4. The committee is convened in mid-October. The first order of business is to schedule approximately 45 hours of committee meetings between then and the Thanksgiving break. Every effort will be made to schedule all meetings between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (i.e., when university offices are open), given security concerns. If necessary, Saturday meetings between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. will be scheduled (with every effort made to avoid Saturdays of home football games, given parking and security concerns). If there is a Saturday meeting, business involving only the committee will be transacted; under no circumstances will there be visitors (candidates, department chairpersons, etc.) at Saturday meetings, and committee members are asked not to publicize unnecessarily a Saturday committee meeting, given security concerns.
5. The ideal order for consideration of applications is mandatory-year tenure first, with others within those departments being handled at the same time, and non-mandatory-year tenure and promotions last. However, the dossiers tend not to arrive in the Dean's Office in ideal order, and time constraints on the committee make it desirable to begin work as soon as possible. The Dean's Office will attempt to arrange the early-arriving dossiers in a close-to-ideal order, but the actual order of consideration may be less than ideal.
6. Initiating consideration of an application: The Dean states the name of the candidate, the nature of the application (tenure, mandatory or not, promotion to what rank), the vote(s) within the department, and the chairperson's recommendation(s).
7. The committee is free to invite, or not to invite, anyone to meet with it, with one exception: If there is a mandatory-year tenure application with a negative recommendation at the department level, the committee must invite the candidate and his/her chairperson to meet with the committee. The candidate and the chairperson meet separately with the committee, ideally with the candidate meeting later than the chairperson.

8. The committee may invite anyone it wishes. However, time constraints have made it typical practice to invite only mandatory-year tenure candidates with negative departmental recommendations; as noted, the chairperson also is invited in such instances. If there has been another chairperson during the candidate's tenure-probationary period, then that person is often invited as well. Non-mandatory-year tenure applicants and applicants for promotion only to associate professor or professor are rarely -- in fact, almost never -- invited. Occasionally, the chairperson of such a candidate is invited, typically without inviting the candidate. In other words, there is no necessity to invite candidates other than mandatory-year-tenure applicants with negative recommendations, no matter how negative the department recommendation may be for a non-mandatory-year or promotion-only applicant. Should the committee decide to invite such a candidate, no precedent is set for future procedure.

9. On rare occasion, the committee has invited someone other than a candidate, a department chairperson, or a former chairperson. As two examples, a retired faculty member otherwise uninvolved in the case once was asked to provide the context of a difficult-to-understand department recommendation, and a faculty member who had been an outside chairperson of a department put into receivership once was asked to talk with the committee even though he had not been chairperson during the candidate's probationary period.

10. The Associate Dean handles all invitations, all other contacts with individuals conducting business with the committee, all requests for information from academic offices, and so forth. Committee members should not contact candidates or others on their own, nor should they seek information about a candidate's performance from other sources. The Associate Dean serves as the liaison between the committee and other entities in all such matters.

11. In the case of mandatory-year tenure applicants only: Regardless of the nature of the department recommendation, if a college committee member judges there to be a significant chance of a negative outcome at the college level, he/she should ask that the candidate and his/her chairperson be invited to meet with the committee. The invitations may be given at any time before the committee votes. Obviously, the earlier the invitation is offered, the better.

12. The committee needs to be prepared to deal with several-to-many dossiers at once. For example, the departmental vote for mandatory-year Candidate A may require us to invite A to meet with us, so the invitation is issued as soon as consideration of the application is initiated. The committee may or may not wish to discuss A at that time, and it won't be able to vote until after the chairperson and candidate meet with us, so the dossier will be set aside, and Candidate B's application will be initiated. B, in the same department as A, may be a non-mandatory year, or strictly a promotion, case, but since the department chairperson is being invited for A, the committee may wish to take the opportunity to ask a few questions about B, so B's dossier is set aside, and Candidate C's application is initiated. In some cases, the initiation of the application, the discussion, and the committee vote all occur during a single committee meeting. In others, all of these steps and more occur across several weeks, with several applications being under active committee consideration at the same time.

13. The committee may vote on an application at any time, but after it has voted, it may not reconsider that application. The committee is encouraged to vote on a candidate as soon as it feels ready, as the dean needs the time to write the dean's letters, which are due typically just before the Thanksgiving holiday. In the case of negative recommendations by the committee or dean, the dean must ask the chairperson to inquire whether the candidate wishes to withdraw his/her application. For the dean to accomplish these procedures within deadline, the committee does not have the option of waiting until the last scheduled meeting to vote on all applications at once.

14. Ideally, every committee member is present for every meeting, and every vote involves five committee members. Scheduling problems and voting requirements may require us to operate with fewer than five people. Typically, a meeting should not be held with fewer than four committee members present. Typically, a vote should not be taken with fewer than four committee members actually voting.

15. Committee discussion is for the purpose of developing the college-level recommendations. Unanimity of recommendation is not the goal of the committee. The goal is to come to an understanding of the case and to communicate through discussion that understanding to the dean so that the dean's letter to the provost may present the various points of view. Each committee member should take into account the recommendations of the earlier levels (voting faculty and chairpersons) and the committee discussion and render an individual professional judgment. Taking into account does not mean being bound by the earlier recommendations. Typically, there is great similarity across levels of recommendations and within the committee, but there are many exceptions. Committee members should recognize that tenure and promotion are complex processes and decisions in which equally qualified individuals of good faith disagree. Disagreement within the committee, and disagreement between the committee and the dean or the chairperson or voting faculty must not be interpreted as lack of respect for each other's point of view, nor should it be personalized.

16. The associate dean takes notes of the committee discussion, without identification of committee members, and of the interactions of the committee with invited guests, who are identified. These notes are not intended to resemble the work of a professional court-reporter but rather are intended to be of assistance to the dean later when the dean's letter is written. They also may serve to assist memory at a later time, should the dean's office be asked to provide information about procedure in general or about a particular application during an appeal or litigation.

17. The dean is involved in the committee discussion in order to develop an understanding of the committee's recommendations, whether unanimous or mixed, but votes separately, later, and through a letter written to the provost. The dean should take into account all recommendations (voting faculty, chairperson, and college committee) and render an individual professional judgment.

18. The dean's letter is addressed to the provost, with copies to the candidate and the candidate's chairperson. In the letter for each candidate, the dean must report the committee vote(s) in terms of approve, disapprove, and abstain; in addition, she reports absences and excused voters. An

excused voter is a committee member from the same department as the candidate; such committee members are involved in the discussion of the application but leave the room during the vote so that not only do they not vote, but they also have no knowledge of the outcome.

19. The dean's own vote is stated in the dean's letter in terms of approve or disapprove and provides a rationale for the recommendation. As each committee member's vote functions as a recommendation to the dean as to what she should do, committee members are asked to abstain only rarely, as the dean does not have the option of abstaining. Recusing oneself is a different matter; a committee member who chooses to recuse him/herself from involvement in a particular case should inform the dean and arrange to be absent from discussion of that candidate.

20. Following a vote, committee members return their copies of the dossier to the associate dean, who will arrange for secure disposal. At the end of November, when the committee has concluded its business, committee members may submit the notes they have made across the weeks to the associate dean for disposal.

21. Committee members are to keep confidential all matters discussed by the committee. The demeanor of the committee is particularly important during meetings with mandatory-year tenure applicants who have received a negative recommendation from the department level.

22. It is our understanding that faculty who exercise their professional judgment are protected from liability so long as they act in good faith and without arbitrariness, capriciousness, or prejudice. Members of this committee have been asked by a faculty member or by the Office of General Counsel to provide information or to testify in an appeal or grievance procedure or in a prospective lawsuit. No member of the committee has been compelled to testify in court.

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