



Cleveland State University

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Office of the Dean

Promotion – Tenure: FAQ

The listing below -- not in any priority order -- represents the usual questions we receive year after year about the promotion-tenure and dossier-construction processes from individual faculty members and/or PRC chairs, and/or Department Chairs – School Directors. The comments below are our usual responses – some of these, obviously, are mandated by various policies/procedures while others can be revised as you (and the Dean) see fit:

1. Departmental (School) PRC Membership - Participation

a. Membership:

See Section 12.12B(2) of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and paragraph 3 of the sheet entitled “Promotion-Tenure: Flow Chart”; PLOA Status: does not disqualify membership but must participate in the Committee’s deliberations

b. Participation:

The Departmental-School By-Laws re Participation Requirements need to be consulted (e.g., have to be present for all the discussions before exercising vote or a majority of the discussions)

c. Recusals/Conflict of Interest:

Many of the comments on the sheet “Promotion-Tenure: Organizational Meeting with College Peer Review Committee” (paragraph 8) relating to recusals on the College PRC are also applicable to Departmental-School level Peer Review Committees (see Article 12.15 [“Conflict of Interest”] of the Collective Bargaining Agreement).

2. External Reviewers

a. Selection Process, Confidentiality and Content of Letter to External Reviewers:

See the attached set of memoranda (“Attached Material” [(dated February 9, 2006)], sub-set of memos generated by the Provost’s Office (dated March 22, 2004); page 7 (“Checklist for Peer Review Committee Letter Soliciting External Reviews”) and page 8 (“Sample Letter to External Reviewers”). Also, the Letter cannot promise or hint at confidentiality: the Ohio Public Records Act categorize these letters as a “public document” and thus available for inspection (with any editing [see very next paragraph]).

b. Access to External Letters:

Article 12.12C(4) of the Collective Bargaining Agreement allows a candidate for promotion and/or tenure full and unedited access to the external letters but not before the dossiers are transmitted from the Dean to the Provost (the written request for these letters is to be addressed to the Provost). The various levels below the Provost (Department PRC, Chair, College PRC, and the Dean) cannot make these letters available to the candidate. This was included in the CBA to stop the past practice of candidates (receiving copies at the beginning of the process) from insisting that a rebuttal be inserted in the dossier to the effect that “how dare does this good-for-nothing so-and-so write that I will never receive the Nobel Prize for animal husbandry?”

c. Different Material Can be Sent to Different Reviewers:

Most of the times, the same material on a candidate is sent to all three reviewers. However, this is not mandatory if an individual has produced a corpus over more than one sub-area: each separate corpus can be sent to the relevant reviewer (this underscores the need to include a full curriculum vitae so the reviewer will have an idea of the candidate’s work in toto rather than just a small portion).

d. Process / Relationship / Brief Biographical Sketch:

The PRC needs to enclose in the dossier: a. a full discussion of the process employed to select the external reviewers; b. a brief biographical sketch (not a 30 page vita) of each reviewer; and c. a statement from the faculty member describing the relationship (if any) between the faculty member and the reviewers

e. Honorarium:

It is the view of the Dean that service as an external reviewer for a promotion-tenure dossier is similar to reviewing an academic manuscript for a scholarly journal or providing a book review – this is service to the discipline or, in the case of promotion-tenure dossier reviews, service to our junior colleagues (a different situation than reviewing a 500 page book manuscript for a commercial publisher [I would expect payment for this service]). Accordingly, the Dean’s Office will not fund any payments to the external reviewers. Having said this, the Dean’s Office will not prohibit such payments from Departmental – School funds if the Chair/School Director so wishes.

3. Preliminary Dossier

Candidates for promotion and/or tenure are mandated to provide a “preliminary” dossier to the Departmental-School PRC the first week of April. I have for quite some time defined a “preliminary” dossier as – at a minimum – (a) a current curriculum vitae and (b) the material to be sent out for external review. Department – School PRCs have the prerogative (but within reason) to broaden the category of material to be sent out for external review: e.g., a research statement or similar material. The Dean’s Office does not receive a copy of this “preliminary” dossier.

4. Final Dossier (Required Material):

a. Written Criteria / Memo of Understanding / Letter of Intent:

The dossier must contain the original Letter of Intent to the candidate as well as the Department-School written criteria for the action sought (promotion to Associate or Full and/or the award of tenure; in addition, if there is a separate “Memorandum of Understanding” with the faculty member, this document likewise needs to be included in the dossier.

5. Final Dossier (Material Strongly Recommended to be Excluded):

a. Raw Data on Student Evaluations / Written Comments from Students:

Candidates are strongly advised not to include in the dossier the raw data from the student evaluations. A summary table, along with any necessary explanation regarding the interpretation of the data, is usually sufficient [along with a statement to the effect that the raw data is available at the Departmental-School level and is available upon request. The same holds for the written comments from students – none of these should be included (but when they are, they are invariably highly positive testimonials without any information regarding whether these represent the totality of the comments or [more likely] a very small unrepresentative sample. These materials – the raw data and student testimonials add only bulk to the dossier.

b. Syllabi:

It is assumed that all of us use syllabi that are current, rigorous, relevant, etc. etc. and the inclusion of these only increases the dossier’s bulk. Having said this, however, if the candidate is emphasizing the teaching track and/or making a particular claim as to the innovative, etc, nature of a course or courses, then the specific syllabi should be in the dossier and fully discussed by the candidate.

6. Final Dossier: Other Comments:

a. Organized / Secure / Obesity:

The dossier should be organized in a rational manner so that it is clearly obvious where specific material can be found. The dossier should be secure enough that papers don’t fall out by just looking at it. The dossier construction process has recently been afflicted by growing obesity: the candidate and the Department PRC should take care that extraneous material is left out.

b. Missing Material from Dossier Retrieved from the Provost’s Office:

The Provost’s Office will inform us when the dossiers are ready to be retrieved (once the Board of Trustees meet in April [sometimes in March]). However, the following material in the dossier is removed by the Provost and kept in that office’s files: (a) curriculum vitae, (b) external letters, (c) letters from the Departmental-School PRS, the Chair-Director, the College PRC, and the Dean. You will receive frantic telephone calls from faculty informing you that this material was not in the dossier and why did you lose it (or steal it). The simple reply is just let them know that the Provost’s Office keeps the stuff.

7. Solicited Material

Article 12.12C(1) of the Collective Bargaining Agreement reads: “The [Departmental] PRC may also consider additional materials it deems relevant to the evaluation.” This has been interpreted that the Departmental PRC thus has the prerogative of soliciting – in addition to the external reviews – additional relevant information and the solicited material, if any, is inserted in the dossier by the PRC with a clear explanation of the process employed.

8. Unsolicited Material

Quite frequently we receive unsolicited ex parte communications from the faculty candidate and/or the departmental PRC and/or the Chair complaining about the decision from one or more (including the College PRC) of these levels. We return whatever was sent (without showing the Dean) to the sender with a note along the following lines:

“The CBA process does not permit this type of input at this (specify) stage. I am returning the material to you and I am also informing you that I did not share it with the Dean. [If the dossier is disputed at the time of receipt, I add]: Since the recommendations are not unanimous, the Provost is mandated to request the University PRC for its own recommendation. You will in due course receive from the University PRC a request for any supplementary-additional material. It will be at this stage in the process that you will have the opportunity to submit this material.”

If the material is from any other source other than the faculty member, PRC and/or Chair (e.g., students, other administrators in the University [I have received in the past such ex parte letters from Vice Presidents and other Deans] or people external to the University), we simply return the material to the sender along with a note: “The University’ promotion-tenure process does not permit this type of input at this [specify] stage. I am returning the material to you and I am also informing you that I did not share it with the Dean.”

9. Distribution of Letters from Departmental-School PRCs and from Department Chairs-School Directors

See paragraph 7 of the sheet “Promotion-Tenure: Flow Chart”

10. UPRC Responses

Article 12.12D of the Collective Bargaining Agreement reads: “... the University-wide PRC shall solicit comments and supplementary material from the candidate, the PRCs [both the Departmental and College PRC], the Chair, and the Dean.” Each level in the process thus has the prerogative of providing additional material or not. If so, no level is required to share this information with any other level and the Dean’s Office has no way of knowing whether or not this “sharing” is actually done. Be that as it may, it has been the long-standing practice of the Dean’s Office to do the following in regard to the UPRC’s request: (a) unless there is totally “new”

information [a very, very rare occurrence], the Dean's Office simply replies to the UPRC with a brief statement to the effect that the Dean has no additional information to submit and we refer the UPRC to the Dean's letter to the Provost which contains the reasons for his positive/negative decision; (b) we send a copy of this response to the candidate, the Departmental-School PRC, the Chair-Director, and to the College PRC for their information [again, in the interests of a transparent process].