



# Cleveland State University

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

*Office of the Dean*

## **Responsibilities of Departmental-School Peer Review Committees**

The information below -- not in any priority order -- may be helpful as you start this year's promotion-tenure / dossier evaluation process.

### **1. Departmental (School) PRC Membership - Participation**

a. Membership:

See Section 12.12B(2) of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. PLOA status does not disqualify membership but must participate in the Committee's deliberations

b. Participation:

The Departmental-School By-Laws regarding 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

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:

The letter soliciting the external review cannot promise or hint at confidentiality: the Ohio Public Records Act categorize these letters as a "public document" and as such, are eventually available for inspection by the candidate.

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-School PRC, Chair, College PRC, and the Dean) cannot make these letters available to the candidate. This was included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement to stop the past practice of candidates receiving copies at the beginning of the process and insisting that a rebuttal be inserted in the dossier.

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 must enclose in the dossier before it is transmitted to the Department Chair-School Director: a. a full discussion of the process employed to select the external reviewers (including who suggested the names); b. a brief biographical sketch (not a 30 page vita) of each reviewer; c. a copy of the letter sent to the external reviewers asking for comments and d. a statement from the faculty member describing the relationship (if any) between the faculty member and the reviewers. Department Chairs-School Directors have been instructed to return the dossier to the PRC if any of this material is missing.

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. Final Dossier (Required Material):**

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

The PRC must make sure that the dossier contains the original Letter of Intent to the candidate (but not for promotion to Full Professor; the Letter of Intent is relevant only for those seeking Associate Professor status with tenure or tenure only) 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. The Department Chairs-School Directors have been instructed to return a dossier to the PRC if the (relevant) required material is not included.

**4. Recommendation from the Peer Review Committee**

- a. The PRC's bottom-line recommendation must contain an explicit unambiguous statement with the precise vote total (i.e., “the PRC recommends the [requested action] by a vote of X in favor and Y opposed” or “the PRC does not recommend the [requested action] by a vote of X to Y”). The Department Chairs-School Directors have been instructed to return a dossier to the PRC if this statement is not included.
- b. There is only one PRC recommendation (it may contain separate majority and minority statements).
- c. Outing of Individual Votes: the individual vote of each Committee member is confidential unless there is a unanimous decision by the Committee to publicly identify how each individual voted on a particular dossier. A few years ago there was a 5-2 decision but the two outliers provided a signed minority statement. There is no problem with a minority statement but since the authors were identified, this therefore outed the actual vote of everyone else.

## **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. 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-School 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 meets 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) the external letters, (c) letters from the Departmental-School PRC, the Chair-Director, the College PRC, and the Dean. Candidates should be informed of this or there will be frantic telephone calls (usually to me) from faculty informing me that this material was not in the dossier and why did I lose it (or steal it). The simple reply is just to tell them 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-School PRC thus has the prerogative of soliciting – in addition to the external reviews – additional relevant information. If this is done, due process and professional ethics require that the PRC exercise caution using such material: the Committee must make sure that the information is relevant and valid. The Committee cannot base its decision on secret scurrilous information.

## **8. Unsolicited Material**

Quite frequently there are unsolicited ex parte communications (positive or negative) from the faculty (or from other members of the University community or even from individuals external to the University). I recommend that this material be returned forthwith to the sender along with a note along the following lines: “The Collective Bargaining Agreement does not permit this type of input at this stage. I am returning the material to you and I am also informing you I did not share it with the other members of the Committee.”

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

The Department-School PRC must, at the time that the dossier is transmitted to the Department Chair-School Director, provide a copy of the Committee’s recommendation to the candidate. The candidate is not required to make any sort of request (written or verbal).