

October 10, 2012

**Task Force Recommendations and Provost's Implementation Schedule for the
Final Report of the Task Force on the Application of Promotion and Tenure
Standards and Processes**

Preface

On July 12, 2011 the American Association of University Professors-CSU Chapter and Cleveland State University Administration signed a Memorandum of Understanding “regarding the development of specific criteria to assure University-wide application of standards for granting promotion and tenure (Article 12.13) as stipulated in the Collective Bargaining Agreement” between the two parties for the period from August 16, 2011 through August 15, 2014. The Memorandum contains three provisions, quoted in full:

1. A collaborative committee composed of an equal number of faculty appointed by the Faculty Senate after consultation with the CSU-AAUP and academic administrators appointed by the administration shall develop specific criteria to ensure uniformity and consistency in the application of promotion and tenure standards across the University. The committee shall review and recommend revisions/additions to the current process.
2. The committee shall submit its recommendations to the Provost on or before September 1, 2012.
3. The Provost shall take action on the report and recommendations within sixty (60) calendar days of receiving the same.

Task One. Standards and Procedures for Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI)

1-5, 8-9 are to be implemented fall semester by all departments/schools. 6-7 will be studied by a committee to be appointed by the Provost.

The Task Force first examined the degree of consistency across campus in the standards and processes used to assess faculty instruction by students. The SEI has become a major piece of evidence presented in promotion and tenure dossiers to document the “fully competent,” “exceptional achievement,” and “sustained excellence” performance standards.

Recommendations

1. Colleges and departments/schools should be reminded of the Senate-approved UFAC recommendations for the SEI, and make adjustments in conducting the SEI as necessary. This will improve consistency across the colleges.
2. All SEIQs should include a prepared statement that is printed at the top of the page containing the evaluation questions. According to the original UFAC recommendation, the statement should contain the following:
 - Convey the purpose of the student evaluation (see next recommendation)

- State that the anonymity of their responses will be preserved
 - Explain that evaluations are not analyzed until after grades have been submitted
 - Note that evaluations will not be returned to the instructor until after the semester has ended.
3. The Task Force recommends use of the following standard purpose statement, to be included directly on the SEIQ and read to the students prior to distributing the SEIQ:
“The purpose of the SEIQ is for the student to provide constructive feedback to improve the learning experience at CSU.”
 4. Because of the potential bias from low and uneven response rates, the Task Force recommends that response rates (students completing the SEIQ as a proportion of students completing the course) be routinely provided alongside any summary statistic calculated from those responses.
 5. A University faculty committee should review the SEIQs used for online instruction and make recommendations for changes as appropriate. The committee should also provide recommendations to improve student response rates. The Provost may wish to assign this task to the new Advisory Committee on e-Learning.
 6. Because there is significant discontent with the current SEIQ norming process and the SEIQ in general, the Task Force recommends
 - A University faculty committee be formed to reconcile the content of existing forms and to develop one common SEIQ that will be used across the University. Colleges, departments, and instructors may add additional questions to the SEIQ if they wish to do so. Members of the committee should include experts in teaching, survey research, and statistical analysis. Each college should be represented. There also should be an *ex officio* member from Institutional Research. The common SEIQ should then be reviewed by Faculty Senate for approval.
 - The faculty committee should review the 1999 UFAC recommendations for “Analysis and Interpretation of the Student Evaluation of Instruction” to determine if these should be implemented. If so, the committee should also determine, in consultation with Institutional Research, whether these analyses and interpretations are possible and feasible. If not, the committee should determine appropriate analyses and interpretations and make recommendations to Faculty Senate for approval.
 7. The Task Force suggests that future comparison norms should be rolling five-year university and college means, calculated separately for different levels of courses.
 8. Dossiers for promotion and/or tenure should include an inclusive report of all the candidate’s course SEIQs and their analysis and interpretation.
 9. More broadly, the teaching section of a promotion and tenure dossier should include the SEIQ reports, peer evaluations, and an analysis and interpretation of the SEIQ reports and the peer evaluations. Other materials that will make the case that the faculty member meets the

standards for teaching should also be included. The Provost memorandum that is distributed each spring contains several excellent suggestions of other supplemental materials that could be included within the dossier as evidence of meeting the teaching standards.

Departments/schools/colleges may provide additional guidance.

Task Two. Standards and Procedures for Peer Evaluation of Instruction

1-4 are to be in place for use in spring semester by all departments/schools. 5 will be studied by the university e-learning advisory committee.

The Task Force addressed this issue in the awareness that no university-wide action had been taken on the 1999 Senate recommendation (see supplemental concern quoted above) that “the peer evaluation process needs to be reviewed and strengthened.”

Recommendations

1. Peer evaluations should be used for both formative and summative purposes. Newly appointed instructors should receive peer evaluations during their first year(s) of teaching and these should be used for primarily formative purposes (to help them improve their teaching). The inclusion of these initial formative evaluations in the dossier should be left to the discretion of the candidate. Faculty who are seeking tenure should have 1-2 peer evaluations per year.
2. Peer evaluations will be more valid if they are done longitudinally. This means repeated evaluations of the candidate over time and also evaluations of the same instructional unit over time. Preference is for the candidate to have multiple reviewers, multiple observations, and multiple courses evaluated. For promotion to full professor, multiple peer evaluations will help demonstrate having met the standard of “sustained excellence” in teaching.
3. All departments and schools should develop and have in place written peer evaluation procedures and guidelines that have been approved by their respective faculty.
4. The written procedures and guidelines should address the following points:
 - a. The selection of the faculty member (or committee) within the department or school who will coordinate all peer observation activities, often this being the department chair or department PRC chair.
 - b. The coordination activities should include procedures for scheduling evaluations and selecting peer evaluators in consultation with the candidate.
 - c. The guidelines should include content for observation and reporting that serve both formative and summative purposes.
 - d. A pre-observation meeting of the instructor and observer should be scheduled and held. The instructor should present the syllabus and the instructional goals for the course and the specific class. The observer should clarify the instructional considerations that will be evaluated.
 - e. A post-observation meeting of the instructor and observer should be scheduled and held. This should be a feedback session in which the observer shares and discusses the written evaluation with the instructor.
 - f. The observation should report on the following (language borrowed from the College of Education and Human Services Guidelines):

1. Knowledge of the subject matter, including breadth and currency of knowledge of the discipline.
 2. Review of the organization and clarity of presentation and course materials (handouts, syllabi, powerpoints, etc).
 3. Attention to the ways in which the instructor engages students in the subject matter and addresses student questions, confusions, or challenges during the class.
 4. Use of written materials, visual aids, technology, etc to facilitate student learning.
 5. Capacity to foster a positive classroom climate which respects the dignity and integrity of each participant.
 6. Recommendations regarding both the strengths and weaknesses of the content and instructional methodology used in the classes observed.
- g. Additional observation points should be added as desirable, taking into consideration any special teaching issues of the instructor's academic discipline.
5. A university faculty committee should recommend procedures for peer evaluation of online instruction. The Provost may wish to assign this task to the Advisory Committee on e-Learning, building on their ongoing pilot study of online peer evaluation of instructor and course being conducted in the School of Nursing.

Task Three. Standards and Procedures for Obtaining External Review of Scholarship/Creative Activity

1-7 are to be implemented spring semester by all departments/schools.

External reviews are intended to permit a check on the validity of the university's multi-level internal review process, ideally providing a check against universal norms of the candidate's profession. Colleges and departments/schools vary in their ability to perform this critical phase of the review process.

Recommendations

Each department/school or college (when the college has no department PRCs) should develop and make available to candidates written guidelines regarding the external review process. The guidelines should incorporate the material in the two statements presented above (from Article 12.12 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and the UPRC Checklist). The draft of the guidelines should be reviewed and approved by the Faculty Affairs committees of the respective colleges. The Task Force recommends the following additional considerations be included:

1. Reviewer impartiality. Define the "arm's length" standard that is used to determine the potential reviewer's impartiality. The Task Force recommends the following considerations when drafting procedures:
 - The reviewer:

- Cannot have been a co-author or collaborator on any project with the candidate
 - Cannot have been a mentor or professor in any institution during the time the candidate received a degree or other form of professional training
 - Cannot be someone in a position to receive some advantage or benefit beyond the honorarium based on the outcome of the candidate's review.
- Evidence of arm's-length impartiality requires a written statement of such from the reviewer within his/her review letter and from the candidate during the process of developing the list of potential reviewers.
 - Candidates should refrain from any direct or indirect contact with a potential external reviewer.
2. Reviewer competence and appropriateness. Departments/schools should describe the process to be used in developing the list of external reviewers. The Task Force recommends the following considerations when drafting procedures:
- Describe how external reviewers are identified (*e.g.*, acceptable Carnegie classifications, faculty rank above candidate, use of reviewers from appropriate nonacademic institutions, from at least three different institutions, having acknowledged expertise or leadership in the candidate's discipline or field of inquiry/creative achievement, or having acknowledged expertise as a college teacher or clinician).
 - Describe the ways that PRCs should provide evidence of external reviewer qualifications. This committee recommends that PRCs include reviewer CVs or some publicly available biographical statement in the candidate's dossier.
 - Describe the degree to which the candidate participated in choosing the final list of acceptable reviewers, including whether or under what circumstances the candidate may have requested the removal of a reviewer from the list. Under no circumstances shall an external dossier be sent to a reviewer not on the final list.
 - Describe how the PRC determines which reviewers to use on the final acceptable list. Are all reviewers on the list sent the external review document, or do PRCs select from the list? If so, specify how the PRC decides which reviewers to use.
 - Describe how the PRC contacts the reviewer in a neutral manner so that the PRC communications do not influence the reviewer. Indicate the nature of any preliminary telephone calls or emails prior to the formal letter of invitation.
3. Number of letters. Determine the recommended number (minimum and maximum) of external reviews that should be secured. The Task Force recommends three as the minimum, from three different institutions, and six as the maximum, from six institutions.
- N.B. The Provost revised this recommendation and will require a minimum of five letters, with exceptions to be granted only by the Provost's office.**
4. Content of solicitation letter.

- In most instances letters should conform closely to the external review letter template for assessment of scholarship as appended to the annual spring memorandum from the Provost's office. The Provost's template letter has been reviewed and approved by the Legal Department.
 - The Provost's Office should also make available template letters for external review of candidates seeking promotion on other criteria, such as exceptional achievement as a teacher and clinical supervisor, exceptional achievement as a teacher, outstanding leadership in the field, or leadership in the realization of the mission of the University.
5. External reviewer confidentiality.
- Each college should determine and then indicate in the policy statement whether or not external reviewer names can be included in the review letters prepared by PRCs, chairs/directors, and deans, in order to assure consistency of practice within each college.
 - PRCs and candidates must follow the contract provision regarding how and when a candidate may view his/her external review letters (Article 12.12 C 4).
6. Content of external review dossier. The Task Force recommends that each PRC include in its guidelines the recommended content of an external review dossier based on the criteria applicable to its particular candidates. The Task Force recommends the following:
- a. Candidates seeking promotion and tenure based on scholarship should include:
 1. A Current CV
 2. A personal statement that
 - Explains the professional significance of the candidate's creative achievement as evidenced in the published (or otherwise professionally certified) work included in the dossier.
 - Documents the level of professional recognition of the candidate's work, preferably with reference to objective criteria that assess the quality of the publication outlet (for journals this could be impact scores, acceptance rates, rankings within the discipline, etc) or the reputation/stature of the exhibition or production/performance venue.
 - Explains how the work extends beyond the dissertation, in the case of any project whose content appears similar or related to the dissertation topic
 - Explains the candidate's contribution to any co-authored or other collaborative work.
 - More generally, the statement should assist the external reviewer in assessing the candidate's work based on the criteria he/she has been asked to use in the letter of solicitation, e.g., quality and impact of the candidate's scholarly and creative achievements.
 3. Copies or reproductions of one's scholarship, research, or other creative activity.

- Products included should be sufficient in number and quality to meet the minimum standards for promotion as specified by current criteria of one's academic unit.
 - When the candidate has material that exceeds the minimum standards, the candidate should select work that best exemplifies his/her primary research/creative activity, that has been more rigorously peer-reviewed (based on the journal quality or professional prominence of a review outlet, e.g., book or artistic product), and for which the candidate has made substantial contributions.
- b. Candidates seeking promotion and tenure based on teaching and clinical supervision should follow the guidelines developed by the UPRC in a Spring, 2008 memorandum entitled "Some Recommendations Concerning Demonstration of Full Competence, Exceptional Achievement, or Sustained Excellence in the Area of Teaching," attached to the Provost Office's annual spring memorandum (appended). The external review document should include the following:
1. A current CV
 2. A personal statement that documents exceptional achievement as a teacher or as a teacher and clinical supervisor
 3. Samples of teaching materials and evidence of exceptional teaching.
 4. If clinical faculty, samples of materials and evidence of exceptional achievement as a clinical supervisor
 5. Analyses of peer evaluations and student evaluations
- c. When written guidelines are not feasible because of the infrequency of the particular promotion case (such as outstanding intellectual leadership; sustained and generally acclaimed leadership in the mission of the University), procedures should be set in place for the candidate to communicate with the PRC and chair/director about the review materials that should be presented in the dossier.
7. The Task Force recommends that colleges should consider providing external reviewers an honorarium for their time, a modest sum of perhaps 200 dollars. If this practice should be followed, the intention should be communicated in the invitation letter, with the statement that the honorarium of a specified amount will be paid to the reviewer upon receipt of the reviewer's letter.

Task Four. Standards and Procedures for Departmental Tenure and Promotion Guidelines

1-4, 6-7 are to be implemented spring semester. 5 will be implemented by the Provost's office.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement contains general language on promotion and tenure standards that can be applied universally to faculty across all academic disciplines. The expectation, however, is that each department/school or discipline within a department will have explicit criteria that define those universal standards for the particular discipline.

Recommendations

1. Each academic department or School in the university should have as part of its official governance documents (either as part of its bylaws or an attachment to them) a statement that specifies the general criteria for tenure and promotion applicable to faculty members who belong to that department's/school's academic discipline(s).
2. This statement should be made available to all incoming faculty.
3. This statement should serve as a central decisional guideline by the department/school chairs/directors and department/school or college Peer Review committees in their review of a candidate's eligibility for tenure and promotion.
4. In colleges that have a College Peer Review committee in addition to departmental/school committees, both the college committee and the dean should consult these departmental/school guidelines to make certain they are being consistently applied across departments/schools in their college.
5. There needs to be a mechanism in place for periodic review and updating of these documents, given that performance standards and the types of evidence that measure these standards do change over time. We suggest that this mechanism be activated from the Provost's office and be applied university-wide to all academic units. Every five years may be the right interval.
6. Any revisions to departmental/school statements should be reviewed and approved by the faculty within the department/school and the Faculty Affairs committee of the respective college (or by whatever other standing committee of the college is responsible for review and approval of departmental/school bylaws).
7. When revised statements have been approved by the relevant college body, they should be implemented for newly hired faculty and for any current faculty who choose to be reviewed on the basis of the new statement. Otherwise current faculty should have the option to be reviewed by the statement in effect when they first held their current faculty rank.