

For Discussion: Remove requirement for faculty to write individual letters for reappointment, tenure, and promotion (R&P §2.2.6.4).

Rationale:

1. **Individual faculty letters are redundant as well as time-consuming** to construct and to read as part of the tenure dossier. Tenured faculty already have a voice in the evaluation process when they meet to discuss the dossier and vote. The department letter as it exists is supposed to summarize “the tenured voting members’ recommendations” and offer an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.

2. **Individual faculty letters are not a best practice for several reasons.** First, the volume of information contained in them as a group detracts from the key aspects of colleagues’ collective evaluation. In other words, they can muddy the waters. Second, the letters are highly variable in quality and level of specificity. Third, and perhaps most importantly, individual letters permit the inclusion of points of criticism or praise in the dossier that were not discussed and weighed as a department. Reasonable people can disagree, and the discussion should take place as a department. Department discussions should be candid, and concerns should be aired in a transparent collegial discussion. These discussions, including points of disagreement among colleagues about the quality of the dossier, are supposed to be documented in the departmental letter.

3. We currently follow this process for annual evaluations of untenured faculty. *

4. There already exists a means for faculty to object to the departmental summary letter. **

Sample proposed changes (should be replicated throughout R&P, e.g. with special committees, promotion to full professor):

2.2.6.4 Departmental Evaluation

The department chairperson then meets with the tenured faculty, having made available or provided each of them with a copy of the tenure-review file including the letters of the external evaluators. The tenured faculty discuss the candidate's qualifications, applying the criteria, as stated in section 2.2.1.5 and as applied in the annual departmental evaluations of the untenured faculty member. ~~Following this meeting, each tenured voting member (including the chairperson, if tenured) submits a written evaluation of the candidate's qualifications based on the criteria. These letters of evaluation must be substantive letters that appraise the candidate's record in teaching, research and scholarship, and service and that address the questions of whether or not the candidate merits tenure and the reasons~~

~~for the recommendation.~~ At the conclusion of the meeting, each faculty member votes on the merits of the candidate's case for tenure and/or promotion.

2.2.6.5 Departmental Recommendation

After ~~receiving the faculty letters~~ meeting with the department and receiving all of the votes, the chairperson writes the department's recommendation. This recommendation summarizes the tenured voting members' recommendations and reflects the departmental discussion, including areas of agreement and disagreement. The departmental letter should ~~analyze~~ analyzes the proposed action in terms of departmental goals and needs, and discusses in detail each of the criteria as applied to the candidate. The chairperson shares a copy of this document with the tenured faculty to solicit feedback on the accuracy of the letter. The department chair makes any necessary changes to the letter and provides a copy of the final document to the tenured faculty members. A tenured faculty member can object to this document, and if not satisfied, submit in writing his/her objections; these objections are included in the candidate's tenure review file. In the event that the department fails to make a recommendation (the tenured voting members' recommendations yield a tie vote), then the College Tenure Committee's (Section 2.2.6.9) recommendation constitutes a "faculty recommendation."

Existing language in the process for annual reviews

*2.2.4.1 Untenured Faculty

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The department chairperson presents to the tenured faculty the performance review files of the untenured members of the department. The department chairperson then meets with the tenured voting members of the department to discuss the performance and status of all untenured faculty.

Following the department meeting, the chairperson summarizes in writing the department's evaluation of each untenured member. The chairperson then meets individually with each untenured faculty member, discusses the faculty's review of his/her performance, and shares a copy of the written summary with him/her. The untenured faculty member is notified that he/she has the right to respond in writing to the tenured faculty's evaluation. Copies of the departmental evaluation and any written response by the untenured faculty member are placed in the untenured faculty member's file in the department.

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