

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

I. Departmental Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Guidelines

Each department in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences shall have Promotion and Tenure Guidelines, a single document that includes all information regarding reappointment, promotion, and tenure and that constitutes a document separate from the departmental constitution, bylaws, or other policy documents.

The departmental Guidelines documents are subject to the guidelines for departments established in the Faculty Handbook, currently found in Section 2.8.4.1. In case of any discrepancy between departmental guidelines and the Faculty Handbook, the latter takes precedence. Departments with ASPECT faculty are asked to incorporate or append the October 2008 memorandum regarding the review process for ASPECT faculty or ASPECT-affiliated faculty to their guidelines; the memorandum is Appendix 1 of this document.

The Guidelines for each department must address the following with regard to reappointment, promotion, and tenure in general:

- Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee
 - Criteria for those serving on the committee, e.g., rank.
 - Number of individuals on the committee
 - Selection or election process: who selects or elects, when, and how
 - Length of term
 - Rotation system or other plan to ensure continuity on the committee each year
 - Limit to numbers of consecutive terms that one individual may serve (if warranted)
 - Policy for replacement of individuals who step down from the committee before their term has ended
 - Responsibilities and purview of the committee, e.g., role of the committee in the solicitation of external reviews, whether the promotion and tenure committee also reviews pre-tenure and promotion-only cases
 - Standing vs. ad hoc committee. The Office of the Provost recommends a standing committee so that a committee is in place and ready to respond if a department chair/head tries to recruit a candidate with tenure. Ad hoc committees may be necessary when there are numerous promotion and tenure candidates in a department in a given year

- Promotion and Tenure Process
 - Role of the chair/head. Address the responsibilities of the chair/head in the promotion and tenure process. According to the Faculty Handbook, 2.8.4.1, “The [departmental] committee shall review the cases of all members who the head or chair of the committee believes deserve consideration for promotion or tenure, including those faculty members in the sixth year of probationary service. The department head or chair furnishes the committee with a dossier for each

candidate.” The Guidelines must clarify who determines which faculty are coming up for reappointment and promotion-only as well, who contacts all three groups of candidates, and when they are to be contacted.

- Voting and documentation. Describe the voting process and the requisite documentation for cases regarding reappointment, promotion and tenure, and promotion-only, taking into account the following :
 - According to the Faculty Handbook, 2.8.2, “[a]ll [probationary period] reviews must be in writing, with the faculty member acknowledging receipt by signing and returning a copy for his or her departmental file. In addition, the promotion and tenure committee and the department head will meet with the faculty member to discuss the review and recommendations. Individual faculty members are also encouraged to seek guidance and mentoring from senior colleagues and the department head.”
 - The role of the committee and of the department chair/head in the voting process is described in 2.8.4.1. In addition, in accordance with the memo of 29 May 2008 from Provost McNamee, http://www.provost.vt.edu/documents/pt_guidance.pdf, departments must also adhere to the following criteria:
 - “Abstention of eligible voters count as ‘not yes.’ The recommendation statement should indicate that there were X number of eligible voters with X voting ‘yes,’ X voting ‘no,’ and X abstaining.
 - “A case must have a majority of positive votes from eligible voters to move forward. Abstentions of eligible voters effectively count as a ‘no’ vote in determining a majority.”
 - “In the recommendation statements from both the departmental and college promotion and tenure committees, an explanation of the concerns represented by the dissenting votes is very helpful in subsequent reviews and should be included. This may be a brief summary of the concerns included in the committee letter to which all committee members agree, or it may take the form of a minority report prepared by the dissenters, as allowed by the Faculty Handbook.”
 - It is recommended that any department-specific policies, e.g., pre-tenure teaching release, be explicitly mentioned in the department chair’s/head’s statement.
 - A copy of the review is to be forwarded to the Office of the Dean after it has been discussed with the candidate, i.e., the final version of the review.
 - Although the department chair/head is responsible for relaying to the candidate and conveying to the dean the reappointment decision, departments may wish to include a statement in the Guidelines that the decision will be made “in consultation with the departmental committee.”
 - The Guidelines should contain a statement regarding what role, if any, the committee or department chair/head may take in assisting the candidate with preparation of the dossier and whether the committee or the department chair/head, with the approval of the candidate, may amend or revise the dossier in order to improve it.

- Time line. Address the following, indicating differences among cases of reappointment, promotion and tenure, and promotion-only, when applicable:
 - When external letters will be solicited
 - When the candidate's dossier is due
 - When the departmental committee convenes
 - By when the departmental committee's work is to be completed
- Issues of confidentiality. Departments should address whether candidates would ever be permitted to see departmental committee or department chair/head letters that are part of the dossier. (Virginia Tech policy is to hold in confidence all letters of evaluation from persons outside the institution unless required specifically by law to provide them to the candidate, according to the External Review Request Guidelines, http://www.provost.vt.edu/external_letters.php).

In addition, the Guidelines for each department must address the following specific issues regarding the pre-tenure, promotion and tenure, and promotion-only review processes:

- Pre-tenure Review Process
 - Time frame for review. Provide a statement of when pre-tenure review occurs in the department. According to the Faculty Handbook, 2.8.2, “[u]nder normal circumstances, departmental promotion and tenure committees review pre-tenure faculty members twice during the probationary period, usually their second and fourth, or third and fifth, years of service. The timing of the reviews should depend upon the nature of the faculty member’s discipline and must be clearly indicated in written departmental policies. The terms of offer identify the initial appointment period. Pre-tenure reviews may be delayed if there is an approved extension as described below. Changes or variations in the standard review cycle must be documented in writing.” The expectation in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences is that each department will conduct two pre-tenure reviews.
 - Description of criteria for review and the review process, including a description of the review committee (if different from Promotion and Tenure Committee). According to the Faculty Handbook, 2.8.2, for probationary period reviews “[a]t a minimum, departmental promotion and tenure committees must review the faculty member’s relevant annual activity reports, peer evaluations of teaching, and authored materials. It is strongly suggested that promotion and tenure committees and pre-tenure faculty use the promotion and tenure dossier format (see 2.8.4) in organizing and presenting information for review. The pre-tenure reviews should analyze the faculty member’s progress toward promotion and tenure and offer guidance regarding future activities and plans.”
 - Mentoring of promotion and tenure candidate. Describe how the candidate is mentored within the department throughout the probationary period and how the mentoring might change as the candidate progresses toward tenure. Include information on how mentors are selected and what the expectations of them are.
 - Peer evaluation of teaching. Provide a description of how the candidate’s teaching is evaluated by peers within the department. According to the Faculty Handbook, 4.10.2, “[t]he university expectation is that in-depth evaluation of

teaching and feedback for faculty will be conducted periodically for all faculty members and at least twice during the probationary period for untenured faculty.”

- Pre-tenure teaching release. Describe the pre-tenure teaching release practice(s) in the department.
- Voting and documentation. Describe the voting process and the requisite documentation for each case, taking into account the information above concerning voting and documentation.
- Promotion and Tenure Review Process
 - Description of criteria. Provide a description of discipline- and department-specific criteria for promotion and tenure, supplementing the description in the Faculty Handbook as necessary. The description may address points such as the following: specific expectations with regard to teaching performance, specific publication or presentation venues that are highly regarded within the department, or a general indication of the number of publications expected for promotion and tenure. The university and college committees require special attention to be given to documenting involvement in diversity initiatives; categories for documentation may be found in Section VII.C.1.-8. of the promotion and tenure guidelines, http://www.provost.vt.edu/documents/pt_guidelines_08-09.pdf or at www.provost.vt.edu/documents/reporting_diversity.php.
 - Mentoring of promotion and tenure candidate. Describe how the candidate is mentored within the department throughout the probationary period and how the mentoring process might differ in years 1-4. Include information on how mentors are selected and what expectations of them are.
 - Peer evaluation of teaching. Provide a description of how the candidate’s teaching is evaluated by peers within the department. According to the Faculty Handbook, 4.10.2, “[t]he university expectation is that in-depth evaluation of teaching and feedback for faculty will be conducted periodically for all faculty members and at least twice during the probationary period for untenured faculty.”
 - External review of scholarship or creative activity. Specifics regarding the process are in the Faculty Handbook, 2.8.4.4, Section II.G. of the promotion and tenure guidelines, http://www.provost.vt.edu/documents/pt_guidelines_08-09.pdf, and at http://www.provost.vt.edu/external_letters.php. Describe the external review process, indicating:
 - The number of external reviewers
 - The process whereby reviewers are selected
 - The materials to be sent to reviewers and who selects the materials. It is recommended that a representative sample of the candidate’s scholarship and/or creative activity be sent to external reviewers and that the size of the sample reflect norms in the discipline. It is further recommended that the same sample of materials be sent to all external reviewers.
 - The anticipated timeline for the external review process

In accordance with the memo of 29 May 2008 from Provost McNamee departments will adhere to the following:

“The expectation is that external review letters should be solicited from senior faculty at major research institutions who are in the best position to judge the

candidate's work." In the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, if a highly qualified reviewer does not hold the rank of Professor or if the reviewer is not from a peer institution, the department chair/head must include justification for the choice of reviewer.

- "There must be – at a minimum – four external review letters."
 - "A candidate may not suggest a majority of the external reviewers."
 - "The reviewers should not be former advisors or others too close to the candidate."
 - The university committee "strongly discourages a department head from contacting an external reviewer to seek clarification" regarding a letter.
 - Voting and documentation. Describe the voting process and the requisite documentation for each case, taking into account the information above concerning voting and documentation.
- Promotion-only Review Process
 - Time frame for consideration for promotion. Comments regarding time of service in rank are in the Faculty Handbook, 2.8.5.3.
 - Description of criteria. According to the memo of 29 May 2008 from Provost McNamee, http://www.provost.vt.edu/documents/pt_guidance.pdf, there are several areas of particular importance with regard to promotion to the rank of professor:
 - "[D]iversity accomplishments are especially important for candidates seeking promotion to full professor." The university and college committees require that special attention be given to documenting involvement in diversity initiatives; categories for documentation may be found at Section VII.C.1.-8. of the promotion and tenure guidelines, http://www.provost.vt.edu/documents/pt_guidelines_08-09.pdf or at www.provost.vt.edu/documents/reporting_diversity.php.
 - "Promotion to full seems premature without [the candidate having guided at least several students to Ph.D. completion before seeking promotion], especially in departments with substantial graduate programs." In the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences this statement is interpreted as referring to the terminal degree in the discipline, e.g., the M.F.A. in Theatre Arts or the Ed.D. in certain programs in the School of Education. The university committee would find it helpful if the departmental committee or the department chair/head would address departmental expectations for graduate student mentorship and degree completion, and how the candidate has met the expectations. The College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences recognizes that many faculty may specialize in areas not covered by terminal degree programs in a given department, thereby offering few if any opportunities for these faculty to supervise graduate students; chairs/heads should note these situations as appropriate.
 - Review process, including a description of the review committee (if different from Promotion and Tenure Committee).
 - Mentoring of candidate
 - Peer evaluation of teaching. According to the Faculty Handbook, 4.10.2, "[t]he university expectation is that in-depth evaluation of teaching and feedback for

faculty will be conducted periodically for all faculty members and at least twice during the probationary period for untenured faculty.” The Office of the Provost directs each department to define what the “period” should be for tenured faculty members.

- Voting and documentation. Describe the voting process and the requisite documentation for each case, taking into account the information above concerning voting and documentation.

II. Procedures for the College Promotion and Tenure Committee

- **Promotion and Tenure Procedures.** College Promotion and Tenure procedures are subject to procedures established in the Faculty Handbook, currently found in Section 2.8. In case of any perceived discrepancy between CLAHS guidelines and the Faculty Handbook, the latter takes precedence.
- **Promotion and Tenure Committee.** According to Article IV, Section 4.2, of the CLAHS Constitution and Bylaws, “The Promotion and Tenure Committee shall include one tenured faculty member chosen from each departmental unit. These faculty members shall serve two-year staggered terms and shall elect one of their members as chair to coordinate discussion, oversee the writing of letters, and handle other details. The Dean shall convene the committee. The Dean may appoint one to three additional voting members to give balance and ensure that there are an odd number of voting members. The Dean and/or the Committee may also appoint non-voting observers.” In practice, the committee is co-chaired by the dean and by one member of the committee. The dean serves ex-officio on the committee and the faculty co-chair directs most of the meetings.
- **Discussion of Cases and Criteria.** The committee meets for 3-4 days of discussion in early January. The candidate’s departmental representative presents a summary of the candidate’s case to the committee. Recognizing the diversity of disciplines in the CLAHS, the definition of research varies and may include the following:
 - Scholarly
 - Creative
 - Social
 - Education/Outreach Education
 - Pedagogy of teachingGrant activity – from the writing and submitting of grant applications to the implementation of grants received - can be expectations for promotion to Associate Professor or Professor. The departmental committee or department chair/head should explain the context of the grants in the candidate’s professional activity or comment on the availability of grant funding in the field. The College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences recognizes the value of external funding. The committee expects all dossiers to demonstrate the candidate’s active involvement in diversity.
- **Voting.** Several votes are taken as part of the process:
 - Straw votes may be taken at any time.

- A first vote is taken after all candidates have been discussed.
- There is a final vote.

In accordance with the memo of 29 May 2008 from Provost McNamee, the committee will adhere to the following criteria:

- “A college committee member is not eligible to vote if he or she has already voted at the departmental level; not voting in such a circumstance is neither a positive nor a negative vote. Nor is it really an abstention, since the member is not eligible to vote on that case.”
 - “Abstention of eligible voters count as ‘not yes.’ The recommendation statement should indicate that there were X number of eligible voters with X voting ‘yes,’ X voting ‘no,’ and X abstaining.”
 - “A case must have a majority of positive votes from eligible voters to move forward. Abstentions of eligible voters effectively count as a ‘no’ vote in determining a majority.”
 - “In the recommendation statements from both the departmental and college promotion and tenure committees, an explanation of the concerns represented by the dissenting votes is very helpful in subsequent reviews and should be included. This may be a brief summary of the concerns included in the committee letter to which all committee members agree, or it may take the form of a minority report prepared by the dissenters, as allowed by the Faculty Handbook.”
- **Roles of Committee Members.** The candidate’s departmental representative presents a summary of the candidate’s case to the committee. Committee members vet each case, taking into account criteria specific to the candidate’s discipline. Committee members may vote only once on an individual’s candidacy. If they choose to vote at the departmental level, then they do not vote at the College level. In such cases, this is not considered (or recorded as) an abstention, but rather they simply cannot (and do not) vote. The recorder takes extensive notes on all cases. Attendance is mandatory and expected.
 - **Documentation.** A writer and a reviewer – the latter is the departmental representative – are assigned to each case. All members of the committee review and edit the letter regarding each candidate. The faculty co-chair approves the final version and all members sign it. The dean notifies the department chair/head in each case, who in turn notifies the candidate. A letter from the dean follows. Should the case be denied, the dean’s letter will make reference to appeal options (Faculty Handbook, 2.8.5); in cases of tenure denial, the dean’s letter also will state the candidate’s last date of employment. The faculty representative notifies the candidate and the department chair/head regarding any adjustments to the dossier that might be required.

III. CLAHS Schedule for Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Deliberations. The schedule is posted each year on the College website. Chairs and heads are responsible for making departmental deadlines known.

Appendix 1

Memorandum

To: ASPECT-affiliated Faculty
From: Ilja Luciak, Chair
Re: Review Process

The following policy for reviewing ASPECT faculty was established at the October 2008 meeting of the ASPECT stakeholders:

For university-required reviews during probationary appointment: The chair/head of the faculty's home department will solicit a letter from the ASPECT Director, asking what ASPECT activities the faculty member has been engaged in. The ASPECT Director should focus his letter on mentoring rather than assessment. The department chair/head will share this letter with the ad-hoc review committee. When writing a letter of evaluation for the faculty member, the department chair/head (and/or ad hoc committee) should incorporate the letter from the ASPECT Director. This process would automatically apply to ASPECT Cluster Hires. Affiliates may also request such letter from the ASPECT Director. The ASPECT Director's letter should not be confidential but be shared with the faculty member.

For tenure review: The process would be similar to above with these exceptions. The ASPECT Director's letter would be an assessment of the faculty member. It would be up to the ASPECT Director whether or not this letter should remain confidential. Certainly letters by the chair/head and ad hoc committee would remain confidential.