Unit Head’s Role in Initiating the Tenure Review Process

Office of the Provost
February 3, 2021
https://uoregon.zoom.us/j/95721457097
Objectives

Participants will …

1. Discuss answers to questions that may have come up during the tenure review process this year.

2. Be able to initiate the tenure process for decision year 2021-22.
Welcome & Introductions

Gabe Paquette– Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Rachel Tischer- Executive Assistant, Office of the Provost
Please introduce yourself

• Name
• Unit
• Role
• Will you have tenure reviews to initiate this spring?
Framing for today’s discussion

How many of you were present for the New Unit Heads training regarding the Tenure Process with us in Fall 2020?

Goal is not to repeat, but instead focus on “just-in-time” information to help you with initiating a tenure case.

All questions are welcome!
At your (Virtual) table (i.e., your Break-Out Room)

Spend 2 minutes writing down the questions that you have about the tenure process.

When ready, share your questions in your break-out room and find out if there are common questions. We can address those questions first when we reconvene the full group.
Overview of discussion

- Supporting candidates as they prepare their contributions
- Best practices regarding external reviewers
Supporting candidates as they prepare their contributions

• CV
• Candidate’s statement
• List of potential external reviewers
• Waiver statement
• Supplementary file (including relevant scholarship, teaching, service, and equity & inclusion materials, as appropriate)
Best practices regarding external reviewers

• Only the heads communicate with external reviewers.

• Use the templates for email solicitations and formal letters of request to review.

• Separately collect lists of reviewers from candidate and committee because an absolute majority of external reviews must be independently selected.
  
  • In case of 5 letters received, 3 must be dept./school-college selections; in the case of more than 5 letters, at least half must be dept./school-college selections
  
  • In case of overlap, a prospective external reviewer counts as an independent selection.

• Be mindful of qualifications and disqualifications for reviewers. We have recently revised our guidelines.

• Note: The template letter to external reviewers who have agreed to provide the requested evaluation has also been revised.
External Reviewers con’t

Note: “Maintain a clear majority of reviewers 1) with no more than a professional knowledge of or relationship to the candidate, and 2) that were not suggested by the candidate”.

-To achieve this, you may want to stagger invitations (instead of sending letters of solicitation on the same day)

Do not include (among others, the following are examples):
Dissertation supervisor
Co-author in last 5 years
Collaborator in last 5 years
Close friends
External Letters of Evaluation

The unit head is the individual responsible for identifying and recruiting external reviewers to write letters of evaluation during the spring and summer terms of the year preceding the year that the review will be conducted. A minimum of five external letters are required for each case, making it advisable to arrange for at least six or seven.

The unit must compile a list of possible external reviewers. The candidate may also provide a list, which should be compiled without knowledge of the unit’s list. If the candidate suggests a reviewer who also appears on the unit’s list, that reviewer may be considered an independent unit selection rather than one proposed by the candidate.

There is no obligation to include reviewers suggested by the candidate, but it is advisable to do so unless the candidate has provided only names of individuals who appear to be inappropriate.

Resources

- Sample inquiry regarding availability to serve as external reviewer
- Sample letter upon agreement to provide the requested evaluation
- Sample paragraph waiving access to the external letters
- Sample paragraph for retaining access to the external letters
- Sample paragraph for retaining partial access to the external letters
- Sample paragraph for candidates who have taken leave(s) of absence
- Sample paragraph for candidates who are using credit for prior service
- Sample thank you letter upon receipt of letter of evaluation
Sample Letter upon Agreement to Provide the Requested Evaluation

July 1, 202_

Professor ______________
Department of ______________
University of ______________

[city, state zip]

Dear Professor ______________:

Thank you for agreeing to evaluate ______________ Professor of ______________, who is being considered for promotion to ______________ at the University of Oregon. As part of our promotion process, we seek outside evaluations from highly regarded faculty in the candidate’s field to help us assess the faculty member’s scholarly contributions to the field. When you submit your evaluation – by September 16, 202__, as previously agreed – please also provide a copy of your current curriculum vita or biographical sketch, which we will provide to the University’s personnel committees.

Enclosed you will find Professor ___’s current CV, personal statement, and representative examples of scholarship, as well as the Department’s statement of expectations for tenure and promotion. It will be very helpful to us if your written evaluation addresses the following questions.

• What is the nature of your relationship, if any, to Professor ___?

• What are the most significant scholarly results produced by Professor ____, and what impact have those results had on the discipline?
  • Please comment on the appropriateness of the venues/outlets used by the candidate to disseminate scholarly products.
  • Please consider contextualizing your remarks in terms of common practices within the discipline or sub-field of the candidate with respect to collaboration, co-authorship, grant funding, or other characteristics.

• How does Professor ____’s record of scholarship compare – both qualitatively and quantitatively – with other scholars in the field at comparable stages in their academic careers?

• How do you assess Professor ____’s potential for producing high-quality scholarship going forward?
  • Optionally, you may comment on the impact of any professional (disciplinary) service rendered by Professor ____. We do not ask you to evaluate the significance of Professor ____’s teaching or local service activities, unless you have had the opportunity to personally observe those activities.

[Insert paragraph regarding waiver status here, choosing from one of the three options below.]
What needs to be included regarding documentation of external reviewers?

- List of everyone asked - including those who declined, and why.
- Brief bio for each reviewer, including statement about his/her relationship to the candidate, if any. (reviewers’ CVs go in the supplementary file)
Contents for Evaluation Letters Section

(Please provide these materials in the order indicated.)

Communications with External Reviewers (*one* example of each)

☐ Initial Inquiry
☐ Official Request to Review
☐ Other

☐ List of Materials Sent to Reviewers (must include candidate’s personal statement and CV, P&T criteria document, and scholarship portfolio)

☐ Biographical Sketches of Reviewers (include name, title, and institution; brief comments establishing standing in field; explicit comments on any relationship with the candidate (or note “no known relationship”))

☐ External Review Letters

☐ Internal Review Letters

☐ Declinations to Review
What are the waiver options?

Candidate's letter of waiver or non-waiver

- Sample Full Waiver Letter [Word]
- Sample Non-waiver Letter [Word]
- Sample Partial Waiver Letter [Word]

How should the options be conveyed to faculty member undergoing review?

- All are valid options, but it must be recognized that many external reviewers will not agree to write unless confidentiality is assured.
Teaching Evaluation Materials

Faculty up for review in decision year 2021-22 are expected to be evaluated against the definition of teaching quality and the standards & conditions outlined in the 2019 MOU.

- Faculty are welcome to use the template for their teaching statement [https://tep.uoregon.edu/resources-faculty-and-departments](https://tep.uoregon.edu/resources-faculty-and-departments)

- Unit managers can download new Cognos reports (ready no later than June).

- Template for the dept. head’s letter available: [https://provost.uoregon.edu/materials-evaluation-teaching-0](https://provost.uoregon.edu/materials-evaluation-teaching-0)

- Remember to have a sufficient number of peer reviews!

5. Peer Review of Teaching
   - Pre-COVID Guidance: Three Peer Review of Teaching reports are required for a tenure or promotion file: Assistant Professor: one peer review before the mid-term review, and one during each of the three years preceding the faculty member’s tenure review; Associate Professor: one every other year.
   - COVID Guidance: [https://provost.uoregon.edu/guidance-promotion-and-tenurerreview-processes](https://provost.uoregon.edu/guidance-promotion-and-tenurerreview-processes) ; “recognizing that COVID has in some cases complicated the completion of the requisite number of reviews, we suggest that there be a minimum of two peer reviews in the post-mid-term review period for assistant professors being reviewed for promotion and tenure in AY20-21 and two peer reviews in the prior 6 years for associate professors being reviewed for promotion in AY20-21.”
Materials for Evaluation of Teaching

Since 2016, the Office of the Provost, the University Senate and United Academics have been working together to critique and revise all aspects of teaching evaluation. For more information, please see Revising UO's Teaching Evaluations.

Teaching quality will be evaluated by unit heads and personnel committees according to the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding between the University and United Academics, as well as the related 2020 amendment. Teaching will meet expectations when it is professional, inclusive, engaged and research-informed, as described in the 2019 MOU. The numerical scores provided from student Course Evaluations or Student Experience Surveys cannot be used as the sole standard for assessing teaching quality. Instead, evaluators will consider insights from peers and the faculty themselves, in addition to student comments and other materials provided in the candidate statement or teaching portfolio.

Personnel committees and unit heads are invited to use this optional template for the Evaluation of Teaching section of their tenure or promotion letters.
Questions and Open Discussion