

Section III.5

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING FEEDBACK AND PROVIDING REVIEWS OF PROBATIONARY PERIOD FACULTY IN THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

Endorsed by the Executive Committee and approved by the Dean in February 1999
Updated April 2003, April 2018

Introduction

The following guidelines outline expectations for departmental evaluation of junior faculty during the probationary period. These evaluations include annual performance reviews as well as the Third-Year Review (please see Section III.2 for specific guidelines on Promotion and Tenure). To support these review processes, each unit should develop a set of practices that fit the discipline and the unit's culture and that effectively engage and provide regular feedback to each untenured faculty to support his or her development as a scholar, teacher, and member of the university community. It is important that the unit recognize its responsibility to be proactive in engaging and giving feedback to untenured faculty.

The reviews required during the probationary period are one occasion when this feedback can be formalized and documented; however, additional feedback appropriate to the traditions and organization of the unit, including regular discussions between the unit executive officer and the faculty member, a program of mentoring that systematically connects the untenured faculty member with a specific senior faculty member, and less formal mentoring approaches through which junior faculty are engaged with senior faculty, are also encouraged. The creation of appropriate mechanisms is strongly encouraged for cultivating the candidate's development in each of the areas of performance on which tenure is granted (scholarship, teaching, and service).

Annual Reviews:

As stated in Provost Communication #21, each academic unit shall review annually the contributions of each of its tenured or tenure-track faculty members to its mission, with the exception of faculty who are undergoing review for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. These annual reviews in sum should include, per Provost Communication #21:

1. A statement of the unit's mission and the expectation of faculty members' contribution to that mission. This mission statement should be written broadly enough to assure individual faculty members a proper sphere of professional self-direction consistent with the privileges and responsibilities of academic freedom.
2. A written statement of accomplishments and professional activities during the past year or other time period specified by the unit (e.g., the unit might ask faculty members to annually provide information covering the most recent three calendar years), plans for the future, and a brief explanation, if needed, of the connection between the faculty member's activities and the mission and expectations of the unit and university.

3. Annual written and/or verbal feedback provided to each faculty member regarding how well the faculty member is meeting expectations, in response to the review submitted to the unit. Additional constructive, periodic feedback to the faculty member is also encouraged, as noted above.

In addition, an annual letter providing feedback to untenured faculty is strongly encouraged. Such letters should be retained in departmental files and should not be forwarded to the College, except as is required for the campus-mandated third year review.

Given the above requirements for annual review and their utility when compiling a tenure review at the end of the probationary period, it is advisable that each faculty member develop and annually add to a summary of his/her factual record of research/publication, teaching, and service following the guidelines for preparation of promotion dossiers.

Third-Year Review:

Provost Communication #13 outlines the process for a faculty member's Third-Year Review by the unit, as reported to the Office of the Dean. For this review, the unit officer (EO) is responsible for preparing a letter to the faculty member, copied to the dean. Third-year evaluations are reviewed by the LAS Executive Committee prior to delivery to the faculty member.

The letter prepared by the EO should:

1. Be submitted in draft form to the Office of the Dean by mid-February, so that it may be transmitted in final form to the faculty member no later than May 1.
2. Clearly specify the mechanics of the review process. For candidates with split appointments, this should include a summary of the process of consultation between units (see also LAS and campus policies on joint appointments).
3. Critically assess research, including thoughtfully evaluating the major scholarly products of the faculty member's research, the record of teaching and any areas for improvement, and assessment of the faculty member's service and development as a campus citizen.
4. Address the quality and projected impact of the candidate's research. In addition to commenting on areas of strength, focused discussion should be given to those areas needing attention. The letter should explain clearly and directly the expectations that are held for promotion and tenure and where scholarly emphasis should be placed in the years immediately ahead.
5. Be based on systematic assessments by colleagues knowledgeable about the candidate's area(s) of expertise, including multiple observations of the faculty member's teaching.
6. Make clear that this is a mid-term evaluation to provide guidance for the probationary faculty member's continuing development, one that *cannot guarantee* the outcome of the final review for promotion and tenure. Specific assurances regarding support for promotion and tenure should be avoided in both the letter and its transmittal.
7. Include as attachments the ICES summary and a current cv with the proposed review letter. The candidate is strongly encouraged to put their cv into dossier format and to draft teaching and research statements as a part of this review.

Overall, this letter should be based on a review using criteria that will be applied in the final tenure review. These criteria are set forth most clearly in Provost Communication # 9.

General Guidelines for Faculty Feedback (for both Annual and Third-Year Reviews):

Annual as well as Third-Year evaluations should consistently apply the criteria that will be used in the final Promotion and Tenure review, and should establish appropriate continuity across year-to-year reviews through an iterative process between the unit EO and the faculty member. Feedback should include both oral discussions and written letters, including those outlined above. It should also critically assess both research and teaching and identify where improvement is needed. For teaching, it is advisable to include not only classroom observations and ICES scores but other methods of evaluation such as reviews of syllabi and course materials, interviews with or comments from undergraduate and graduate students, and candidate self-assessments. Where teaching difficulties are identified, units should develop plans calculated to facilitate the candidate's development as a teacher.

Assessments across the probationary period should also include discussion of the probationary faculty member's opportunities for contribution in service and for development as a member of the campus community. It is the responsibility of every department to promote the development of attitudes of institutional responsibility and to provide mechanisms through which untenured faculty can develop as contributing members of the campus community. Such assignments should be appropriate in the context of overall responsibilities, so that development in teaching and research are not placed in jeopardy.