

TO: Vice Provost Cynthia Young and Faculty Senate Personnel  
Committee  
FROM: Blake Scott and Fevzi Okumus  
DATE: 3/21/17  
SUBJECT: **Recommendations for University Promotion & Tenure Process,  
Policies, and Best Practices**

The recommendations below have been developed by the outgoing and incoming chairs of the university promotion & tenure (P&T) committee in response to several exigencies: 1) the record number of P&T cases this year (79) and dramatic increase in cases projected for 2020 and 2021 (over 200 each year); 2) the need to align university and unit guidelines with the Collective Impact Strategic Plan; 3) the need to develop clearer policies and best practices for units and their P&T committees. In addition to observations from the committee and data/analysis from Faculty Excellence, we consulted guidelines and processes from a number of research universities, namely Cincinnati, Colorado, Kentucky, Michigan State, Minnesota, Northeastern, South Carolina, Syracuse, Texas, USC, and Washington.

The following sections present recommendations about Process, Policies, and Best Practices.

### **Role and Process of University Faculty P&T Evaluation**

We believe that this committee is important to maintain for several reasons: 1) it provides a crucial all-university perspective that focuses, in part, on the university's P&T standards and its strategic goals for impact; 2) it can offer an assessment that accounts for conflicting reviews at other steps of the process (a particularly valuable contribution to the provost); 3) it can identify issues with cases that were overlooked or not made explicit in previous stages of the review process.

The university P&T committee determined that, ideally, the maximum caseload for a year is around 50. Our committee explored a range of strategies for managing the projected increase in caseload, including strategies for limiting the types of cases that require university committee review, expanding to multiple parallel committees or subcommittees, and focusing the committee's purview.

Note: Implementing the following recommendations would require changes to UCF Regulation 3.015.

#### *Process Recommendation 1: Bypass University Committee for Non-Tenure-Earning Promotion Cases*

Our first recommendation is to eliminate this step of faculty committee review for non-tenure-earning clinical and research promotion cases. These cases would thus move directly from the dean's evaluation to the provost. One alternative would be to bypass the university committee for clinical but not research cases. Another alternative would be to have the university committee evaluate non-tenure-earning promotion cases only at the request of the provost.

This recommendation would not be sufficient to reduce the university committee's caseload, however, as such cases are not projected to increase as much as other types and this past year comprised only 12 of 79 cases.

*Process Recommendation 2: Bypass University Committee for Unanimous or Near-Unanimous Positive Cases*

The most effective way to limit the university P&T committee's caseload and enable it to focus more intently on mixed-review cases would be to bypass this stage of university faculty evaluation for files that had unanimous or near unanimous positive reviews at all previous stages. Doing so for unanimous positive cases would have eliminated 38 of the 79 cases this past year and an average of around 50% of the cases over the past four years; this is a significant reduction but unlikely to get the university committee's caseload to the target of 50 or fewer cases.

Lowering the threshold percentage of positive votes would get us closer to the targeted number of cases. The table below shows the numbers and percentages of cases receiving 90%, 85%, and 80% of positive faculty votes on unit/department and college committee (therefore, not including chair and dean votes) over the past four years.

Year	# total cases	# 100% positive	% of cases	# 90% positive	% of cases	# 85% positive	% of cases	# 80% positive	% of cases
2016-2017	79	41	52%	54	68%	58	73%	61	77%
2015-2016	43	26	60%	27	63%	30	70%	33	77%
2014-2015	33	19	58%	20	61%	20	61%	20	61%
2013-2014	35	20	57%	24	69%	24	69%	25	71%

As the table above shows, routing cases receiving 80% positive faculty votes directly from the dean to the provost would eliminate over 70% of cases (an average of 71.5% of cases over the past four years) from the university committee's caseload. Importantly, we should note that *all* cases that met this 80% threshold between 2013-2016 (with the current year still pending) were approved by the provost and BOT. Thus, using this criterion would eliminate a sizable number of cases from the university committee's caseload and would not likely change the ultimate results of such cases. Because of this, and because we also think the chair's and dean's votes should be separately considered, we recommend the following combination of criteria—of which must be met—for routing cases directly from the dean to the provost:

1. Positive vote from the chair;
2. Positive vote from the dean;
3. 80% of positive faculty votes across the unit/department and college committees.

### *Process Recommendation 3: Form Two Parallel University P&T Committees*

Either separately or in conjunction with one or both of the other two process recommendations, the university could form two parallel university P&T committees, each with elected representatives from the colleges and ORC. (Each college and ORC would therefore elect two faculty members to serve at this level.) One university committee would review tenure/promotion to associate cases, and the other would review promotion to full cases. Although the former type will constitute the largest increase in cases, we have found that mixed-review cases of the latter type took the most time to evaluate.

## **Policies**

Note: Implementing the following recommendations would require changes to UCF Regulation 3.015.

- The university P&T committee must include an elected research representative from Centers and Institutes overseen by ORC.
- A faculty member must have at least one Cumulative Progress Evaluation (CPE) from her/his unit before applying for promotion to full professor.
- A faculty member cannot apply for promotion to full professor more than two times in a four-year period.
- Department/unit and college P&T committees should have at least five members. If a unit has fewer than five eligible members, then eligible faculty from related disciplines within the college or area will be added.
- If a member of a CPE or P&T committee has a clear conflict, she/he should recuse her/himself before the discussion of and vote on the candidate's file rather than cast an abstaining vote. Additionally, if a committee member must abstain because she/he did not review the dossier (or for some other legitimate reason), she/he should not receive a ballot rather than cast an abstaining one.
- The chair of the department/unit, college, or university committee is responsible for accurately explaining, in the written evaluation, any split vote. The dossier cannot advance to the next level of evaluation without this explanation.
- The dossier's overall summary statement should include or become an overall statement of impact, tied to the university's strategic plan. (COS already requires its candidates to include a one-page impact statement.)
- Although research, teaching, and service should remain the primary areas evaluated, and although a candidate's research contributions should still meet the thresholds specified in the university regulation, candidates with "other assignments" (e.g., administration, journal editing, clinical teaching and leadership) can also be evaluated on their performance in these areas.

## **Best Practices**

### *Best Practices for Dossier Preparation*

- The overall summary statement and research summary statements in CPEs should include sections on impact, tied to the university's strategic plan.

- Listings of grant funding in the cv and summary statements should specify grant sources and recipients, shares or amounts credited to candidate, and years over which grants are distributed. This information should match what is found in the ORC database. Grants not included in ORC database should be well documented in the dossier.
- In the cv and in the overall and research summary statements, peer reviewed/refereed publications should be listed separately from non-peer reviewed ones, and precise dates and stages of publication (e.g., published, in press, accepted) should be included.
- The research summary statement should include an explanation of the disciplinary and/or journal conventions for listing authors' names, if applicable.
- Citation and impact metrics should clearly specify sources (e.g., Google, ISI, Altmetrics) and use sources widely valued by the relevant field(s). The field's conventions for this can be explained in the research summary statement.
- Because professional service is one of the areas evaluated and can also indicate recognition or reputation as an expert, such contributions should be specifically documented in both the cv and service summary statement.
- If a candidate changed from a tenure-earning to a non-tenure earning position during the evaluation period, the dossier should provide a clear explanation of how, when, and why this change occurred.
- A candidate's response to an evaluation at any step in the process should be respectful, brief, fact-based, and clarifying about aspects of her/his file.

#### *Best Practices for Units and Colleges*

- A candidate's external reviewers for tenure/promotion to associate should not have been faculty in the candidate's terminal-degree-granting program.
- A candidate's external reviewers can include a professor emeritus, but not more than one; the bio of such a reviewer should explain why she/his is still a leading scholar in the field.
- Department/unit P&T Criteria should include field-specific examples of how impact can be demonstrated.
- Departments/units and colleges must have written promotion criteria for non-tenure-earning clinical and research faculty.
- Departments/units, colleges, and ORC should be consistent in designations of clinical and research faculty positions. Some research faculty have heavy teaching loads, and some clinical and research faculty have heavy administrative loads; this creates confusion about the nature of these positions.

