



UNIVERSITY of MASSACHUSETTS
AMHERST

373 Whitmore Administration Building
181 Presidents Drive
Amherst, MA 01003

Office of the Provost

Voice: 413.545.2554

Fax: 413.577.3980

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To: Deans, Directors, Department Heads and Chairpersons, Department and School/College Personnel Committee Chairpersons

From: Katherine Newman, Provost & Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Cc: Kumble Subbaswamy, Chancellor

Subject: Promotion and Tenure Recommendations for Tenure-Stream Faculty

Annually, the Office of the Provost circulates information intended to reinforce the criteria and procedures mandated by the UMass-MSP Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and by the Board of Trustees' Academic Personnel Policy (the "Redbook") for all recommendations of tenure and promotion. I continue that tradition with this memorandum, which outlines the kind of information the Chancellor and Provost find especially useful in evaluating cases for promotion and tenure.

This letter presents an opportunity to communicate with colleagues whom I don't see face to face very often, but I encourage anyone with concerns or questions to raise them in our annual retreat for chairs/heads on **September 3**. Individual personnel committee members or faculty candidates with questions are encouraged to communicate with Vice Provost John Bryan and are also welcome to make an appointment with me to explore any issues that need further amplification in their particular context. Our office is always open to you.

Tenure Standards & Criteria

The Redbook notes the special responsibility the faculty and the university's leadership bear for personnel decisions based on high professional standards (Section 4.1) and "clear and convincing evidence," (Section 3.1):

High professional standards must be the basis for all personnel decisions. Personnel recommendations and decisions shall be made only after a review of all the qualifications and all the contributions of the individual in the areas of teaching; of research, creative or professional activity; and of service. All three areas must be considered, but the relative weight to be given to each may be determined in light of the duties of the faculty member. [Section 4.1]

The faculty has the obligation to present a clear, complete and convincing case for the recommendation so as to assure the faculty member of a complete presentation of his or her qualifications and achievements, and so as to provide

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the basis both for full reviews of the recommendation, and for the decision.
[Section 3.1]

In applying these standards to the criteria for tenure, the Redbook describes in broad terms the importance of excellence:

The award of tenure can be made only by the President with the concurrence of the Board of Trustees. Consideration of a candidate for tenure shall be based on the following:

- a) Convincing evidence of excellence in at least two, and strength in the third, of the areas of teaching; of research, creative or professional activity; and of service, such as to demonstrate the possession of qualities appropriate to a member of the faculty occupying a permanent position.
- b) Reasonable assurance of continuing development and achievement leading to further contributions to the University. [Section 4.9]

The Redbook requires that positive tenure recommendations relate the proposed award of tenure to the academic and strategic plans of the department, college, campus, and university and to the department's affirmative action goals.

Most tenure cases also involve an assessment of suitability for promotion to Associate Professor. In these cases, Section 4.6(b) (cited below) also applies and should be addressed at each level of review.

Promotion Standards & Criteria

The standards for *promotions* are further defined in Section 4.6. In their evaluations, reviewers at all levels should explicitly cite these standards and criteria, and articulate whether and how the candidate's record conforms to them:

- a) For promotion to **Assistant Professor**, the faculty member must possess the appropriate terminal degree, or equivalent professional experience, and have a record of achievement in the field of academic specialization. In addition, the candidate must show promise of continuing professional development and achievement.
- b) For promotion to **Associate Professor**, the faculty member must have a record of achievement sufficient to have gained recognition on and off campus among scholars or professionals in his or her field; and must show promise of continuing professional development and achievement.
- c) For promotion to **Professor**, the faculty member must have a record of achievement sufficient to have gained substantial recognition on and off

campus from scholars or professionals in his or her field; and must show significant potential for continuing professional achievement. [Section 4.6]

Three Areas of Evaluation

The Redbook outlines three domains in which candidates for tenure and promotion must be assessed.

Research/Creative/Professional Activity. The assessment of a tenure candidate's accomplishments in research/creative/professional activity should consider whether the candidate demonstrates high professional standards. Candidates who demonstrate "excellence" in this domain are typically those who have had an impact on their field of scholarship or performance.

Promotions to Professor require "substantial recognition on and off campus from scholars or professionals in his or her field"; therefore, reviews for such promotions should focus on the significance of a candidate's research/creative/professional activity, the mark it has made on the field in question, and the increasing visibility of the candidate, particularly – though not exclusively – based on work done post-tenure (throughout the period at the rank of Associate Professor). Reputations build over time and hence the work done prior to tenure is also important, but we look for a consistent trajectory that creates and sustains impact or influence on the field in question.

For tenure and for promotions to full professor, significant recognition can be assessed in a variety of ways. Some disciplines are amenable to measures like citation indices; some are best calibrated by fellowships or grants awarded; in the arts, juried competitions or selection for a show are important; other fields may recognize the high value of particular peer-reviewed presses or flagship journals. The judgment of disciplinary specialists at the department level is crucial in fleshing out these standards; so too are the views of college-level personnel committees. It is important, then, not only to review a candidate's accomplishments, but to contextualize them in ways that enable every level of review to understand the criteria that are most important in the specific field of study.

External letters from respected scholars who know the field both in its particularities and its breadth are especially valuable in determining whether a candidate's scholarship or creative work reflects high professional standards and achieves the standard of excellence. External letters that provide mere summaries of the record are less useful; therefore, in soliciting letters, department chairs/heads should draw attention to the evaluative nature of the review so that reviewers understand what the University is asking of them. (The Provost's Office Academic Personnel website offers two templates for soliciting external reviews at <http://www.umass.edu/provost/faculty-staff-resources/personnel-information>.)

The Redbook's Section 6.4 requires that the file contain descriptions of the "standing" of external reviewers so that internal reviewers, particularly those outside the department, can understand the weight that should be accorded their assessment. "Standing" refers to the individual's status with respect to her/his reputation, position, and rank within the academic field.

The following characteristics of external letters are especially compelling:

- Reviews that assess the originality and influence of a candidate's portfolio, the ways in which it displays independence from dissertation work or post-doctoral training, and the trajectory or promise it manifests going forward;
- Letters from scholars who are "arm's length" from the candidate (meaning, for example, that they have not been thesis or post-doctoral advisors, recent collaborators, or personal friends)
- Letters from scholars who work at institutions we regard as peers of UMass (meaning other flagship public universities or their equivalents in private colleges and universities). (For the Carnegie List of RU/VH institutions, see [http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/lookup_listings/srp.php?start_page=custom.php&limit=0%2C50&clq=&basic2005\[\]=15&submit=CREATE+LIST](http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/lookup_listings/srp.php?start_page=custom.php&limit=0%2C50&clq=&basic2005[]=15&submit=CREATE+LIST)). Of course, many distinguished scholars work at smaller institutions and their input is highly valued as well.

Ideally, reviewers at every level rely on these letters alongside their own assessments of the substance and impact of the scholarly work; their assessments of the program of inquiry, theme, or intellectual agenda that charts the course of research; and their assessments of the candidate's potential for her/his professional achievements continuing at a high level. When there is significant disagreement among external reviewers, or between one or more external reviewers and the internal assessment, this should be acknowledged and discussed.

Teaching. Our roles as teachers are among the most important ones we perform. In considering whether a candidate has met the Redbook's high professional standards for teaching, faculty should be considered within the totality of their contributions to the instructional mission. Achieving such a comprehensive assessment typically involves multiple modes of evaluation, not just student evaluations, including:

- teaching effectiveness in the formal classroom setting and in less formal student interactions.
- commentary on the range of courses taught and their importance to the curriculum;
- the currency of course content as revealed in course syllabi;
- evaluations from students; evaluations from peers; evaluations of the effectiveness of pedagogic innovations or improvements;

- and a review of teaching-related issues reflected in the candidate's Annual Faculty Reviews.

Beyond the classroom, reviewers should include assessments of the candidate's role, if any, in such areas as:

- academic advising;
- mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students;
- service learning and other forms of community engagement;
- supervision of students engaged in independent study, honors, or graduate work; and
- the development of curricular materials, including those intended for alternative formats, such as distance learning.

Although not required, a teaching portfolio may be a useful way to connect teaching activity with the candidate's personal statement.

Service. The Redbook's "high professional standard" for service may mean different things at different levels of seniority. For assistant professors, service on editorial boards or in national or international scholarly societies not only contributes to the field but helps to forge professional relations and the establishment of a professional profile beyond the university; service contributions within the department or university, while still important, might well be fewer than those of more senior colleagues. Senior faculty might engage in a balance of professional and local service activities, taking on more advanced, leadership roles.

Certain types of service receive special mention in the CBA and the Redbook. For example, the CBA requires that service to the faculty union be considered, and the Redbook requires that service outside the department be considered at the department level. Service may include contributions to governance or management (to the department, college/school, university or profession); outreach to extend knowledge beyond the university/professional community; and community engagement that benefits both the university and off-campus communities. Some faculty members have special service obligations recorded in a Memorandum of Understanding at the time of appointment; these should be recognized and assessed in accordance with the terms of the MOU.

Whatever the scope of service, merely being a member of committees or governance bodies does not, in and of itself, demonstrate excellence. The candidate's contributions to the service mission, especially his/her impact and increasing leadership, are important.

A Note on "Cultural Standards." Recognizing the breadth of promotion and tenure standards articulated by the CBA and the Redbook, some departments have developed

documents that express the “cultural standards” of their disciplines. These documents are valuable expressions of the expectations of professional communities, but they must not be used to formally evaluate a candidate’s research, teaching, and service since they have not been bargained with the faculty union. Accordingly, departmental reviewers must not rely on or refer to such documents in making their recommendations, and department chairs/heads must not send these documents to external reviewers.

Tenure & Promotion Process

The process of advancing a candidate’s file through levels of review is similar for all tenure and promotion cases with these variations: For promotion to the rank of Associate Professor accompanying a recommendation for the award of tenure, positive cases proceed through review at the level of Provost, Chancellor, President and Trustees. For all other promotions, including promotion to full professor, the process concludes with the decision of the Provost and Chancellor. (Nominations for promotion to “Distinguished Professor” and for appointment to named chairs follow a different process and must be reviewed by the Board of Trustees.)

The Redbook (Section 6.4) and the CBA (Articles 11 and 12) detail the timelines and steps for recommendation of tenure and promotion, and the current Master Calendar offers specific deadlines for the advancement of files through the process.

- A. Beginning the process. Department heads/chairs must provide the candidate with notice of the impending review by the end of the third calendar week of the term prior to the semester in which the tenure decision by the Board of Trustees is scheduled. For faculty members for whom 2015-16 constitutes the tenure decision year, September 21, 2015, is the deadline, but we encourage earlier notification.*
- B. Compiling the file. The "basic file" for each promotion and/or tenure recommendation, compiled by the department head/chair, should contain:
 - 1. All materials submitted by the candidate that he or she believes will be essential to an adequate consideration of the case.
 - 2. Letters from outside reviewers as described in C below; a description of the professional standing of each reviewer and of his or her relationship with the

* A faculty member who is not scheduled for promotion consideration may nonetheless request such a review. Neither a department head/chair nor a department personnel committee may prohibit an eligible faculty member’s application for promotion, nor may they refuse to review an application; however, under no circumstances should promotion reviews of an individual be conducted more often than once a year.

candidate; and an indication of the source for each name (candidate or department chair).

3. Tables of contents, as described in F. below. **(Note that in the new eRPT workflow system, the table of contents will be generated automatically.)**
4. The candidate's *curriculum vitae*, including a bibliography or comparable list of professional accomplishments.
5. Copies or reviews of the candidate's published works or evidence of other professional accomplishments, or the indication of a site where these works can be easily obtained.
6. Evaluations of the candidate's teaching effectiveness, including but not limited to those of students.
7. Evaluations of the candidate's service and outreach activities.
8. Recommendations of committees and administrators, as described in D. below.

Each successive level of recommendation or decision must review and, if necessary, supplement the basic file. Throughout the review process, the candidate retains the right of access to all parts of the basic file except for those letters to which he or she has voluntarily waived access, as described in C. below.

- C. Soliciting External & Internal Letters. For tenure recommendations and for promotions to Associate Professor or Professor, the department head/chair (not the DPC) should solicit evaluations of the candidate's accomplishments from external scholars and/or professionals of high stature in the specific field and in the discipline as a whole.

The CBA requires that the department head/chair solicit evaluations from "scholars and professionals from among those suggested by the faculty member (if he/she wishes to do so), but the list is not limited to those the faculty member suggests."

The candidate has the right to suggest external reviewers and to comment on any others the head/chair intends to solicit but does not have the right to veto any on that list. The head/chair must also show the candidate the intended solicitation letter before sending it. The head/chair should carefully consider any arguments the candidate makes for why a proposed reviewer is inappropriate or has a conflict of interest or why the solicitation should be revised.

With some exceptions, most solicitations of external evaluations for candidates under review in 2015-16 were solicited over the summer of 2015. Templates for those reviews were provided last fall.

As explained in last year's instructions, ordinarily dossiers include a minimum of eight evaluations in order to provide a sufficient profile of the candidate's

achievements and enable reviewers to provide a “clear, complete and convincing case.” Ideally, the files will include a more robust set of 10-12 evaluations. As noted above, candidates are best served by letters from “arm’s length” reviewers.

Some departments solicit letters from colleagues within the university. These letters are primarily useful in addressing the candidate’s teaching and service contributions, but they generally do not fit the definition of “arm’s length.”

The candidate must sign the waiver form, either waiving or not waiving access to the letters that will come from both external and internal reviewers prior to sending the requests out. Once signed and submitted by the candidate, the waiver is irrevocable for the personnel action under consideration.*

The solicitation should clearly indicate whether the faculty member has or has not waived access to evaluators’ letters. In either case, the solicitation should make it clear that the candidate will receive a list of external reviewers from whom letters were solicited and received. The Provost’s website offers solicitation templates that you may find useful (see <http://www.umass.edu/provost/faculty-staff-resources/personnel-information>.)

D. Recommendations – Typically, the process moves through the following stages.

DPC: The department personnel committee reviews the basic file, may supplement the file with relevant information, and writes a recommendation, which includes the committee’s numerical vote on the overall recommendation. In tenure cases (but not for promotion) the committee should rate the candidate as “Excellent,” “Strong,” or “Not Strong” for each of the three areas of evaluation (research/creative/professional activity, teaching, service). Although individual votes on each category of performance are not required, they are encouraged as they offer a helpful indicator of how united the DPC is in its assessments. Accordingly, if individual votes are taken, they should be recorded and forwarded to the head/chair as part of the contents of the file.

Recommendations from departmental committees should report not only the vote but the reasoning behind it from both those in favor and those against. Even unanimous votes should be supported in this way.

* Comments or letters received in response to invitations that are not individually solicited are not protected by the faculty member’s waiver of access.

The committee adds its recommendation* to the file, sends a copy of its recommendation to the candidate, updates the file's table of contents, and forwards the expanded basic file to the department head/chair. The candidate may choose to respond to the committee's recommendation and to any materials added by the committee; such a response becomes part of the basic file and is forwarded with the file to subsequent levels of review.

Department head/chair: The department head/chair evaluates the expanded file, including the DPC's recommendation and the candidate's written response to the DPC recommendation (if any). This is intended to be an independent assessment which needs to be supported by the head/chair's own analysis of the materials in the file covering research, teaching and service, as well as the external and internal letters of evaluation.

The head/chair may supplement the file with relevant information; adds his/her written recommendation* to the file; sends a copy of his/her recommendation to the candidate and to the DPC; updates the table of contents; for positive recommendations, describes the relationship of the proposed award of tenure to program plans, flexibility as affected by rank and tenure distributions and anticipated retirements, and the department's affirmative action goals; and forwards the expanded file to the school/college personnel committee. Again, the candidate may respond to the head/chair's recommendation and to any materials added by the head/chair; such a response becomes part of the file and proceeds with the file to subsequent levels of review

SPC/CPC: School/college personnel committees (SPC/CPC) perform an important part of the tenure and promotion process. These colleagues are somewhat more removed from the immediate environment of the department, but are in fields that are close enough to form an intellectual community and hence a basis for evaluation that is substantial, while being more independent of the department. The school/college personnel committee evaluates the expanded file, including previous reviewers' recommendations and any responses by the candidate; may supplement the file with relevant information; adds its written recommendation, including overall vote. Here too, if votes on each element of the tenure file

* If the candidate has waived access to the letters submitted by external evaluators, the composers of internal recommendation letters should scrupulously ensure that no external evaluator is identified, directly or indirectly. References to such evaluators should avoid characterizations of them that hint at identity. For example, avoid references such as "a prominent researcher at a Midwestern university" and "the associate editor of a top journal in the discipline." Instead, use "Reviewer #1" and "Reviewer #2" but do not align the numbering with the list provided to the candidate.

(research/teaching/service) are taken, those votes must become part of the file sent to the Dean and on to the Provost.

As an independent evaluation, recommendations from college committees should report not only the results of the vote but the reasoning behind it from both those in favor and those against. Even unanimous votes must be supported in this way.

The SPC/CPC sends a copy of its recommendation to the candidate and to the department head/chair and DPC; updates the table of contents; and forwards the expanded file to the dean.

Dean: The dean provides an independent review of the expanded file, including previous reviewers' recommendations and any responses by the candidate. Deans should also discuss how the candidate fits programmatically into the College/School and describes the contributions of the field (and the department) to the educational and research mission of the unit. She/he may supplement the file with relevant information; add his/her written recommendation; for positive recommendations, describes the relationship of the proposed award of tenure to program plans, flexibility as affected by rank and tenure distributions and anticipated retirements, and the department's affirmative action goals; sends a copy of his/her recommendation to the candidate, the SPC/CPC, the department head/chair, and the DPC; updates the table of contents; and forwards the expanded file to the provost.

Candidate's right to add materials: The candidate may supplement the file with new, relevant material at any stage in this process. The candidate may submit a written response to any material added to the file at any stage in the process.

Rights of response: When materials are added to the file by the candidate or by other reviewers after the file has reached the college level, the DPC and the head/chair have the right to respond in writing to the new materials, but they should submit their responses in a timely fashion – ideally within one week – so that the review process is not delayed. Such responses become part of the expanded file and must be considered by subsequent reviewers.

- E. Contrary Recommendations. The evaluation of a candidate by a head/chair is an important element of the file and should be undertaken with a fresh view. However, the Redbook requires that a head/chair consult with the DPC before recommending differently from the DPC.

Similarly, the SPC/CPC and Dean provide an important independent perspective on a candidate's qualifications. In accordance with the Redbook, the SPC/CPC "shall consult with the department" before making a recommendation contrary to that of either the DPC or the department head/chair, and the Dean, before making such a contrary recommendation, must "invite the department to provide additional information for the basic file or clarification of the recommendation in question."

By design, the Provost and Chancellor stand apart from the department and the college or school. The information submitted at all levels prior to their review is critical to this additional, independent level of review. The Redbook requires that the Provost "shall invite the Dean to provide additional information for the basic file or clarification of the recommendation" before making a recommendation contrary to that of either the SPC/CPC or the Dean. All such requests and all information received in response must be added to the expanded file.

The recommendations and decisions of academic administrators may run counter to the recommendation of a DPC only in exceptional circumstances and with compelling reasons that are fully explicated. A contrary recommendation must be explained against the backdrop of the Redbook's standards and criteria and the content of the department personnel committee's recommendation.

- F. Table of Contents. At the time of his or her recommendation, the department head/chair should compile a table of contents of the basic file, add it to the file, and send a copy to the faculty member. Similarly, when the school/college personnel committee acts, it should update the table of contents, add it to the file, and send copies to the faculty member and the department. Deans should check that the table of contents has been updated and distributed prior to submitting the file to the Provost. **(Note that as of August 2015, an online workflow system for this entire process is in pilot implementation with full roll-out expected in time for the cycle of "promotion to full professor" cases in the fall. In that system, the table of contents will be automatically created and updated.)**
- G. Personnel Action Forms. Completed Personnel Action Forms and Tenure & Promotion Checklists should accompany all tenure and promotion files submitted to the Provost's Office. Tenure files should also be accompanied by a completed "Summary of Tenure Recommendation" form (attached).
- H. Timelines. As indicated in the master calendar, faculty members to be reviewed during the current academic year are those whose tenure decision year occurs in the second semester of AY2015-2016 or the first semester of AY2016-2017. We must submit tenure cases to the President's Office six weeks prior to meetings of

the Trustees' Committee on Academic and Student Affairs. A recommendation from this committee is then forwarded to the Board of Trustees. The Trustees meet four times each year: typically in February, June, September, and December.

Recommendations in tenure and promotion cases are due as follows:

| Personnel Action | Tenure-Decision Year Ending | File Due to Dean's Office | File Due to Provost |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Tenure & Promotion to Associate Professor | August 31, 2016 (normal cycle) | November 6, 2015 | January 14, 2016 |
| | January 19, 2017 (off-cycle) | March 4, 2016 | April 15, 2016 |
| Promotion only | NA | January 22, 2016 | March 21, 2016 |

If you have questions about the procedural aspects of the promotion and tenure process, please contact Vice Provost John Bryan.

The University of Massachusetts—from the campus to the Trustees—has expressed its commitment to high-quality scholarship, teaching, and service. Chancellor Subbaswamy and I welcome your counsel on ways in which we can improve the process and we thank you in advance for all of the hard work you contribute in the course of executing this critical responsibility. The thoughtful evaluations you provide strengthen the university for many decades to come.

c: College Personnel Officers
J. Bryan
A. Williams