

Orientation Guidelines for New Promotion & Tenure Committee Members

The Promotion and Tenure Committee (P&T) advises the University Librarian in matters pertaining to the evaluation, retention, and promotion of Library faculty members, with both tenure-track and clinical appointments. It casts votes, reported to the campus, on all cases for promotion and for tenure or retention. It conducts reviews of the research and publication, librarianship and teaching, and service activities of the faculty, evaluating their progress in preparing for promotion and/or tenure. Through presentations and more individualized activity as liaisons to junior faculty, the committee seeks to clarify the process and to encourage those going through it. It works with the Executive Committee and the faculty at large in formulating the norms espoused by the UIC Library Faculty, which are reported to campus units outside the library and to outside referees who evaluate the research of candidates for promotion and tenure at 6Y, for promotion to full professor, or for clinical faculty promotion.

The committee prepares guidelines and documents detailing the goals and processes of the various activities connected with promotion and tenure, including internal documents that offer guidance to committee members in the execution of their various reviews and reports. All library faculty, either tenure-track or clinical, at the rank of Associate or Full Professor automatically serve on P & T. In some large campus units, the P & T Committee is drawn from the ranks rather than being a committee of the whole. Committee members serve as liaisons to junior faculty in the preparation of their papers. Two members (frequently the candidate's P & T appointed liaisons for paper preparation) work together to prepare the 6Y tenure-track or clinical promotional papers for each candidate with input from the rest of the committee, which reads and evaluates the papers as they develop.

Committee members routinely lead workshops for the introduction and clarification of the process for beginning faculty and for paper preparation for more advanced faculty. It is sometimes necessary for P & T to sponsor additional informational meetings, frequently in conjunction with the Executive Committee, to investigate new issues requiring the input of the full faculty. All committee deliberations are strictly confidential and may not be discussed with those outside the committee. The UL informs candidates of the outcome of votes and reviews, and it is inappropriate for other members of the committee to do so. In discussing broad issues arising from committee discussions with other members of the faculty who are not members of P & T, great care should be taken to avoid even indirect references to specific cases.

1. The chair and secretary are elected for one-year terms but generally serve for two consecutive years. In recent years, the secretary follows as chair, though that has not always been the case. (This is committee tradition and not required or specified by any documentation.)

2. The committee participates in faculty reviews in the first, third, fifth, and sixth years of service for tenure-track faculty and in the periodic reviews of clinical faculty, initially three years after appointment and then every five years. It may recommend an earlier review of clinical faculty if a previous review makes that seem worthwhile. The committee also conducts promotional reviews of both tenured and clinical faculty at the Associate level upon their petition. P & T votes are advisory and not binding on the University Librarian. Results of all votes are reported to candidates by the UL; summaries of actions mandated by the campus (3Y and 6Y for tenure-track faculty; promotional reviews for faculty who petition for them) are reported to the campus in the documentation of cases.

3. The UL is required to submit notification of retention or non-retention of 1Y faculty based solely on librarianship annually, generally in late November. The UL reports her decision to the committee following discussion with the faculty member's department head, and the committee is asked to endorse the recommendation. It does not conduct any review of its own. This vote is traditionally a voice vote whereas the later reviews in which the committee is fully involved are by secret ballot. One may vote positively, negatively, or abstain. Under certain conditions, generally due to missing the discussion of the merits of the case or a conflict of interests, a member may be ineligible to vote. The UL as Dean of the Library Faculty endorses or does not endorse the Committee's votes in a letter of justification.

4. The campus mandates that the committee's advice to the candidate in the third year review be included in the comprehensive (6Y) papers. This step shows that the candidate's department has supplied appropriate advice and support by 3Y. The library's 5Y review is not mandated by the campus and is strictly an internal review to determine whether the committee finds that the candidate's record is sufficiently strong to justify the preparation of the 6Y papers. This vote is not reported to the campus. The UL may require the committee to prepare comprehensive papers even if it voted negatively at 5Y. A vote is taken after the preparation of the 6Y papers, and this vote is reported to the campus. At this point, the case goes forward unless the candidate withdraws his or her papers by resigning from the library faculty.

5. The 3Y and 5Y reviews for tenure-track faculty and non-promotional periodic reviews for clinical faculty are conducted within the library and do not use outside referees to evaluate the candidate's research and publication records. The 6Y tenure-track and all promotional reviews do call upon expert outside referee evaluation, and these cases go through the full campus review process, being examined by the campus wide P & T Committee, the Dean of the Graduate College, the Provost, and all the way up to the Board of Trustees. In general, the decision is made at the Provost level, but it can be reversed at a higher level. Appeals are possible but based on breach of proper procedure rather than the merits of the case to the extent that these can be separated.

6. Referees (those experts writing outside letters evaluating the publications of our candidates) should be full professors or the equivalent thereof at prestigious institutions with substantial, on-going publication records at least in part in the candidate's field of expertise. The choice of referees who do not altogether fit these criteria, particularly as to rank, must be very carefully justified. Referees should have no close professional or personal relations with the candidate; they should not have been their teachers or mentors, co-authors, or colleagues in the same library or other institution. There should be no grounds for even a suspicion of a conflict of interest. Candidates will not be informed of the identity of referees, nor will they be allowed to suggest referees. They may, however, suggest exclusions, which the committee will consider but is not bound by. Referees should be thanked informally by e-mail or by phone by the principal preparer of the papers as soon as their letters are received. Formal letters of thanks from either the principal preparer or the chair of P & T will be sent following the action of the Board of Trustees in the summer.

7. To help candidates prepare for their 6Y or clinical promotional reviews, the committee is now requiring that they use a somewhat tailored version of the campus papers for earlier reviews to get used to the format and to determine how best to present the different aspects of their cases. Members of the committee are assigned as liaisons to help with paper preparation, one in the first year and two thereafter. Clinical faculty members receive one liaison for internal reviews but a second is assigned for promotional reviews. The committee also sponsors annual workshops for tenure-track and clinical faculty at different stages of the process. An initial general workshop for beginning faculty on the basic principles and goals of promotion and tenure are followed by workshops more specifically geared toward the formal reviews.

8. Faculty on the committee at less than the rank of Professor must petition for promotion; there is required built-in review as there is for tenure track assistant professors or periodic reviews of clinical faculty. Most candidates do not choose to petition for promotion until 5 or 6 years after joining the committee. Only full professors examine the cases of those petitioning to move from associate to full professor; to be involved in these evaluative reviews, committee members must be at the same or a higher rank than the one to which the candidate aspires. Petitions for promotion are due to the UL by early March. For those already tenured or on a clinical appointment, the failure to win promotion does not result in a terminal contract, and the candidate may choose to seek promotion again at a later date,

9. Formal reviews of faculty include an evaluation of the candidate's librarianship conducted by a 3-person committee appointed by the Executive Committee. Untenured faculty may serve, though not generally in the same cohort as the candidate. The candidate's supervisor may not chair the committee but will either serve on it or be interviewed. Non-faculty will not be interviewed except under extraordinary circumstances. For candidates with a major teaching component of their librarianship, one member of the committee will be appointed by EC to provide a written evaluation of the candidate's librarianship.

10. Under most circumstances, three copies of reports whose confidential nature does not allow for electronic distribution will be submitted to the chair of P & T and will be made available to the committee from the office of the UL's assistant.

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