

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO  
PROMOTION AND TENURE GUIDELINES  
2007-08

PART II

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION OF  
AN EFFECTIVE PROMOTION AND TENURE CASE

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES AND EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

The overall goal of the P&T process is to offer a mechanism for candidates to make as clear and as comprehensive a presentation of their accomplishments as possible. Simultaneously, the process should permit those in the collegial role of reviewers as much information and as much context as necessary to render an evaluation of the candidacy. (But keep in mind that too much detail can weaken a case because the strengths of the case get lost in the detail.)

Based on the experience at campus-level review in recent years, the following observations are offered to both candidates and executive officers.

### CAMPUS LEVEL P&T REVIEWS

P&T committees above the level of an individual's appointment judge how well the case has been made either for the granting of indefinite tenure or for promotion. **It is not the quality of any one piece of work or the length of the dossier but the overall *quality* of the candidate's record and the accompanying documentation that determine the outcome.** Remember that faculty on these committees welcome guidance in their search for indicators of quality.

### EXECUTIVE OFFICER ROLE AND RECOMMENDATION

*Norms and Expectations in the Candidate's Field:* University evaluators often seek guidance regarding disciplinary norms, publication outlets, etc. Contextual information about the discipline or sub-discipline should be provided in the summary of unit norms and expectations. This could include an explanation of the significance of the order of authors in multi-author publications. Further details about best practices in the discipline can be helpful when added at appropriate places in the body of the papers.

Candidates for promotion also seek information about the expectations of their department and college. Indeed, faculty say they wish that executive officers would more effectively communicate the expectations of the department, college, and university, early in their careers. We suggest that executive officers meet regularly with individual faculty members to discuss goals and expectations. Regular and frequent feedback on career plans and progress of faculty (both on the tenure track and on non-tenure tracks) is recommended as a supplement to the required mid-probationary review. The tempo/rhythm of the discipline and the candidate's career should guide the timing of such additional reviews.

*On Making the Case to Scholars from Other Disciplines:* Candidates and executive officers should remember that at the campus level, review is conducted by scholars who typically are **not** from the candidates' disciplines. Thus, candidates and executive officers should not use jargon or assume the readers are familiar with the kinds of scholarship typical of the field. The workshops organized by the Office of Academic Affairs can be instructive as to the variations among disciplines.

**The significance of accomplishments should be communicated in the executive officer's statement--details should be included only to the extent that they help make the case that the candidate's contributions have been significant.**

*Apparently Negative Comments:* If external referees make unfavorable comments, it is best to address them directly in the departmental justification. If the points are valid, an acknowledgment is appropriate. If the executive officer disagrees with criticism, the campus reviewers need to know why the external criticism is not relevant, warranted or accurate. Ignoring criticism may be read as accepting it. The same advice applies to the need for addressing weaknesses in any part of the record.

## TEACHING

*Role of Documentation in Establishing Quality:* Teaching quality needs to be well documented. When assertions are made about excellence of teaching, evidence must be provided. Campus-level reviewers want to credit teaching, but cannot do so without evidence. Multiple sources of evaluation such as student\*, peer and supervisory evaluations contribute to a stronger case for teaching excellence. Evaluations that are very recent alone do not carry as much weight as evaluations from departments that can show that there is a continuing departmental process that assesses performance in the classroom, lab, seminar or other teaching modes. Avoid raw data for student information. Inclusion of formal teaching evaluations (e.g. as administered by TLC are strongly recommended).

*Teaching Documentation Task Force Report:* Executive officers or faculty wanting access to resources on teaching documentation are referred to the final report of the Teaching Documentation Task Force. This report has been distributed to all deans and executive officers. It can also be found at the Academic Affairs website: <http://www.uic.edu/depts/oa/cetl/resources/tdr.htm>

*Team/Co-Teaching:* Where a candidate is not fully responsible for a course, the nature of the candidate's contributions to the class/course role should be clarified. Evaluative comments pertaining only to the candidate, and not of other instructors, should be included.

\*It is inappropriate and a conflict of interest to ask current doctoral students supervised by the candidate to write a teaching evaluation for the candidate. If this is deemed necessary, under exceptional circumstances, please contact Michele Mancione at 3-7636.

## RESEARCH

*Publications:* It is important to draw attention to significant work that has undergone peer review. Where appropriate, citation indices may be helpful. Be aware that annals and proceedings vary as to the level of creativity and in the rigor by which contributions are chosen. So please indicate the nature of the research and kind of review to which such publications were subjected. The same should be done for monographs and chapters in books. In some disciplines a chapter in a book, for example, is assumed to be a review of literature; in other disciplines, a chapter may be original scholarship. Communication of the strengths of a case to those in other disciplines is always a challenge.

*Quality of Publication Outlets:* An excellent way to document the quality and significance of a candidate's scholarship is to address the quality of the publication outlets (including objective rankings, where available); in some disciplines the extent to which the candidate's work has been cited by peers can be important. Contact the library for documentation of ratings, ranking and reputation of the outlets.

*Funding:* Success in competitions that involve peer review is (as is the case with publications) taken as a reliable sign of quality work. Note that faculty research is funded by multiple sources, and it is sometimes difficult for reviewers to know if a particular funding source relies on peer review in evaluating and awarding funds. So, for less well-known sources of funding, it is important to indicate when the award is based on peer review. (Note that funding is not in itself an indicator of academic merit).

The availability of and reliance on external funding varies considerably across fields and it is important that campus reviewers be told the situation and expectations of the candidate's discipline.

*Collaborative Work:* Because interdisciplinary and multi-investigator research is becoming more common, campus reviewers need more detail on the role of candidates in research and teaching that is collaborative. In the case of research use Section II C. to delineate the contributions of the candidate. Letters from co-authors that document the relative contributions of the co-authors can be especially helpful and should be solicited by the executive head. An executive officer statement that explains the value of collaborative work in a given discipline may also be helpful.

While committees recognize that in many disciplines collaboration is becoming increasingly important, candidates are nevertheless advised to seek ways of establishing independence from their mentors.

*Creative Works:* Entries in the "Creative Works..." category should be accompanied by statements that explain how the work or performance or show was reviewed, juried, etc. Campus reviewers need assistance in understanding the significance of such accomplishments.

***Selection and Solicitation of Referees for the External Evaluation:*** Because the choice of outside referees is critical to evaluating the candidates, the guidelines in Part I, Section 3 C., pages 9-11 should be followed scrupulously.

*The solicitation of referees:* It is recommended that this be done in two stages. Please see Part I, Section 3 C., page 11.

*Documentation of Credentials of Referees:* Campus level reviewers rely heavily on the judgment of the outside referees. Referees' credentials should be clear and their relationship to the candidate as neutral as possible e.g., not co-authors, not mentors, not past or present departmental colleagues. We suggest that referees be asked to state in their evaluation letters what their contact and relationship with the candidate has been. With this information, campus reviewers can give proper weight to the reviewer's comments. (See Part I, Sec. 3 C.).

*Thank You:* Referees often want to know the outcome of our deliberations. A thank you letter that communicates the final outcome of our deliberations would be appropriate.

## SERVICE

*Department Expectations:* There are varying expectations across units regarding the participation of junior faculty in service activities. Executive officers are encouraged to specify their unit's expectations in the section of the papers that asks for details regarding the norms of the discipline. Assistant Professors are not expected to carry a heavy service burden. They should normally attend all department meetings but not generally serve on university committees or do wider service to the profession or community.

*Significance of Contributions:* Service entails many different types of activities, and it sometimes is difficult to document the excellence and impact of these activities. If the candidate feels it necessary, an explanation of the impact of these activities can be included.

Grant review activity is considered a service and may be recorded under Section III. F., Service to the Profession/Discipline, in Part IV Forms.

Likewise, candidates and Executive officers are encouraged to include information on the candidate's contribution(s) to promote equity or diversity at UIC in terms of gender, race/ethnicity and ability status. In service, this could be participation in the WISEST initiative.

## STATEMENTS BY CANDIDATES

The candidate's statement of current and planned research/creative endeavors should be brief and **limited to one-page**. A technical presentation or lengthy chronological accounting is not useful. Do not repeat the factual information found elsewhere in the papers. The campus reviewers want to understand the candidate's long-term agenda, progress made, significance of the work, etc. Again, remember that typically the reviewer is not from the candidate's field. The same guidelines apply to statements concerning interdisciplinary work, teaching and service.

In some disciplines, it may be helpful for the referees to receive a copy of the candidate's Statement of Current and Planned Research, in addition to the CV and publications.