

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

From: John McCarthy, Acting Provost & Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

cc: Kumble Subbaswamy, Chancellor

Date: September 14, 2017

Subject: Promotion and Tenure Recommendations for Tenure-Stream Faculty

1. Introduction

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. The most significant changes are in sections 1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5A, and 4.5B.1, and in the table on page 14.

To my way of thinking, a tenure and/or promotion dossier consists of an assessment, argumentation for that assessment, and evidence in support of the argumentation. The assessment and argumentation are presented in the memoranda prepared at each level of review. The evidence consists of all the other material in the dossier – the CV, teaching assessments, reference letters, and so on. The argumentation in these memoranda is more effective to the extent that it is soundly reasoned and buttressed by strong evidence. Evidence that might seem to undermine the conclusions reached, such as a contradictory reference letter, should be confronted in the memoranda. When there is significant disagreement among members of the Department Personnel Committee (DPC) or College Personnel Committee (CPC), the opposing views should be presented for other levels of review to consider. This, then, is how I understand the following *Redbook* requirement:

In exercising its primary responsibility of peer review, 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 the basis both for full reviews of the recommendation, and for the decision. [Section 3.1]

2. Tenure Standards & Criteria

The Redbook notes the special responsibility that 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 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 latter criterion is often overlooked in the presentation of tenure cases. It is important to consider it and address it at each level of review (e.g., by discussing evidence of work in progress).

The Redbook also 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.

3. 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 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.*
- b) *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]*

4. Three Areas of Evaluation

The Redbook outlines three domains in which candidates for tenure and promotion must be assessed. In each domain, the assessment should refer directly to the evidence in the dossier and “high professional standards” to justify its conclusion.

For the award of tenure, the candidate must demonstrate excellence in two of these domains and at least strength in the third. For promotion to (full) Professor, assessment in all three domains is required, but there is no mandate to reach a conclusion about whether the record is excellent, strong, or not strong.

4.1 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. These standards vary across disciplines. 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 and deans. The reference letters are also very important in this regard. It is essential, then, not only to review a candidate’s accomplishments, but to contextualize them in ways that enable subsequent levels of review to understand the criteria that are most important in the specific field of study. (Also see section 4.5 below on “cultural standards.”)

It is important to communicate these standards and expectations to faculty throughout the pre-tenure period. The AFR and reappointment processes provide opportunities to communicate this information in the context of a preliminary assessment, but they are not sufficient in themselves; departments and schools/colleges should see to it that pre-tenure faculty are receiving mentoring and guidance from the time they start work through the preparation of the tenure dossier. Although the Redbook’s tenure and promotion standards include an assessment of the candidate’s potential for further contributions (see section 4.4 below), the case for tenure and promotion cannot be made exclusively or primarily on the basis of potential, because the Redbook mandates a review of “contributions” and “a record of achievement”.

Promotion to Associate Professor or Professor requires “recognition on and off campus from scholars or professionals in his or her field”; for promotion to Professor, this recognition must be “substantial”. The reference letters are, of course, an important component of the evidence for assessing whether this recognition has been achieved. Other sources of evidence may include book reviews, awards, citations of published work, publications in high-ranking journals or with well-regarded presses, fellowships, grants, and so on. As in the assessment of research/creative/professional activity, the departmental and college levels of review should contextualize the assessment of “recognition on and off campus”.

Letters from respected scholars, scientists, or other professionals are essential to the assessment of candidates for tenure and/or promotion. Letters that provide mere summaries of the record are significantly less useful than those that provide and explain the reviewer’s assessment of the candidate’s work. 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 to their assessment. Indicators of standing include the reviewer’s rank, the reviewer’s accomplishments and recognition in the discipline, and the stature of the department or institution at which the reviewer is employed. A reviewer’s positive assessment is more compelling if the reviewer is at arm’s length from the candidate. An arm’s-length reviewer is one who is not the candidate’s personal friend, doctoral or post-doctoral advisor, or recent collaborator. (Recent collaboration on work that involves a large number of collaborators, such as happens in some branches of physics, does not place a reviewer at less than arm’s length.)

Neither the Redbook nor the CBA specifies a particular number of letters that must be collected. If the number of letters from high-standing, arm’s-length reviewers is small, however, it may be harder to make the case for a specific assessment of the candidate’s work. This is particularly true when one of a small number of letters disagrees with the others, or if a letter is too cursory to be useful. Departments have been asked to establish an external-letter minimum in their by-laws. Many of the departments have done so. If they have not, the number of external letters to be solicited is ultimately determined by the Chair in consultation with the candidate, guided by disciplinary and school/college expectations. As a suggestion (but not an iron-clad rule), it has been my experience that most cases can be evaluated thoroughly with 5-6 arm’s-length letters.

4.2 Teaching

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. This is in accordance with the CBA, which specifies that the basic file contain “evaluations of teaching effectiveness, including but *not limited to* those of students” [emphasis added]. Achieving such a comprehensive assessment typically involves multiple sources of evidence, not just the student perspective, including:

- Evidence of teaching effectiveness not only in the formal classroom setting but also in less formal student interactions.
- Commentary on the range of courses taught and their importance to the curriculum. This perspective may include not only the departmental level but also the school/college level (for interdepartmental requirements) and the campus level (for general education requirements).
- Evaluation of the currency of course content as revealed in course syllabi.
- Evaluations from students; evaluations from peers, including observations of the candidate’s teaching; evaluations of the effectiveness of pedagogical innovations or improvements.

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

- Academic advising (unless this falls in the service category).
- Mentoring of undergraduates and directing of undergraduate research, including honors theses.
- Activity in graduate education beyond the classroom, including advising doctoral or master’s students, directing dissertations or theses, membership on graduate committees, mentoring, etc.
- Supervision of students engaged in independent study.
- Service learning and other forms of community engagement.
- The development of curricular materials, including those intended for alternative formats, such as distance learning.
- Innovative instructional efforts, such as creation or adaptation of courses for TBL classrooms or introduction of instructional technology.
- Curricular revision to better align curricula with departmental, school/college, and campus priorities.

Because the contributions of junior faculty to education beyond the classroom are sometimes unofficial, particularly in the area of graduate education, department-level reviewers should take note of any contributions that might not otherwise be apparent from the written record. Contributions to a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive educational experience should be noted in the assessment of teaching, and may also be relevant to the assessment of service.

Assessment of teaching based *solely* on numerical SRTI scores is [not recommended](#) by the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment (OAPA), which administers the SRTI. SRTI resources can be found [here](#); questions about the interpretation of SRTI can be directed to Associate Provost Martha Stassen at mstassen@acad.umass.edu.

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

4.3 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 relationships and establish 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 on the campus.

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 (of the department, college/school, university or profession); outreach to extend knowledge beyond the university or 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.

4.4 Continuing Professional Development

The Redbook's tenure standard requires "reasonable assurance of continuing development and achievement leading to further contributions to the University." The promotion standards require "promise of continuing professional development and achievement" (Associate Professor) or "significant potential for continuing professional achievement" (Professor). These mandated assessments should not be overlooked at the departmental and college levels of review. Generally, evidence of potential consists of work in progress or under submission, which the dossier might include in the CV or the candidate's personal statement, as well as assessments by external reviewers.

4.5 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.

5. 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 and Chancellor followed by 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 2017-18 constitutes the tenure decision year, September 21, 2017, is the deadline, but we encourage earlier notification.
- Requests to advance the tenure decision year (TDY) are initiated by the faculty member and reviewed by the DPC, head/chair, dean, and the Provost/Chancellor. (They are not reviewed by the CPC.)
 - Delays in the TDY are granted automatically under some circumstances. Under other circumstances, the request for a delay requires recommendations of the department personnel committee and head/chair; review and recommendation by appropriate administrative officials, typically the Dean and Provost; and approval by the Chancellor. If approved, the re-designated tenure decision year is set forth in a written agreement between the individual and the Chancellor.
 - It is a good practice for DPCs and heads/chairs to informally review all associate professors annually for their readiness for promotion to (full) professor, starting a few years after the award of tenure. This review may lead to a decision, in consultation with the candidate, to proceed with the promotion case. If not, it provides an opportunity to mentor the candidate about the path toward promotion. In any case, it should not be necessary for a faculty member who is ready for promotion to have to request it. Notwithstanding the results of this informal review, any associate professor has the right to be reviewed for promotion to full at their discretion.

- 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. (Departments are strongly urged to provide candidates with guidance and assistance in assembling and organizing these materials, to present the case in the most compelling fashion possible.)
 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 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. (Also see section 4.1 above.) 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 they wish 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 the candidate 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. Even candidates who have waived the right to read external and/or internal letters will know who provided letters.

With some exceptions, most solicitations of external evaluations for candidates under review in 2017-2018 were solicited over the summer of 2017. Templates for those reviews were provided last fall.

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.

The DPC should also address the Red Book’s Section 4.2, which requires consideration of program plans, flexibility by rank and tenure distribution, and affirmative action. The “4.2 Statement” should be made in a separate file for uploading to APWS. All other areas of review of the file will subsequently respond to this statement, either endorsing or expressing alternative assessments of the three areas. If the custom in the department is for the department head/chair to compose the “4.2 Statement,” the head/chair may provide the file to the personnel committee to upload; in that case, the committee may upload a separate endorsement or alternative assessment.

The committee uploads its recommendation to APWS, 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.¹ 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.

¹ If the candidate has waived access to the letters submitted by external evaluators, DPCs, heads/chairs, and other internal evaluators should take care that no external evaluator is identified, directly or indirectly, in their evaluations. 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 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.

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 that 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; must upload their written recommendation in the form of a memo to the file; and must respond to the previously uploaded "4.2 Statement." (APWS updates the table of contents and will automatically notify the candidate and the DPC of the additions to the file; they will have access to those additions once the new materials have been reviewed to ensure the confidentiality guaranteed to reviewers has not been compromised.) Again, the candidate may respond to the head/chair's recommendation and to any materials added by the head/chair by uploading a response to APWS where it will be visible to all subsequent levels of review.

SPC/CPC: 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; uploads its recommendation to APWS, including overall vote. Here too, if votes on each element of the tenure file (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 uploads its recommendation to APWS and must respond to the previously uploaded "4.2 Statement." (APWS will update the table of contents and will automatically notify the candidate and the DPC of the additions to the file; they will have access to those additions once the new materials have been reviewed to ensure that the confidentiality guaranteed to reviewers has not been compromised.) The candidate may respond to the SPC/CPC's recommendation and to any materials added by the SPC/CPC by uploading the response to APWS where it will be visible to all subsequent levels of review.

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 describe 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; adds their written recommendation; and must respond to the previously uploaded "4.2 Statement." APWS will update the table of contents and will automatically notify the candidate and the DPC of the additions to the file; they will have access to those additions once the new materials have been reviewed to

ensure that the confidentiality guaranteed to reviewers has not been compromised.)

The candidate may respond to the Dean's recommendation and to any materials added by the Dean by uploading the response to APWS where it will be visible to all subsequent levels of review.

Candidate's right to add materials: The candidate may supplement the file with new, relevant material at any stage in this process by uploading files to the Post-Submission Materials section of the file in APWS.

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 Redbook requires that a head/chair consult with the DPC before recommending differently from the DPC. Similarly, 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. Likewise, 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.” Similarly, 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. These queries should be CC-ed to all prior levels of review and to the candidate; they too have a right to respond. 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. Every addition to the file requires an updating of the file's table of contents. In the Academic Personnel Workflow System, the table of contents is automatically generated, and users of the system no longer need to compile the table as a separate document.
- G. Forms. In the past with physical promotion and tenure dossiers, departments attached file checklists, tenure summaries, and personnel action forms. Now that the dossier is in APWS, checklists are no longer required.

- H. File Uploads and Downloads. APWS now supports the download of entire files in the eRPT module as bookmarked PDFs. (Follow the green “Print / Download” link at the upper left corner of the browser window.) Files that have been uploaded in a format other than PDF will not be captured in these consolidated files but will still be available through each file’s main screen. We ask that all document files be uploaded in PDF format.
- I. 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 AY2017-2018 or the first semester of AY2018-2019. 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:

<i>Personnel Action</i>	<i>Tenure-decision Year</i>	<i>File Due to Dean</i>	<i>File Due to Provost</i>
Tenure & Promotion	2017-18 spring semester	November 6, 2017	January 16, 2018
	2018-2019 fall semester	March 5, 2018	April 16, 2018
Promotion only	NA	February 12, 2018	April 2, 2018

If you have questions about the procedural aspects of the promotion and tenure process, please contact Associate Provost Michael Eagen at meagen@umass.edu or 545-6221.

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 comments 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.

cc: College Personnel Officers
 Michael Eagen
 A. Williams