

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

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

cc: Kumble Subbaswamy, Chancellor

Date: June 2021

**Subject: Promotion and Tenure Recommendations for Tenure-Stream Faculty**

## 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. Non-trivial revisions since May 2020 are highlighted like this.

Dates and deadlines are provided on the [Provost's website](#) and are no longer included in this memorandum.

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]*

## 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 "continuing development and achievement" 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(a) (cited immediately 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 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]*

## 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 each domain is excellent, strong, or not strong.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020, many faculty members experienced disruptions to their research/creative and professional activity, teaching, and service. Faculty were invited to describe these via COVID-19 Impact Statements through the Annual Faculty Review process. At the faculty member's discretion, these statements, or a summary of these statements, may be included as a separate addendum to the faculty member's personal statement. The faculty member should indicate whether any COVID-19 Impact Statement(s) should be shared with external evaluators or be for internal use only. Internal evaluators (DPC, chair/head, CPC, and Dean) should assess the faculty member's work in light of any COVID-19 impacts reported in the dossier.

### 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 4.6 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".

During the COVID-19 pandemic period beginning in March 2020, any scholarly disruptions and decreased productivity, particularly when inconsistent with the prior or subsequent record, should not be interpreted as meaningful. In addition, scheduled conference presentations, invited talks, performances, and exhibitions that were cancelled should be weighed as if they had occurred. Virtual performances and exhibitions, along with presentations at virtual conferences and seminars, should be weighed as if they were face-to-face. Because the pandemic's impacts have fallen more severely on certain faculty (e.g., women, persons of color, parents), internal evaluators should avoid implicit or explicit comparisons with faculty members whose personal circumstances allowed their productivity to remain undiminished during the pandemic and to cases that were successful prior to the pandemic.

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 reviews of books by the candidate, 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](#). (Please use the most recent versions, which incorporate language on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.)

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 or astronomy, does not place a reviewer at less than arm's length.)

Departments sometimes ask whether it is permissible to depart from the template solicitation letter provided in APWS. We strongly recommend use of the template letter for consistency across the campus and to ensure compliance with the Redbook, the CBA, [and agreements with the MSP about advising reviewers on the effects of the pandemic](#). Moreover, the candidate has the right to review the solicitation letter and comment as to its "appropriateness." The CBA provides in Article 12.4.4 that "Prior to the solicitation, the candidate shall be provided with a copy of the solicitation letter and the list of the proposed referees and shall be given an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness of both." The template solicitation letter has been vetted and is, therefore, presumptively appropriate.

Solicitation letters for tenure or promotion of faculty who started work during or before Spring 2020 should remind external reviewers of the disruption that the campus experienced beginning on March 13, 2020 [and throughout the entirety of the 2020-2021 academic year](#) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Research facilities, including labs and libraries, were closed. [Faculty](#) had to move some or all their courses online. All formal evaluation of teaching was suspended in Spring 2020 and Fall 2021, and pre-tenure faculty were automatically granted a one-year delay in the tenure decision. [Most faculty](#) had to work out of their homes, K-12 students switched to online instruction or home schooling, and childcare [or other dependent care](#) was largely unavailable. The template solicitation letter to external reviewers cautions them against regarding approved TDY delays as "extra" time from which greater productivity can be expected. The same caution applies to internal reviewers.

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 [persuasive](#). 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/Head 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 around 6 arm's-length letters. The September 2015 guidance requiring more letters than that has long since been rescinded; nonetheless, we continue to receive cases with large numbers of external letters (10, 12, or even more). This is unnecessary; it significantly inconveniences your colleagues in the discipline and does not usually add much information about the case.

The campus currently has a subscription to Academic Analytics, a compiler of data on faculty research activity. When used with care, this tool can be helpful in doing planning, analysis, and assessment at the level of programs, departments, centers or institutes, and larger units. It can also be helpful to individual faculty members in identifying funding sources, publication venues, or potential collaborators, and it can suggest candidates for honorific awards. It is a very crude instrument for evaluating individuals, however -- far cruder than the detailed information that we routinely incorporate into our academic personnel actions. Indeed, the Academic Analytics company itself advises against the use of this tool in assessing individual faculty. For these reasons, Academic Analytics data should not be considered by internal evaluators (DPC, head/chair, SPC/CPC, Dean, Provost/Chancellor) in academic personnel actions.

## 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, including SRTI [and Forward Focus](#) scores, SRTI [and Forward Focus](#) open-ended comments, and letters; 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).
- Creation of open educational resources.
- 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, chairing or serving as a member of dissertation or thesis committees, mentoring, etc.
- [The largely invisible but crucially important teaching and service work of mentoring women students, students from first-gen or low-income backgrounds, students of color,](#)

and international students. This work is often undertaken by faculty who share one or more of these identities with the students they are mentoring. These contributions are frequently invisible because the faculty member may have no official connection with the students being mentored.

- 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. Introducing novel teaching methods may lead to a decline in SRTI scores. Faculty members should not be penalized for adopting innovative pedagogy that may lead to superior learning outcomes. DPCs, heads/chairs, CPCs, and Deans should be aware of this, as am I.
- Curricular revision to better align curricula with departmental, school/college, and campus priorities.
- Contributions to maintaining educational continuity for our undergraduate and graduate students during the period of remote learning beginning in Spring 2020 and continuing throughout the entire 2020-2021 academic year. Faculty success in moving courses online, developing substitutes for class labs and studios, maintaining student engagement, and providing students with a human connection to our institution should be acknowledged. Because SRTIs were not administered in Spring or Fall of 2020, reviewers should rely more heavily on faculty self-reporting of teaching accomplishments. Faculty are encouraged to be explicit about their efforts and include any evidence of successes in the realm of teaching.

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 student evaluation scores (SRTI and/or Forward Focus) is not permitted by the Academic Personnel Policy and the MSP labor agreement. The Office of Academic Planning and Assessment (OAPA), 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](mailto:mstassen@acad.umass.edu).

Forward Focus resources can be found [here](#). Student evaluations were not administered during the Spring and Fall 2020 semesters because of the shift to remote learning. Departments were permitted to administer either SRTI or Forward Focus for the Spring 2021 semester by agreement with the MSP. Spring 2021 student evaluations, however, should not be compared to past or future student evaluations in assessing teaching effectiveness.

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. Of particular note is the contribution that faculty make by mentoring their colleagues. Like the mentoring of students described in the teaching section above, this service activity may be invisible and it may contribute significantly to a campus climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This work can fall more heavily on faculty of color and women.

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, Faculty Senate, 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.

Many usual forms of service were difficult or impossible to carry out during the COVID-19 pandemic; committees did not meet and many conferences and professional events were canceled. At the same time, some faculty made extraordinary contributions to service, and their efforts should be recognized. One example is the contribution that some of our more tech-savvy faculty made by helping their colleagues to move their courses online. These individuals are particularly deserving of recognition because their contributions to our educational mission extended beyond the students in their own courses. Another example is the public service rendered by our faculty who contributed their expertise to understanding and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. A third example is contributions faculty made to their professional associations in transforming face-to-face conferences to virtual platforms. These examples are by no means an exhaustive list of how our faculty rendered unusual service during this difficult time.

### 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 Special Considerations for Promotion to Professor

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 in, say, the fourth year after the award of tenure, and certainly no later than the first post-tenure PMYR. 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 **never** 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.

I sometimes encounter references to a promotion case being "early". It cannot be said too often or too emphatically that **there is no minimum time between tenure and promotion to professor**. We have approved promotions to professor as soon as a year or two after the award of tenure. If the case merits promotion, it should be brought forward without any consideration of an arbitrary timeline. In particular, the notion that promotion occurs no sooner than six years after tenure is entirely fictitious, with no basis in policy.

The following text is taken from the Provost's December 20, 2018 memo offering a more expansive view of the requirements for promotion to professor:

*I am writing to share some thoughts on the criteria for promotion to (full) professor. I ask you to consider a somewhat more expansive view of the accomplishments that would qualify an individual for elevation to this rank.*

*Candidates for promotion to professor are required to demonstrate "a record of achievement sufficient to have gained substantial recognition on and off campus from scholars or professionals" and "significant potential for continuing professional achievement" (Redbook). They are evaluated in all three areas of research/creative activity, teaching, and service. Generally, personnel committees and the administrative levels of review have placed the greatest emphasis on the first of these areas. At an R1 university like ours, it is appropriate to focus on accomplishments in research/creative activity in assessing the records of candidate for promotion to our highest academic rank.*

*While an exceptional record of accomplishments in research/creative activity is and should be the norm for promotion to professor on our campus, the Redbook language is somewhat more flexible:*

**Article 4, Section 4.1** *High professional standards must be the basis for all personnel decisions. Personnel recommendations and decisions shall be made only after a review of all of 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 the light of the duties of the faculty member. [Emphasis added.]*

*As we all know, the Redbook language on tenure is much more specific, requiring demonstrated excellence in at least two of the three areas, and at least strength in the third. But the notion of “relative weight ... determined in the light of the duties of the faculty member” is potentially applicable to promotion to professor.*

*Consider the case of a faculty member who has maintained a modest level of activity in research/creative activity but has excelled in teaching or service. This individual may be making significant contributions to the scholarship of teaching and learning in the discipline or obtaining significant external funding to support teaching or diversity initiatives, or creating and launching new degree programs, or exercising major leadership at the department, school/college, or campus level in an administrative, MSP, or Senate role. In assessing these contributions, we should apply the same criteria as we do with faculty whose research records are the primary justification for promotion: it must be of a quality and extent “sufficient to have gained substantial recognition on and off campus from scholars or professionals”, and it must be sustained over a long period sufficient to demonstrate “significant potential for continuing professional achievement”. It seems to me that the Redbook’s flexibility in assigning weight allows for these possibilities.*

#### 4.6 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 MSP. 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 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 [Provost’s website](#) 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 2020-21 constitutes the tenure decision year, September 18, 2020, is the deadline, but we encourage much 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.) The case should not be initiated in APWS and outside letters should not be solicited until the change of TDY has been approved at all levels. Problems have sometimes arisen when one of the levels of review feels that the candidate is unready and the tenure case has been launched prematurely. Those issues should be sorted out before the case proceeds to the collection of external letters.
  - The need for these approvals should not be interpreted as discouraging requests to advance the tenure year, when it is appropriate to do so. Cases should not be discouraged simply because they seem “early” in comparison with our usual practices.
  - 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.
  - The template solicitation letter to external reviewers cautions them against regarding approved TDY delays as “extra” time from which greater productivity can be expected. The same caution applies to internal reviewers.
- 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 APWS 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 2019-2020 were solicited over the summer of 2019. The Provost's Office Academic Personnel website offers two templates for soliciting external reviews.

- 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 in tenure cases (but not for cases involving only promotion) 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 in cases for promotion only, without an award of tenure, should not include votes on each category of performance.

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 document 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 in the form of a memo to the file, including overall vote. If votes on each element of the tenure file (research/teaching/service) are taken, those votes must become part of the file. (APWS updates the table of contents and will automatically notify the candidate 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.) 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. If the candidate chooses to respond to the DPC's recommendation and the DPC wants to offer a rejoinder, the DPC's response should wait until the case has advanced to the college level of review. This limitation is necessary to avoid excessively delaying the case at the department level.

**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.

If the candidate chooses to respond to the head/chair's recommendation and the head/chair wants to offer a rejoinder, the head/chair's response should wait until the case

has advanced to the college level of review. This limitation is necessary to avoid excessively delaying the case at the department level.

**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, the DPC, and the department head/chair 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.

If the candidate chooses to respond to the SPC/CPC's recommendation and the SPC/CPC's wants to offer a rejoinder, the SPC/CPC's response should wait until the case has advanced to the dean's level of review. This limitation is necessary to avoid excessively delaying the case.

**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 all prior levels of review 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.



If the candidate chooses to respond to the dean’s recommendation and the dean wants to offer a rejoinder, the dean’s response should wait until the case has advanced to the provost’s level of review. This limitation is necessary to avoid excessively delaying the case.

**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.<sup>1</sup>

- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

- 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. It is helpful if departments complete the summary page because it is not automatically completed by APWS.
- 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. Faculty members to be reviewed during the 2021-2022 academic year are those whose tenure decision year occurs in the second semester of AY 2021-2022. 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, usually September, December, April, and June.

If you have questions about the procedural aspects of the promotion and tenure process, please contact Associate Provost Michael Eagen at [meagen@umass.edu](mailto:meagen@umass.edu) (413) 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, Associate Provost for Academic Personnel  
Ann Williams, Director of Academic Personnel