

GENERAL ADVICE FOR CANDIDATES WHEN CRAFTING A RESPONSE FOR THE PROMOTION FILE

1. Seek assistance from MSP. We can help you think through whether it is a good idea to add a response, depending on your specific case. We are always happy to look over a draft response and offer suggested edits. It's not easy to be your own advocate. Tone is important; you don't want to sound defensive or angry, just straightforward and confident.
2. Keep it short and concise; normally one page will suffice. There is already so much in a promotion file to read and you want to make it easy for your colleagues and administrative reviewers to take in your points.
3. No need to repeat things already in the file; do not quote yourself.
4. Don't be defensive in your response, especially when the votes are positive and you are responding merely to clear up a few errors or inaccuracies.
5. Never accentuate the negative. Don't repeat others' quotes that don't help your case. The last thing you want to do is to draw attention to those points so that they are at the top of your reviewers' minds. Summarize the problems as quickly as possible and move on to your points about what's good in your record.
6. Think about who your audience is. For instance, if you are responding to a problematic recommendation letter from your CPC, then your audience is the Dean and the Provost. It's easy to fall into the trap of addressing the CPC – but they already wrote their letter, and your response won't change it. So, you are writing to the Dean, and then the Provost – giving them some context and giving them a way to think about the problems with the CPC letter (without dwelling on the negative). Remember they'll be reading your response after reading probably 100 pages of documents, including your statement, publications, external and internal letters, the reviews of all prior levels...which gets back to point #2 about being brief! MSP is here to help.

CONTACT US AT:

Mass. Society of Professors

Email: msp@umass.edu

Phone: (413) 545-2206

Eve Weinbaum, MSP Grievance Officer

Email: weinbaum@umass.edu

Lori Reardon, MSP Director

Email: lreardon@umass.edu