

# **Administrator and Staff Engagement in the Promotion and/or Tenure Review Process**

Dr. Kathy Bieschke  
Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs  
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OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR FACULTY AFFAIRS

# Today's Topics

- Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
- Tenure and/or Promotion Policies and Processes
- Changes to Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness
- Q&A




# VPFA Website – [vpfa.psu.edu](http://vpfa.psu.edu)



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[Faculty Development & Recognition](#) ▾ 

## Important Faculty News

[Guidance for Faculty Work from Outside the U.S.](#) (February 1, 2023)

Review the latest [Penn State Faculty News Digest](#) emails.

Visit Penn State's official [Coronavirus Information page](#) and our [COVID-19 Resources for Faculty page](#).

## Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

The Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs (OVPPFA) is dedicated to facilitating and promoting the success of all faculty members at Penn State over their careers.



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# VPFA Office Staff



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# Special Guests

- **Nicole Gampe**, Faculty Activity Management Services Team,  
University Libraries
- **Shawnee Wagner**, Records Specialist/Associate,  
Human Resources



# Policy AC23

- “Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Regulations”
- Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs is the steward of AC23
- Website for University policies: [policies.psu.edu](http://policies.psu.edu)



# Administrative Guidelines

- How we operationalize AC23
- A comprehensive document with some changes made each academic year
- Important to know about AC23 and the guidelines –at [vpfa.psu.edu](http://vpfa.psu.edu)



# P&T Process Reminders

- **Recognize our goal:** To have a faculty appropriate to a major research university, with a commitment to teaching, research and service, so that the internal and external reputations of each unit are constantly improving.
- **Respectful, civil, and thoughtful disagreements and deliberations** are to be expected, and they are part of a healthy, academic discourse.
- **Understand our system of checks and balances**, with independent but mutually informed recommendations by faculty peers and administrators.





# Recommended Charge

- [Recommended Charge to Promotion and Tenure Committees](#) can be found on the VPFA website
- Familiar with unit and university p&t documents
- Determine the meeting modality at the first meeting
- Declare conflicts of interest; abstentions are not permitted
- May only vote if present for discussion
- Maintain confidentiality about deliberations
- Consultation must occur if disagreeing with previous review, summarize and reflect in letter
- Review to focus on unit criteria: confine review to contents of dossier and work with the relevant administrator to obtain needed information
- Every level of review must have access to the same information; additions to dossier due no later than 2/1/22
- Same criteria must be applied to all candidates regardless of the length of the probationary period



# Charge items specific to level of review

- **Level One: Department/School/Campus.** Evaluation of all criteria in light of unit guidelines; review should contextualize the candidate's work from a disciplinary perspective
- **Level Two: College/Campus.** Give due consideration to the judgment of disciplinary experts (previous level of review; external letter writers); evaluation in light of college/campus criteria and expectations, equity, procedural fairness
- **Level Three: University.** University criteria, equity within and among colleagues, and procedural fairness.



# Charge items applicable to all levels of review

- Split ratings are discouraged (e.g., very good-satisfactory) and if used, subsequent levels of review will use the lower rating as the judgement of the committee
- A rating for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning is required (i.e., excellent, very good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory); ratings for other areas are encouraged but not required
- The rationale for the vote of the committee should be in the letter; include majority and minority opinions



# Charge: COVID Impact

- *COVID's impact is ongoing*
- *For tenure-line faculty in their probationary period in calendar year 2020:*
  - [Guidance regarding a one-year extension due to COVID-19](#)
  - [FAQs pertaining to the guidance](#)
  - [COVID extension fact sheet \(June 2022\)](#)
- *Guidance documents*
  - [Guidance for administrators and members of P&T committees](#)
  - [Guidance for Promotion and Tenure Narratives](#)



# COVID-Specific Charge Items

- Recognize that events of 2020/21 had differential impact on faculty
- External reviewers were asked to be mindful about how the events of 2020/2021 might influence achievement and trajectory
- Consider specific impacts with a faculty candidate's discipline, research program, or creative practice.
- Be aware the delivery of instruction and assessment of teaching effectiveness were affected.
- Be familiar with adjustments to the P&T process due to COVID.
- Consider that the impact of events in 2020/2021 might extend backwards and forward.



# The Importance of the Dossier

## THE DOSSIER

The dossier paints a vital picture – especially for the University Committee, Provost, and President – and has many key components.



# Key Components of the Dossier

- Narrative statement
- Separate sections of the dossier should focus on accomplishments in three areas: Teaching, Research, and Service (and Patient Care and Librarianship, as appropriate).
- What should not be part of the dossier? The actual CV, sample of publications, course outlines, letters of thanks or appreciation. Statements about the candidate's personal life are discouraged.



# Key Components of the Narrative

- Tell the story of your work
- Updated guidance for the narrative statement due to COVID can be found [here](#) on the VPFA website.
- Candidates are encouraged (but not required) to describe how the events of 2020/21 (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic, societal/racial tensions, political unrest) impacted their work, and the steps they took to manage these impacts, in the narrative that accompanies their dossier for promotion and/or tenure.
- Candidates are encouraged to work closely with their department/division/school head, chief academic officer, or director of academic affairs to develop their narrative statements.
- **Regarding the length of the narrative,** *“We encourage candidates to be as succinct as possible. The narrative statement should not exceed 2,000 words; this word length will be reduced to 1600 words when there are no candidates pursuing tenure who were in their probationary period in calendar year 2020.”*





# Responsibility for the Dossier

- *Updated FAQ#3: Who is responsible for the preparation of the dossier?*

Preparation of the dossier is a collaborative activity between the academic unit head and the faculty member, and a shared responsibility. The academic unit head will take the lead on setting a timeline for dossier completion and the faculty member will assemble whatever materials are in their possession by the timeline given by the academic unit head. If the unit is using Activity Insight to generate the dossier, it is the faculty member's responsibility to ensure this information is entered into Activity Insight in accordance with the timeline specified. (Page 8, III.B.2; page 12, III.E.1). When disputes about the preparation of the dossier arise, the faculty member may choose to reach out to the unit ombudsperson for assistance.



# Dossier Reminders

- Signatory pages must be accurate and complete. Don't forget this part!
- Ensure the dossier leaves the academic unit in pristine condition.
- Use **current promotion and tenure forms**, available for download from GURU at <http://guru.psu.edu/forms/4-21PromotionandTenureForms.html>  
OR create promotion and tenure forms by using Activity Insight's Permanent Data screen and running the 'Promotion and Tenure Report.'
  - Promotion and Tenure forms will no longer be on GURU as of July 2024



# Dossier Reminders

- Research should span faculty member's entire career.
- Materials for teaching and service:
  - **For tenure review:** include materials from the date of Penn State employment in a tenure-eligible position.
  - **For promotion review:** may choose to report information about teaching and service for up to 10 of the most recent consecutive years since the last successful formal review.

# Dossier Reminders

## Teaching

- A summary of student comments should be provided.
- Peer reviews and advising surveys are to be included as parts of the dossier. Candidates have access to this material.
- Alternate assessments are no longer included in formal reviews, effective immediately

# Dossier Reminders

## Research/Creative Accomplishments

- Do not include works in progress and grants not funded for sixth year and promotion dossiers.
- Candidates are not expected to have an entry in every category

# Dossier Reminders

## Service

- Candidates are not expected to have an entry in every category
- Entries may only appear in one category
- This year, we modified a value formerly called "Administrative Support Work" to now be "Academic Leadership and Support Work" and we added a new value called "Assessment Activities."
  - We added this to provide space for faculty who are engaged in program assessment activities for majors and certificates, as well as assessment of general education learning outcomes, foundations, and domains

# External Letters

- We must have four external letters.
- External letters should come from people who can give honest and objective evaluations.
- Use judgment and discretion regarding all external letters.
- There should be no contact between the candidate and the reviewer. If a reviewer contacts a candidate, that candidate should immediately contact his or her department head, director of academic affairs, or school director.
- Advance contacts to potential reviewers should go through the dean or chancellor, the department head, the director of academic affairs, or the school director.
- Letters should not reference external reviewers by name or other descriptors that could reveal the person's identity, such as the institution where that person works.
- Include a log and list of only those who received all materials.



# COVID Impact on Requests for External Letters

- The “Sample Letters to External Evaluators” was updated with new language as of April 6, 2021 and will be maintained until there are no longer any candidates for tenure who were in the probationary period during calendar year 2020. See Appendix C.
- Additions include: reference to the Extension to the Probationary Period, encouragement to candidates to reflect the impact of COVID-19 in their narrative, and directives to ignore the length of the probationary period.





# Statements of Evaluation

- For tenure decisions, include all prior evaluative letters beginning with the earliest provisional review.
  - Include the names and ranks of committee members in the letter. Review committees should have at least three members.
- Vote totals should be included in the first paragraph of the letter.
- **For split votes,**
  - Include a rationale for the decision; Include majority and minority views in the letter
  - Tie votes are equivalent to “no” votes
- If a consultation occurs, include a summary of the consultation in the letter.
- Be consistent in the use of descriptors related to teaching, research, and service.
  - Per Appendix A.C. of the Administrative Guidelines, the following descriptors must be used to make a judgment of the candidate’s teaching: Excellent, very good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory
- For Joint Appointments, a letter from the secondary department head is required.



# Consultation

- Is required when there is a potential for disagreement between the current level of review and the previous level of review.
- Initiating a consultation does not mean there will be a disagreement.
- If a consultation occurs, resulting letters should reflect a consultation occurred and should provide a brief description of the issues discussed.
- Previous levels of review **MAY NOT** change their letters as a result of a consultation



# Stays of Tenure and COVID Extensions

- Faculty members for whom the probationary period has been extended may include additional evaluations beyond five years to provide sufficient evidence of evaluations or teaching assessment.
- No discussion of stays/leaves/extensions should appear in the dossiers.
- Extensions to the probationary period are given for legitimate reasons and vetted through my office; length of probationary period is irrelevant to the judgement being made.



# Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness

Candidates in 4 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> year reviews in fall of 2023 only	There are no changes to the review process, given that fall 2023 SEEQ's are not included in dossiers
Candidates in 2 <sup>nd</sup> year in Spring 2024 only	Fall 2023 SEEQ data will appear just as previous semesters' SRTE data appears in the dossier.
Candidates undergoing 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> , or 6 <sup>th</sup> year reviews in 2024-2025 only	Will be given the option of determining which approach to student feedback to include in their dossier.
Candidates in 1 <sup>st</sup> year and future hires	Will follow all new recommended changes, including the formation of a committee
All Candidates	<p>Alternate assessments that were included in the dossier for previous formal reviews should be retained and referred to in previous recommendation letters.</p> <p>Effective immediately, candidates are not required to include an alternative assessment in their dossier.</p>

# Changes to Guidelines: 2023-24

- A summary of all changes to the guidelines and FAQs can be found [here](#).
- **Some changes that have not yet been discussed**
  - **V.I.8. (Page 26)** – new bullet was added to clarify that units may choose to not complete an annual review during the same year as a formal review of tenure-line faculty or may complete an abbreviated review.
  - **Appendix N (Pages 72-73)** – a new appendix was added for “Guidelines for Sharing Elements of the Dossier Following Formal Reviews for Tenure-Line Faculty”



# Frequently Asked Questions

- Last updated in July 2023, the P&T FAQ document on the VPFA website contains 84 questions and answers.
- Note: The FAQ document is a resource, but not policy. Follow AC23 and the Administrative Guidelines, in addition to the policies of your college, campus, school, and department.
- Like the Administrative Guidelines, the current FAQ has changes from last year.
- Contact academic unit head or VPFA if you cannot find an answer to your question!



# Added language to FAQ #28

- *If a faculty member is on paid or unpaid leave of any kind, may the faculty member serve on a promotion and tenure review committee?*

No, while on leave, including sabbatical leave, faculty members may not participate on promotion and tenure review committees. **Faculty members on leave are not expected to complete assigned tasks during the leave.** The academic unit should respect the purposes of the leave, including sabbatical leave, and there should be no expectation that faculty on sabbatical leave donate their research time for department service of any kind. (Pages 16-17, IV.C. for a discussion of the selection and appointment of review committees). **This is fair to both the faculty member and to the candidates under review as an inconsistent application of this expectation can lead to inequities.** Academic units should carefully consider whether to allow a faculty member on a one-semester leave in the spring semester to serve on a promotion and tenure committee that may be called back into service while the faculty member is on leave in the spring as the faculty member would not be able to participate in any discussions, meetings, or votes.



# New FAQ #38

- *When will the changes recommended by the Senate pertaining to teaching effectiveness take effect?*

Effective fall of 2023, a revised student feedback survey (Student Educational Experiences Questionnaire) will be administered in all courses. This change will not impact 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year reviews as those dossiers will not typically include student feedback data from the fall 2023 semester. In spring of 2024 only, dossiers will include data from the student feedback survey. The changes to how student feedback will be used moving forward is considered a major change to university guidance that will take effect in 2024-2025 for all candidates undergoing 2<sup>nd</sup> review; candidates undergoing formal 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, or 6<sup>th</sup> year review in 2024-2025 will be given the option of determining which approach to student feedback to include in their dossier.





# New FAQ #41

- *Must I include an alternate assessment of teaching effectiveness in my dossier?*

Effective July 1, 2023, candidates are not required to include an alternate assessment in their dossier. Alternate assessments that were included in the dossier for previous formal reviews should be retained as they may be referred to in previous recommendation letters. Moving forward, faculty at Penn State will be required to submit a self-reflection as part of their annual review.



# New FAQ #42

- *May I include the results of the mid-semester feedback survey in my dossier?*

Mid-semester feedback is formative and will not be shared with administrators. Candidates will not be permitted to include information about their mid-semester feedback in their dossiers or supplemental materials. If the candidate wishes to discuss mid-semester feedback in their narrative, they may choose to do so.

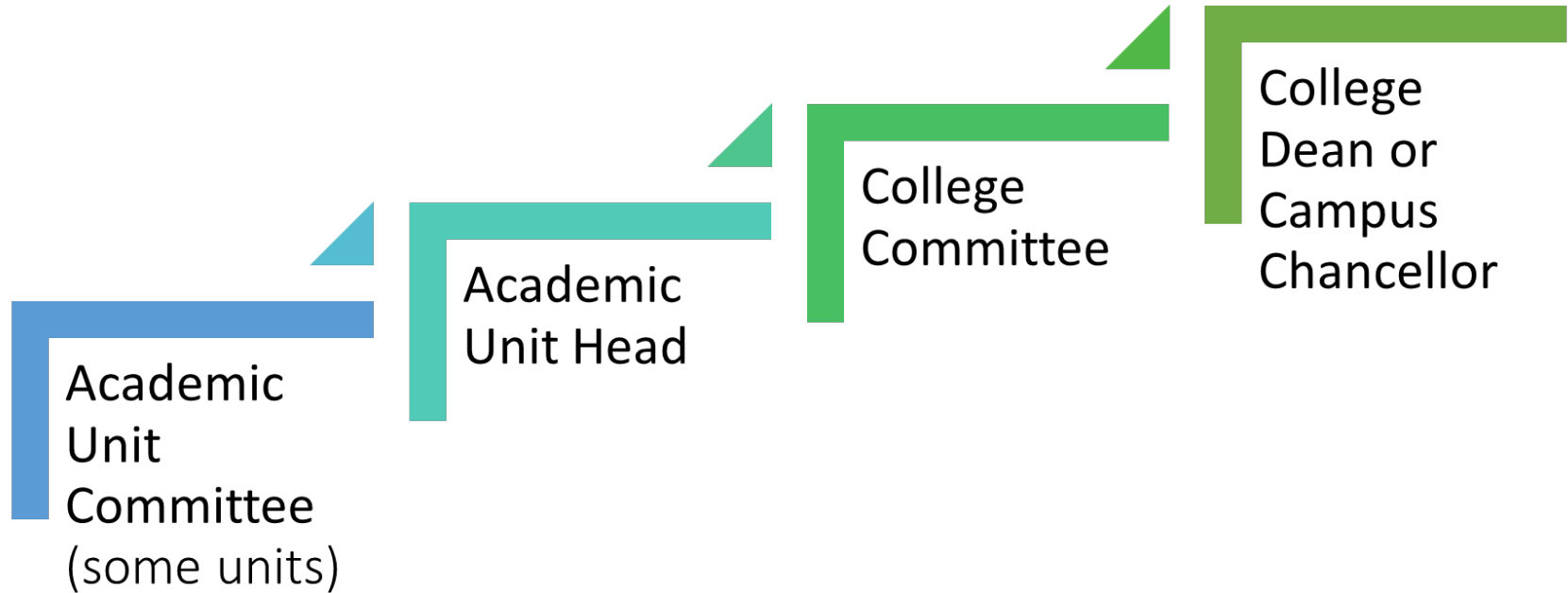


# Policy AC-21

- “Definition of Academic Ranks”
- Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs is steward of AC21
  - Abby Diehl oversees the promotion process of non-tenure-line faculty members
- Website for University policies: [policies.psu.edu](https://policies.psu.edu)



# Non-tenure-line Promotion Procedures



# Non-tenure-line Promotion Procedures

## Non-Tenure-Line Administrative Guidelines:

- implement the University's policy on academic ranks—AC21—and specifically non-tenure-line ranks and promotion;
- supplement but do not alter basic policies set forth in AC21;
- are revised periodically to reflect recommendations of faculty committees and administrators for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the review process.

[https://vpfa.psu.edu/files/2023/07/Non-Tenure-Line-Administrative-Guidelines\\_6-30-23.pdf](https://vpfa.psu.edu/files/2023/07/Non-Tenure-Line-Administrative-Guidelines_6-30-23.pdf)

# Key Personnel

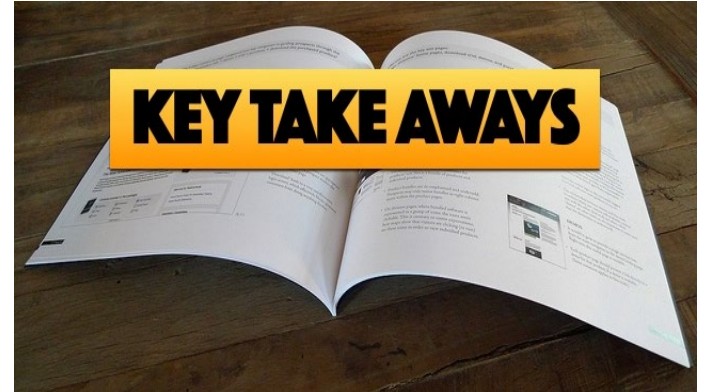
- **Nicole Gampe**, Faculty Activity Management Services Team, University Libraries
- **Shawnee Wagner**, Records Specialist/Associate, Human Resources





# A Few Final Thoughts

- Know and follow policies
  - Department/school
  - College/campus
  - University policy, guidelines, FAQs
- Confidentiality
- When in doubt, call! Staff in the Office of the VPFA (814-863-7494, or 3-7494 if on campus) with any additional questions.





# Committee Chair and Committee Member Engagement in the Tenure-line Promotion Review Process

**Monday, September 19, 2023, 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

**Target Audience:** College and Unit Committee Chairs and Committee Members

This session will cover any changes to promotion and tenure guidelines that are new for the academic year and is an opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the review process for tenure-line faculty.

# Thank You.

# Questions or Comments?



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