5.5 Guidelines of the Academic Council for the Evaluation of Candidates for Promotion Conferring Tenure

5.5
GUIDELINES OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL FOR THE EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR PROMOTION CONFERRING TENURE

[As amended through May 23, 2018]

The statement in Sec. 405d of the Academic Council By-Laws, which states that references to departments also pertain in cases in which colleges, programs or ad hoc committees make or join in a recommendation, applies to these Guidelines.

I. The Department’s Relation to the Candidate Sec. 101.

Scheduling the Evaluation

Following consultation with the candidate, the chair will set:

(a) The deadline for the candidate’s submission of his/her current curriculum vitae and the body of scholarly and/or other creative work to be evaluated.

(b) The anticipated time for the completion of the department’s evaluation of his/her candidacy.

Sec. 102. Consideration for tenure or promotion conferring tenure before a review is mandatory

(a) When a tenure-track faculty member requests consideration for tenure or for promotion conferring tenure before such a review is mandatory, the tenured members of the department must give preliminary consideration to that request. If the majority of the tenured members of the department present and eligible to vote do not vote to conduct a full review, the chair must notify the candidate in a timely manner. The candidate may request reconsideration based upon additional information. The tenured faculty in the department must honor this request; however, the candidate is not entitled to a full review if the tenured faculty in the department do not think it is advisable.

(b) If the majority of the tenured faculty of the department present and eligible to vote do vote to conduct a full review, they will so notify the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the candidate. Consideration of the case must then proceed to a vote on whether or not to recommend tenure or promotion conferring tenure in keeping with the timetable presented in section 201. Once a decision has been made to conduct a full review, the review of the case will follow the procedures in the Faculty Handbook.

For additional information about tenure cases reviewed prior to the mandatory review year, see sections 103, 307, and 308.
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Sec. 103. The Evaluation

(a) Teaching

1. Student Evaluations. The student evaluations, collected by the Office of the Registrar and deposited in the Office of Academic Affairs, should be examined by the department chair. Other tenured members of the department may examine them as well.

2. Other Student Evaluations. In addition to the evaluations collected by the Office of the Registrar, the department may wish to solicit other evaluations from former or current students of the candidate.

3. Faculty Peer Evaluation. The chair may solicit information from faculty members within or without the department, e.g., those who have taught courses jointly with the candidate.

4. The Candidate’s Own Evaluation. Candidates should be invited to submit to department chairs for inclusion in their dossiers any teaching materials that they consider pertinent to their cases, such as course syllabi, examinations, lecture notes, and so on. They may, if they wish, make any further statement concerning their teaching that they consider relevant. Furthermore, candidates should feel free to request chairs to consult specified students—alumni or undergraduates—concerning their teaching.

(b) Scholarship

1. Outside Opinions

   a. Ordinarily the chair should solicit from outside the Wesleyan faculty three to five opinions from qualified authorities of the department’s choosing.

   b. The candidate may name additionally up to three such authorities and request the chair to consult them. There may be more or fewer for cause. In both cases, the replies should be held in confidence from the candidate. The solicitors of the letters should represent that these practices of confidentiality are in force (namely, that the replies will be shared only with tenured members of the department, the Advisory Committee, and the Review and Appeals Board). The letters of solicitation should inquire at least concerning (a) the degree of acquaintance with the work of the candidate, (b) an appraisal of the work itself and (c) the candidate’s standing in his/her field amongst scholars of comparable age and experience. Copies of all letters received should be submitted to the Advisory Committee when the department is making positive recommendations.
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2. **Inside Opinions.** The chair of the department may, at the candidate’s or department’s behest, request letters of evaluation from authorities who are members of the Wesleyan faculty (either inside or outside the candidate’s department) and who are familiar with his/her work. If the candidate requests a letter of evaluation from a program/department/college of which the candidate is a core member, the department chair or the promotion committee chair must solicit a letter from the program/department/college for inclusion in the dossier provided to the Advisory Committee. These should be considered as supplementary to, but not substitutes for, outside opinions. In all cases, the letters of evaluation should be held in confidence.

3. **Bases of Judgment.** The usual evidence of scholarly publication consists of books, monographs, and articles. The latter could be published or accepted for publication in edited books, anthologies, or recognized scholarly journals. Such evidence might include anthologies, translations, technical reports, reviews, commentaries, textbooks, and so on, where such productions are pertinent to the evaluation of the candidate’s performance and promise as a scholar.

Manuscripts, drafts, research proposals, public talks, and like may be included only if they can be evaluated by qualified external judges. Lectures that have been “refereed” could serve as evidence. Candidates should be made aware throughout their time at Wesleyan that their case for tenure or promotion is likely to be stronger if work to be evaluated is published or accepted for publication.

It may be the normal expectation of some departments to require a book or monograph or a specific number of significant papers. Where such a requirement exists, it should be made clear to the candidate when he/she comes to Wesleyan that this is the case.

Departments in which publication is not ordinarily expected should arrive at separate and clear understandings with the Office of Academic Affairs and the Advisory Committee as to what constitutes the usual evidence of performance and promise in that field. These understandings as to “the usual evidence” should be embodied in written statements prepared by such departments, to be reviewed and adopted by the Office of Academic Affairs after appropriate consultation. Such statements would be routinely made available to all members of those departments as well as members of the Review and Appeals Board.

(c) **Colleagueship**

See the “By-Laws of the Academic Council,” **Part V, Sec. 502 (c).** Testimony regarding colleagueship shall be solicited by the department chair.

The same expectations of accomplishments and promise in scholarship, teaching, and colleagueship apply to all cases reviewed for tenure and promotion conferring tenure. In particular, there must be clear and sufficient evidence that the normal expectations of excellence evidenced in scholarship, teaching, and colleagueship have been met during the shortened time frame available in cases reviewed prior to the mandatory deadline.
Sec. 104. Candidates and the Evaluation

In addition to being informed ahead of time of the schedule of the evaluation, to nominating referees of their teaching and scholarship, to commenting on the regular student evaluations of their teaching and to supplementing them with course materials (for all of which see above), candidates have the following rights in relation to their departments:

(a) Candidate’s Statement. Candidates should have the opportunity to state their own cases before the tenured members of the department in person or in writing.

(b) Counselor. Candidates may, if they wish, request a tenured member of the faculty, usually of their own department (who may well be the chair), to assist them in presenting their cases to the department, to review their dossiers, and to ensure that their rights and interests are duly observed in the department and in the presentation of their cases to the Advisory Committee. The acceptance of a role as counselor in no way compromises the tenured person’s right to come to an independent judgment and to vote as he/she sees fit.

(c) Information and Confidentiality. It is the responsibility of the chair and the counselor to keep the candidate informed of the status of the case, including a summary of the Advisory Committee’s general reactions to the evidence on teaching and scholarship. But in aiding the candidate, the chair and counselor are cautioned not to impair the confidentiality of the Advisory Committee’s procedures and discussions.

Sec. 105. Departmental Consultation in the Evaluation

Chairs should consult all non-tenured members of the department except those in their first and last years at Wesleyan. The counsel of the non-tenured faculty members may be oral or written. After appropriate consultation with the department, and with the concurrence of a majority of the tenured faculty, the chair recommends to the president promotion to tenure or not.
II. The Department’s Relations to the Office of Academic Affairs and the Advisory Committee

The statement in Sec. 401 of the Academic Council By-Laws, which states that when a department has fewer than three Academic Council members, the VPAA, in consultation with the chair of the department, must supplement that number to a minimum of three, applies to these Guidelines.

Sec. 201. Deadlines for Preparing the Evaluation

In the calendar year preceding a mandated tenure decision the chair will inform the Office of Academic Affairs of:

(a) the deadline set by the department for the submission to it of the candidate’s current curriculum vitae and the body of scholarly and/or other creative work to be evaluated:

by May 30 for candidates whose appointments end on June 30, and by September 15 for candidates whose appointments end on December 30;

(b) the anticipated time for the completion of the department’s evaluation:

by September 1 for candidates whose appointments end on June 30, and by December 15 for candidates whose appointments end on December 30.

The deadlines for the submission to the Advisory Committee of all materials to be evaluated are:

November 1 of the preceding calendar year for candidates whose appointments end on June 30, and
February 15 of the same calendar year for candidates whose appointments end on December 30.

In order to be considered for tenure or promotion conferring tenure prior to the mandatory review year, the cases of candidates whose appointments end on June 30 must meet the notification and submission deadlines set for mandatory reviews of candidates whose appointments end June 30. Similarly, in order for candidates to be considered for tenure or promotion conferring tenure prior to the mandatory review year, the cases of candidates whose appointments end December 30 must meet the notification and submission deadlines set for mandatory reviews of candidates whose appointments end December 30.

Requests for extension of these deadlines must be submitted in advance to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Advisory Committee. Extensions will apply only if these requests are approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and by the Advisory Committee.

Sec. 202. Department’s Presentation of the Recommendation
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(a) Scheduling Meeting with Advisory Committee. The chair, working through the Office of Academic Affairs, should make an appointment with the Advisory Committee as far in advance of the intended appearance as possible.

(b) Presentation of the Written Case. As soon as possible, and not later than two weeks before the appointment with the Advisory Committee, the chair should deposit at the Office of Academic Affairs electronic copies of the following:

1. Department letter.
2. Updated curriculum vitae of the candidate.
3. Candidate’s research and teaching statements.
4. List of referees, indicating the candidate’s and the department’s choices.
5. Assessment of the quality of journals and presses.
6. Sample invitation letter to referees and sample follow-up letter.
7. Referees’ letters.
8. List of materials sent to referees.
9. In cases where materials that have been subjects of evaluation were not electronic (such as artwork or hard copies of books), the chair should arrange with the Office of Academic Affairs to make appropriate copies available.

[For more detail, see the Advisory Committee policy on Presentation of Cases for Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion.]

(c) Department’s Oral Presentation of the Case. All tenured members of the department shall be requested to meet with the Advisory Committee at the appointed time to explain the reasons for their adherence to or dissent from the department’s recommendation, and to answer such questions as are put to them. The counselor, if a member of another department, shall be requested to attend as well. In addition, the department chair may invite to be present and testify such Wesleyan colleagues outside the department as he/she sees fit.

(d) Additional Information. The department chair should stand ready to supply the Office of Academic Affairs and the Advisory Committee with additional information as desired, and, with senior colleagues, to meet again with the Advisory Committee for additional testimony if required.

III. The Relation of the Office of Academic Affairs and the Advisory Committee to Candidates

Sec. 301. Notification. The Office of Academic Affairs will notify candidates in writing as far ahead as possible of the date on which their case is to be introduced in the Advisory Committee.

Sec. 302. Response to Student Evaluations. When student evaluations are returned to untenured faculty members, they shall be routinely invited to return a written comment on them to the Office of Academic Affairs as well as to their department chairs. They shall be invited again by the office, when their case is considered, to
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make a general summary comment on the evidence

provided by the student evaluations. These comments shall be made available to the Advisory Committee.

Sec. 303. Record of Leaves. In addition, the Office of Academic Affairs shall make available to the Advisory Committee the candidates’ applications for and reports on sabbaticals and leaves of absence.

Sec. 304. Additional Outside Opinions. The Office of Academic Affairs and the Advisory Committee, after notification and discussion with the department chair, the counselor, and the candidate, may solicit additional opinions of a candidate’s work from outside and inside authorities. These opinions and the invitations to offer them are to be subject to the procedures guiding the department chair, the counselor, and the candidate in their solicitation of opinions (see Sec. 102b. and Sec. 202b.)

Sec. 305. Candidate May Meet with Advisory Committee. The candidate may appear, at his/her request, before the Advisory Committee, and he/she may submit statements in writing to that body.

Sec. 306. Timetable for Completion of Advisory Committee and Review and Appeals Board Review. The Advisory Committee must proceed to a vote in a timely manner to recommend or not to recommend tenure or promotion conferring tenure so that the university may comply with the deadlines stipulated in section 307. In the case of a positive recommendation from the Advisory Committee, the concurrence or non-concurrence of the Review and Appeals Board must also proceed in a timely manner to comply with these deadlines.

Sec. 307. Informing the Candidate. It is the responsibility of the Office of Academic Affairs to keep the department chair (and the candidate’s counselor if these are not the same) informed of the status of the case. In a review for tenure or promotion conferring tenure conducted prior to the mandated review year, a candidate will be notified of the university’s decision by June 30 if the case was submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs as per the above deadlines in the previous fall semester; and by December 30 if the case was submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs as per the above deadlines in the previous spring semester.

Sec. 308. Declinations and Prior Reviews. Candidates for tenure or promotion conferring tenure may decline to be considered in the year in which such decisions are mandated by AAUP principles. A decision to decline a review constitutes a waiver of the right to be considered for tenure. Departments may not request the Advisory Committee to consider candidates who have declined or who have not been granted tenure or promotion conferring tenure at the conclusion of prior full university reviews by the University, i.e. reviews in which the final outcomes have been reported to the candidate in writing by the president or his/her designee.