

## University-Wide Tenure Reviews Proposal for a Standing Committee System

- ★ The Provost should establish a single standing committee to evaluate candidates for tenure. The committee's mission will be to establish consistency of standards for tenure across the University. To that end, the committee will conduct a final evaluation of every candidate for tenure, including those from Barnard College but excluding those from the Law School, to insure that there has been a strong qualitative review of the candidate at the department and school levels and that the nominee meets the University's high standards for tenure. In conducting their evaluation, the Provost and the standing committee expect to rely on rigorous and robust procedures of review at the department and school levels.
- ✓ The standing committee will consist of thirteen members, chosen by the Provost, from among the tenured faculty of Columbia's colleges and schools, including Barnard, to serve staggered terms of three years. The members of the committee will be broadly representative of the disciplines covered by the University's faculty, but there will not be a fixed distribution of seats on the committee by school, department or discipline.
- ✓ The committee will have a faculty chair, chosen annually by the Provost from the membership of the full committee. The chair will direct the committee's meetings and will advise the Provost on the composition of the review panels that will evaluate the individual candidates.
- ✓ Members will be compensated for service through a mechanism that fits the context of the school or department in the University where they are appointed. This could be a one-course reduction in their teaching loads (preferably in the spring), a research fund of \$10,000 which they can use to support their academic work, or an appropriate percentage of salary coverage. The chair of the standing committee will receive twice the compensation given to the other members in light of the greater responsibilities he or she will have in the University's new system for evaluating tenure nominations.
- ✓ Each candidate will be reviewed by a subset of seven members of the standing committee chosen by the Provost with the advice of the committee chair, except in the case of candidates from Barnard as described below. Ideally, every member of the standing committee will review more than 50 percent of the cases each year.
- ✓ Each review panel should include as many members who are close in specialty to the candidate as possible but should also include at least one who is outside of the field. No member of the standing committee should serve on the review panel for a candidate from his or her department (or, for candidates in the Arts and Sciences and Barnard College, in the cognate department at the other institution), with whom he or she collaborates or whom he or she has trained or been trained by. In selecting the members of a review panel, the Provost should take care to ensure an appropriate breadth of knowledge, especially when the candidate's work is interdisciplinary in nature.
- ✓ The process by which candidates from Barnard are evaluated is currently defined in the University's inter-institutional agreement with the College to include the participation of two of its faculty on each *ad hoc* committee. In a standing committee system, every review panel for candidates from the College will also include two of its faculty. In any year in which there are either one or no Barnard members on the standing committee, the Provost will, in consultation with the Provost at Barnard, select three of its tenured faculty at the start of the academic year to serve on the reviews for its candidates. The Provost, on the advice of the standing committee's chair, will appoint one or two of the three to serve on the review panels for the individual candidates from the College, depending on whether there is a Barnard faculty member on the standing committee.
- ✓ Membership on the standing committee will be public, but the membership of the review panels should be kept confidential, as should the date of the meetings at which a nomination is considered, the content of the deliberations of the standing committee and the final vote. The members of the standing committee and any witnesses who appear before it should be expected to observe strict confidentiality.
- ✓ Members of the standing committee should not discuss nominations with anyone outside the committee itself. Anyone with questions about a case or who wishes to provide the standing committee with information should contact the Office of the Provost.

## ★ Standing Committee Schedule

- ✓ The standing committee will be scheduled to meet twice a month from September through February and at weekly intervals from March through June. The meetings should be held at a standardized date and time, established by the Office of the Provost in advance of the academic year. It is quite likely that some of the meetings will be canceled, especially during the fall term, for a lack of nominations to review.
- ✓ Review panels should be established for each potential candidate in September or as early as possible in the case of those that come to the attention of the Office of the Provost later in the academic year. At the same time, the Provost, with advice from the standing committee's chair, should assign responsibility for leading the evaluation to one member of the review panel and should designate another as the second reader. The Provost should have the discretion to change the membership of the review panels but should consult with the chair of the standing committee before making any substitutions.

## ★ Standing Committee Procedures

- ✓ Nominations will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis with the exception of those involving key recruitments and retentions, which should receive priority. To be considered at a particular meeting, the nomination and full supporting dossier for a candidate should be submitted to the Office of the Provost no less than three weeks in advance.
- ✓ The dossiers for candidates should contain the information currently required for an *ad hoc* review: a selection of the candidate's publications as well as all outside letters of evaluation, the statements from the nominating unit that constitute the case and the other materials described in the Provost's current tenure review guidelines as being part of the dossier.
- ✓ Prior to the meeting at which the case will be discussed, the members of a review panel should individually make their own preliminary assessments of the adequacy of the case made on behalf of the nomination. They will submit that assessment to the Office of the Provost through a secure web-based system at least three days in advance of the meeting. Those assessments will be available to other members of the review panel and the rest of the standing committee only after all of them have been submitted. In addition to providing their assessments, the members of a review panel will use the on-line system to indicate whether they want to hear from any witnesses at the first hearing of the case.
- ✓ A minimum of five members of a review panel must be present at the meeting at which the nomination is considered in order to reach a decision on the case. If a quorum of five is not available, consideration of the nomination will be postponed until the next meeting.
- ✓ Other members of the standing committee may be present at the discussion of a nomination, may ask questions and, when appropriate, may seek to resolve differences within a review panel over the qualifications of the candidate. However, only the members of the review panel will vote on whether the candidate should receive tenure.
- ✓ Every nomination will be discussed at least once regardless of the nature of the preliminary on-line assessments. The committee will not hear from witnesses at the first hearing unless one or more members of the review panel, using the on-line assessment system, ask for them to appear. At the end of the discussion, the review panel should decide if it is ready to vote on the nomination. Any member of the review panel can ask for a postponement of the vote due to concerns that the case presented on behalf of the candidate is not adequate. However, the decision on whether to carry over the evaluation to another meeting should be made by the entire review panel.
- ✓ If the nomination requires further consideration, the review panel will inform the Provost of any additional written information it may require before a second hearing can occur. If there is a second hearing, the Provost will also arrange for witnesses to appear to provide the review panel with information on the quality of the candidate's work and the significance of the appointment for the nominating department or school. At the second meeting, the department chair or dean, or a colleague designated by the chair or dean, should present the case for the nomination. The chair or dean will have the option of asking to have a second witness who is closer to the candidate's field appear, but the final decision on whether to have any additional witnesses should rest with the review panel.

- ✓ Second hearings should occur no later than one month after the first if the nature of the case and scheduling permit. Further delays may occur if the Provost, on the advice of the review panel and in consultation with the chair of the standing committee, finds that additional time is necessary to gather further documentation or to address issues raised by the panel.
- ✓ The vote of the review panel will be advisory to the Provost who will continue to make the final decision on whether to forward a nomination to the President and the Trustees. If the Provost chooses not to accept the formal recommendation of the review panel, he/she will inform the standing committee of the reasons why. As a general rule, candidates should not be awarded tenure without a positive vote by the review panel. Moreover, the Provost should consider carefully whether to recommend a candidate for tenure when there is a significant split in the review panel's positive vote.
- ✓ Appeals of negative decisions should be permitted only if there are procedural irregularities with the first review that were sufficiently serious to place in question the validity and fairness of the original, negative decision. If the Provost agrees to reopen consideration of a nomination for this reason, the review should be reconsidered by the standing committee as a whole.

★ **Deadlines for Submission of Nominations**

- ✓ The schools and departments will be expected to adhere to the following schedule for submitting information about their internal candidates to the Office of the Provost.
  - They should send the Office confirmation by May 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding year that they have sent out the requests for the external evaluations of those candidates.
  - By December 15<sup>th</sup>, they should submit the nominations and dossiers.
  - The Provost should allow exceptions to these deadlines when junior faculty have unexpectedly received offers of tenure from other universities.
  - The Provost may also need to permit exceptions when the size of a school's case load and its schedule for its internal evaluation of its junior faculty do not allow it to complete all of its reviews by December 15<sup>th</sup>. In these cases, the Provost may wish to negotiate a separate schedule for the submission of the nominations and dossiers for the school's internal candidates. However, all nominations for junior faculty, with the exception of those who have unexpectedly received external offers of tenure, should be received no later than February 15<sup>th</sup>.
- ✓ The schools and departments should not be expected to conform to this schedule with external candidates. However, the latest date for the submission of nominations and dossiers should be March 31<sup>st</sup>, except in the case of unanticipated opportunities to recruit distinguished scholars from other universities.
- ✓ If a school misses the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for asking for the referee evaluations for internal candidates, the dean/executive vice president will be required to write to the Provost explaining the reason for the delay and how the school will insure that the December 15<sup>th</sup> deadline will be met. If it misses the December 15<sup>th</sup> date for submitting nominations and dossiers for those candidates without the prior permission of the Provost, the standing committee should defer consideration of the nomination until it reviews all other cases. Candidates should not be reviewed during the academic year when the school fails to observe the March 31<sup>st</sup> date for the final submission of nominations and dossiers except in the case of unanticipated opportunities to recruit distinguished scholars from other universities or the need to match late offers of tenure extended to members of the junior faculty.

**Advisory Committee for a Standing Committee System**

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