

## **Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure, Department of Family & Consumer Sciences**

This document specifies standards and procedures for Promotion and Tenure within the Department of Family & Consumer Sciences. The goal of the Promotion and Tenure process is to document and recognize excellence *and to support academic freedom. Through the promotion and tenure process, the University makes a commitment to faculty members who have demonstrated excellence, and this commitment affords the opportunity to engage in scholarly activities requiring greater investment of time and risk but also the potential for more significant impact and outcomes. Promotion and tenure supports scholarship that could not take place without such an investment and commitment. Because of the magnitude of the commitment of promotion and tenure, the standards for promotion and tenure provide guidelines for evaluating excellence, and for evaluating the probability of continuing excellence beyond the granting of promotion and tenure.*

### **I. Standards for Promotion and Tenure**

Candidates for promotion and tenure should demonstrate significant contributions across all categories of the appointment, and should excel in one or more area(s) of the appointment. Candidates for promotion and tenure shall be evaluated according to their appointment. Standards for excellence in teaching; research, scholarship and creative activity; outreach/cooperative extension; and professional service are delineated in the document, *Guidelines for the Evaluation of Faculty: Annual Evaluation, Promotion, and Continuous Appointment, College of Education and Human Sciences.*

### **II. Procedures for Annual Evaluation**

Tenure-leading probationary faculty members are on a tenure track, but not yet tenured; they have an appointment for a stated period of time, usually one year. For these persons, the annual evaluation provides information concerning the faculty member's progress toward promotion and tenure. Tenure-leading probationary faculty undergo a particularly rigorous evaluation that includes a determination of whether their performance is likely to meet expectations for the indefinite future. These faculty should be evaluated annually in this manner through their sixth year. The annual evaluation communicates areas of progress and strengths, and alerts the faculty member to performance deficiencies at the earliest possible time. Any concerns held by the Department Chair or the *Peer Review Committee* regarding the faculty member's performance should be clearly stated in the written evaluation. The review will include specific recommendations for improvement and professional development that will enhance the faculty member's chances of eventually achieving promotion and tenure.

*Tenure-leading probationary faculty shall undergo a comprehensive review during the third year of their probationary period, the purpose of which is to provide both summative and formative feedback to the faculty member, including specific recommendations intended to position the probationary faculty member for a successful promotion and tenure review, and thus a successful future as a scholar. The Peer Review Committee shall select a faculty member who is a “content expert” in the probationary faculty member’s scholarly field, to join the Peer Review Committee in providing formative and summative feedback. This faculty member can be selected from the Department or from another unit within the University.*

The absence of negative evaluations does not guarantee the granting of tenure; annual evaluations should apprise probationary faculty members of performance deficiencies in time for them to take corrective action. Occasionally, these annual evaluations will result in termination, and, where appropriate, terminal contracts; in these cases, notice shall be given in accord with the Board of Regents Bylaws, Section 4.4.2. The annual evaluation also provides the opportunity to consider changes in responsibilities that reflect the strengths of the individual and the needs of the Department and the College.

### **III. Mandatory Procedures for Evaluation of Candidates for Continuous Appointment (Tenure) and Promotion**

Procedures for continuous appointment (tenure) and promotion are established by the Board of Regents Bylaws and by academic tradition. Our Department must also follow the policies and procedures established by the Office of Academic Affairs and/or IANR, as well as the College of Education and Human Sciences.

#### **A. Procedures for Tenure Only**

##### **1) Tenure Notification Date**

At the time the faculty member is proposed for initial appointment to a Specific Term position, the tenure notification date is established using the form *Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Tenure Decision Dates*. This form specifies any credit given to the person as a result of previous experience. The form must be completed prior to the submission of the appointment for Board of Regents approval.

A faculty member with extensive academic experience may be offered a Continuous Appointment (Tenure) at the time of hiring, if the Department and the College decide to do so. However, approval must be obtained from the

appropriate Vice Chancellor(s) and Chancellor prior to the extension of an offer involving a Continuous Appointment. Final approval of all Continuous Appointments must be given by the Board of Regents.

## **2) Timing of Tenure Evaluation**

The tenure evaluation process must be initiated in time to be concluded prior to the tenure notification date specified in the *Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Tenure Decision Dates*. For a new faculty member without credit for prior experience, the tenure review process would normally begin in the fall term of the sixth year of appointment, with a decision made by the following May of that academic year. Notice of award of tenure or termination shall be in accord with Board of Regents Bylaws, Section 4.2.2.

For the truly exceptional faculty member, award of tenure may be considered prior to the mandatory time. Early tenure implies that a candidate has exceeded, in the shorter time period, the type of sustained high level performance that would be expected during the normal probationary period. Notwithstanding any contrary provision of these mandatory procedures for the tenure evaluation process, any faculty member who is being considered for an award of early tenure may, at his/her discretion, elect to withdraw from the tenure evaluation process without prejudice to later evaluation and consideration for award of tenure.

No faculty member may be considered for tenure without his/her consent. Refusal to be considered at the mandatory time, however, is equivalent to resignation no later than at the end of the probationary period.

## **3) No Procedural Delays**

No procedural delays shall prevent a tenure recommendation involving notice of non-renewal from being submitted to the Board of Regents in time for its action by the appropriate deadline for notice of non-renewal. However, timely notice of non-renewal by the Board in such circumstances shall not preclude either the completion of the appropriate review process or the later submission of a different recommendation to the Board, if the results of the review so warrant.

## **B. Procedures for Promotion Only**

### **1) Nominations for Promotion**

Nominations for promotion may be made at the appropriate time by any member of the faculty, including the candidate. No person, however, may be nominated without his/her consent. Nominations are submitted to the Department Chair.

## **2) Candidate Withdrawal of Promotion Application**

At any level of the consideration process, a candidate for promotion may request that the nomination be withdrawn from further consideration, and such request shall be honored without prejudice to future attempts to secure promotion.

### **C. Procedures for Tenure and Promotion**

#### **1. Application Procedure**

Departmental and College deadlines for the tenure and/or promotion evaluation process are adjusted annually, based upon the Campus deadlines established by the appropriate Vice Chancellor(s). The Department and College deadlines must provide adequate opportunity for due process in the consideration of an applicant's nomination, for candidate response, and time for reconsideration and appeal of adverse decisions. Nomination to the rank of Associate Professor and consideration for tenure may take place in the same year, but they are separate processes with distinct deadlines and documentation requirements.

#### **2. Documentation File**

Candidates are responsible for preparing a documentation file to support their nominations. It is the obligation of Department Chairs and the Dean to advise candidates as to the form and substance of a documentation file. The only anonymous materials that can be included in the files are student evaluations. Normally these anonymous evaluations are those routinely solicited, according to Departmental or College procedures, from all students enrolled in courses taught by the faculty member. If additional student evaluations are desirable, the process for gathering these evaluations must be described in writing and become part of the record. Documentation should be organized to comply with instructions from the appropriate Vice Chancellor(s). The recommendations from each review become a part of the file.

The content of a documentation file, and the emphasis to be given various components of the file, may vary from discipline to discipline. The emphasis to be given various components of the file should reflect the individual's assignment. Except as provided in the following section on "external reviews," the candidate is entitled to access all materials in the file. The candidate is entitled to know the identity of everyone who reviews the file. Anyone with relevant information (i.e., an award or distinction recently received, a manuscript just accepted for publication in a refereed journal) for inclusion into the file may proffer that information at any level of consideration to the person responsible for conducting the review. That person shall determine, after consultation with the candidate, whether to include the material. The candidate must be informed of the content and source of any substantive new evidence to be added to the existing file. The candidate has a right to review, object to, and respond in

writing to any such added material, with the response becoming a part of the documentation file.

### **3. External Reviews**

Outside reviews will be solicited by the Department Chair. At least three external reviews must be obtained for each candidate. The faculty member is entitled to know how, and by whom, the panel of potential reviewers is to be identified and selected. Every reasonable effort must be made to assure that the external reviewers represent an appropriate subset of peers. A candidate shall have the opportunity to propose names of possible external reviewers and object to the inclusion of other external reviewers, but the final identification of the reviewers remains the responsibility of the Department Chair, who will seek input from the candidate, the candidate's peers in the department, and members of the Promotion and Tenure committee. The list of reviewers will be supplemented by the Department Chair, the candidate's peers, and members of the Promotion and Tenure committee so that approximately half of the potential reviewers are nominated by the candidate and approximately half are nominated by others. The candidate has the right to review the list of potential reviewers and to remove the names of any individuals that the candidate deems to be inappropriate reviewers. Criteria for determining appropriateness of reviewers may include, for example, the presence of personal or professional conflict in the relationship between the candidate and a potential reviewer, or if the reviewer does not have the necessary expertise in the candidate's field. The faculty member also has the right, unless waived, to have a copy of any review received and to append a written response to each copy of the review that is to be used for evaluation purposes.

*The candidate shall commence the process of selecting external reviewers by submitting a list of possible reviewers to the Department Chair by April 30. The list of possible reviewers should be comprised of peers who reflect the candidate's appointed responsibilities and discipline. Potential reviewers must hold a rank at or above that to which the candidate aspires, and should hold appointments at institutions that are comparable to the University of Nebraska and appropriate for the faculty member's appointment. Potential reviewers must not include people with whom there may be a conflict of interest, such as faculty advisors or advisees, or persons with whom the faculty member has worked closely. Potential reviewers may be individuals with whom the candidate has had no relationship, or with whom the candidate is an acquaintance or has served in a professional relationship with the candidate (for example, on a committee of a national or regional organization). It is highly recommended that candidates begin to think about potential appropriate reviewers prior to the year of their promotion and/or tenure review.*

A candidate may waive the right to access external reviews and/or the right to know the identity of external reviewers. Such waivers shall not be assumed,

implied, or coerced, and must be executed in writing prior to solicitation of outside reviews. The waiver form is available from the Department Chair and is found at <http://www.unl.edu/svcaa/hr/tenure/waiver.html>. The scope of the waiver shall be clearly indicated in writing prior to solicitation of external reviews. A copy of any waiver executed by a faculty member shall become a part of the file. Any letter soliciting an external review shall inform the potential reviewer of the extent to which the contents of the review or the identity of the reviewer will be known to the candidate. In soliciting external reviews, the Department expresses its confidence in the professionalism of those whose judgment is sought. External reviewers should be provided with copies of appropriate Promotion and Tenure guidelines when the recommendation letter is requested. Peers and administrators must assess and weigh the content of external reviews within the context in which they were provided, a context that includes the extent to which those reviews are confidential. A review may not, however, be routinely or automatically discounted simply because a candidate chooses not to waive either the right to access the reviews or the right to know the identity of the reviewers.

#### **4. File Preparation Assistance**

A candidate may request a colleague to assist in preparing appropriate documentation. Both the candidate and the adviser should be aware of the potential conflict of interest that may arise should the adviser be required to vote on the nomination later in the process. An agreement to provide counsel and advice to a candidate does not imply a commitment to support the candidate's nomination. *Sample document files of faculty who have been promoted and granted tenure are available in the CEHS Dean's Office.*

*Pretenure faculty members are encouraged to attend the meetings of the CEHS pretenure group, where file preparation is discussed. It is recommended that the candidate meet with senior faculty and/or the Peer Review Committee to review their file materials prior to submitting them to the Promotion and Tenure Committee.*

#### **5. Chair of Department Promotion and Tenure Committee Responsibilities**

*The Chair of the Department's Promotion and Tenure Committee is responsible for assuring that all appropriate promotion and tenure procedures are followed. The Chair of the Department's Promotion and Tenure Committee convenes the Promotion and Tenure Committee, comprised of all tenured faculty who hold rank equal to or higher than that to which the candidate aspires, with the charge to review the candidate's documentation and to make a recommendation to the Department Chair based on a paper ballot vote taken after discussion is complete. Tenured faculty shall vote on the tenure recommendation, and*

*promoted faculty shall vote on the promotion recommendation. The Chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee shall convene the meeting on the second Friday in September, in order to allow time for the committee to submit a recommendation to the Department Chair, for an appeal, if necessary, and for the Department Chair to submit a recommendation to the Dean by October 1..*

*The Chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee shall set the context for discussion of the candidate's documentation by reviewing the candidate's appointment and responsibilities, criteria for promotion and tenure, and the procedures to be followed during the meeting.*

*The Chair of the Department's Promotion and Tenure Committee is responsible for ensuring that the discussion at the meeting considers only the content of the candidate's documentation. New material of such a substantive nature as to adversely affect the decision shall not be introduced at any meeting unless the candidate is given the opportunity to respond. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee to make the necessary judgments concerning the substantive nature of any new material, to convey new information to the person being evaluated, and, if necessary, to delay the vote or decision until the person has had the opportunity to respond. However, the process must be completed so as to comply with submission deadlines to the next level of consideration.*

## **6. Department Promotion and Tenure Committee Procedures and Recommendation**

*All members of the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee shall be given the opportunity to thoroughly review the candidate's documentation prior to the committee meeting. Members are responsible for fairly and completely reviewing all sections of the candidate's documentation and considering the evidence of accomplishments in relation to the candidate's appointment. The Department Office Supervisor is responsible for the custody of the candidate's documentation, which may not leave the building and must be kept confidential. Arrangements will be made for Promotion and Tenure committee members on other campuses to review candidate files in a way that maintains confidentiality. Committee members shall make a request to the Department Office Supervisor to review the documentation.*

*The chair of the Peer Review Committee shall also function as chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee (as per bylaws draft). Members of the Peer Review Committee shall elect the chair of the committee.*

Members of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee should participate in discussion and deliberation during the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee meeting, but should recuse themselves from voting on the candidate at the Department level. These individuals should be prepared to vote on the

candidate(s) at the College Promotion and Tenure Committee meetings. Individuals who are themselves applying for promotion should not be on the Departmental or College Promotion and Tenure Committees in the year that they are being considered for promotion.

The Department Chair will not be a member or participate in the deliberations of the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee. The Committee may request that the Department Chair clarify questions that arise. The Department Chair later will make an independent recommendation regarding tenure or promotion. Under all circumstances, the Department Chair shall have the opportunity to meet with the committee to discuss its recommendations.

The discussion at all meetings shall be free and candid, and shall be based only on material in the file. All discussions will be confidential. New material of such a substantive nature as to adversely affect the decision shall not be introduced at any meeting unless the candidate is given an opportunity to respond (*see Chair of Department Promotion and Tenure Committee Responsibilities, above*). *At the conclusion of deliberation, the Chair of the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee will call for separate votes on promotion and/or tenure, as applicable. A paper ballot vote shall be cast for each application decision to be made, and the results of each vote shall be verified by two members of the committee. Any faculty member who is out of town can be connected via telephone or video conference. Faculty members participating in deliberations via telephone or videoconference shall vote by indicating which of two envelopes with paper ballots on the table (noted as A and B, but without reference to the contents) should be counted. Because of the importance of participating in deliberations prior to voting on the application, voting in absentia will not be permitted. The department will make every reasonable effort to ensure that all eligible faculty members can vote. A quorum will be comprised of three quarters of faculty members eligible to vote.* The recommendation, including a synopsis of the discussion and the vote of the committee are transmitted in writing to the Department Chair and to the candidate. All candidates must be informed of the outcome of the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee's evaluation at the same time. Likewise, all candidates submitting their materials for promotion to a higher rank must be informed of the outcome of the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee's evaluation at the same time, although the time could be different for those applying for Associate Professor than for those applying for Professor.

## **7. Negative Decisions and Appeal Process**

If at any point in the process, the candidate is not recommended for tenure or promotion by either the appropriate faculty committee or responsible administrator, the candidate must be notified of that negative recommendation and must be informed of the right to request reconsideration of the decision as provided in the Board of Regents Bylaws, Section 4.8(a). The candidate must inform the committee or administrator not recommending tenure in writing of

his/her intent to request reconsideration/appeal of the decision within two working days after receipt of notification of a negative recommendation. The candidate will have five working days after the initial notification of a negative recommendation to prepare the reconsideration/appeal, which must be presented in writing but can also be presented orally. The group or individual to whom the reconsideration/appeal is being made must inform the candidate of the decision within five working days after the reconsideration appeal has been presented. If a reconsideration is requested, the recommendation shall not be forwarded until the reconsideration is complete. If the candidate requests a statement of reasons or requests reconsideration of a decision within these time lines, such requests will be granted as expeditiously as possible. The group or individual to whom the reconsideration/appeal is made, must give their response in writing to the candidate and must justify the decision and any changes made in the decision. The department must schedule the review process so that any reconsideration shall be completed in time to meet established submission deadlines to the next level of consideration. The purpose of the statement of reasons is to give an unsuccessful candidate an opportunity to prepare a rebuttal argument. To allow for a meaningful opportunity to respond, the candidate must be given the opportunity to review the file. No negative recommendation shall be forwarded until the reconsideration is complete.

## **8. Department Chair Recommendation**

Following completion of deliberations by the faculty committee, including any reconsideration of an initial decision, the department chair reviews the entire record and makes an independent recommendation that is transmitted in writing to the dean, to the candidate, and to the committee. If the department chair recommends against tenure, the candidate must be informed of the right to request reasons for the adverse recommendation, and request reconsideration as described in the UNL Faculty Evaluation Guidelines Section VI.D.

## **9. Faculty Rights**

If a candidate at any point in the proceedings believes that the above procedures are not being followed, several avenues are available to the candidate for redress through the governance system. The first recommended course of action is to discuss the situation with the responsible administrator. If the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the candidate, then an appropriate panel of the University's Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee will be available to offer counsel and assistance in informal attempts to resolve differences. On procedural issues or on grounds of insufficient consideration, a formal grievance may be filed with the University's Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee. If the issue involves an alleged violation of an individual's academic freedom, the University's Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee should be contacted as it is the entity empowered to investigate the allegations.

## **10. Composition of the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee**

The Department Promotion and Tenure Committee shall be comprised of all tenured faculty who hold rank equal to or higher than that to which the candidate aspires. For appointments involving more than one academic unit, or where the responsibilities of the candidate reside in several areas, the appropriate peer evaluation committee shall consist of colleagues, who by virtue of rank, credentials, and experience are able to make informed judgments about the candidate. In the event that a person on the committee is under consideration for promotion or tenure, s/he will not serve on the committee for that year.

### **Effective Date of Guidelines**

This document shall become effective the academic year after the guidelines have been approved by the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences faculty.

### **Applicability of Guidelines**

Upon adoption, these guidelines will be applicable to all faculty holding appointments in the Department of Family & Consumer Sciences.

Approved November 2006