

PROMOTION AND TENURE

Ensuring
fair,
consistent,
and
appropriate
review.



Promotion and tenure is a key decision for



- promotion and tenure candidates, their units, and the university.



Tenure: A Foundational Element of American Higher Education System

- Candidate

- Significant milestone in professional career
- Protects academic freedom
- Promotes the pursuit of original ideas and innovation in teaching and scholarship

- Institution

- Significant employee benefit – important for retention
- Strong incentive for junior faculty
- Tenured faculty are invested in institution
- Significant milestone in life of institution (\$2M to \$3M investment)

PROMOTION AND TENURE REVIEW PROCESS





Good process should lead to
appropriate outcomes



got fairness?

Contract: Unit's responsibilities



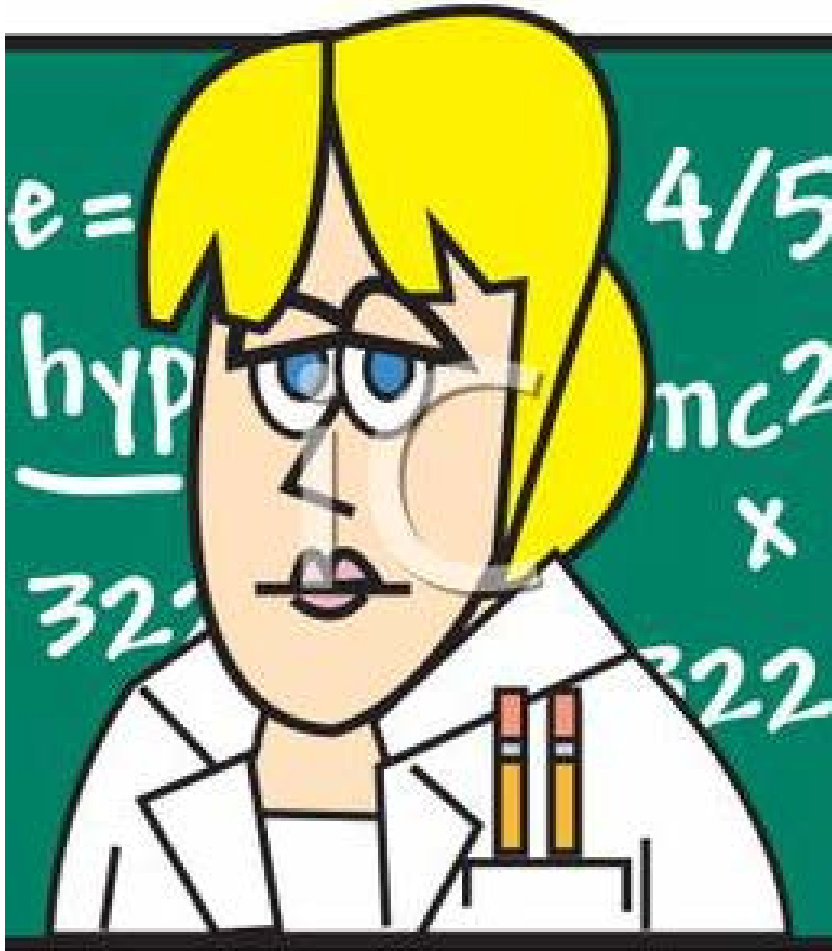
- Evaluate candidate based on the unit's criteria.
- Unit must adhere to institutional policies, meet deadlines and follow appropriate processes.



Unit's peer review criteria

- Promotion and tenure criteria are created by the faculty unit and are approved by the Provost.
- Criteria, therefore, vary by unit and reflect the unit's mission and discipline.
- **Peer committee, Chair/ Director, Dean, Provost** use these criteria when evaluating candidates.
- Neither the peer committee nor chair/director can add to the criteria or choose to ignore portions when evaluating a candidate.
- If the criteria are problematic it is the unit's responsibility to change them.

Units should use same criteria for all





Time period under review

- Tenure candidates: last five years, whether or not those five years were at the University of Maine
- Promotion to Professor: performance since appointment to Associate Professor

Stopping the Tenure Clock





Stopping the Tenure Clock

- Some tenure candidates have an extended tenure clock – for “childbirth, child rearing, adoption, or exceptional life circumstances.”
- Since the tenure clock was stopped, the period under review includes **five years plus the year (or two) the clock was on hold.**
- The **same criteria and standards** are used, whether or not a candidate stopped the tenure clock. Candidates with an extended tenure clock should not be held to higher standards for scholarship.

External letters

- These are critical for evaluating research and creative activity.
- Should be solicited early, so that they are available before the peer committee conducts its evaluation.
- Best Practice: Contact potential reviewers in July, send materials in August.





Soliciting and using external letters

- Units vary in how they pick external reviewers, but typically allow candidates to suggest names. Peer committee does not have to contact everyone on the list and can add names at its discretion.
- For potential reviewers suggested by the candidate, he/she should include a brief justification and description of his/her relationship to the reviewer.
- Best practice: Ideal external reviewer is
 - Expert in the candidate's field
 - At rank equal to or higher than the rank applicant is pursuing
 - Does not have personal relationship with candidate
 - Has not worked directly with candidate
- Best Practice:
 - Co-author is not a good reviewer, as this person is also evaluating her or his own work.
 - Dissertation adviser is not a good reviewer, as she/he knew candidate in role graduate student (not faculty member) and likely developed a personal relationship.



Letters to external reviewers

- Units should use the same basic letters for all P &T candidates.
- The candidate's dossier should include a copy of the letter sent to external reviewers.
- Reviewers should be informed that candidates may read the reviewer's letters.



What should reviewers receive and review?

- Reviewers should receive materials relevant to their disciplinary knowledge, such as the candidate's c.v. and copies of research papers.
- Reviewers do not need to receive the candidate's entire promotion application.
- Reviewers should be sent the department's promotion and tenure criteria.
- Reviewers should not discuss teaching.
- Reviewers should not be asked if they believe the candidate would receive tenure at their institution.



Language in letters to external reviewers

The department chair or peer committee chair should send two letters.

- Letter 1 should include:
 - Request to review
 - Date materials will be sent
 - Due date of review letter
 - This can be done via email but best to send a formal letter as an attachment and via US Mail
- Letter 2 is sent if reviewer agrees and should include:
 - A request that the reviewer include a description of his/her relationship to candidate
 - A request that reviewer send her/his CV (brief CV is fine)
 - Instructions on what you would like the reviewer to evaluate and that candidate should be reviewed against department's promotion and tenure criteria
 - Inform the reviewer that candidate will see the letter
 - Due date of review letter
 - A copy of department's promotion and tenure criteria

The Peer Committee Meeting





At the peer committee meeting

- Peer committee members should recuse themselves from the process if there is a conflict of interest (e.g., the candidate is your spouse; you are suing the candidate).
- Everyone should come prepared, having reviewed the full dossier.
- Apply the departmental evaluation criteria and use documents in the dossier and personnel file.

Be systematic on process and content

Best Practice: Appoint one person to keep group focused on the link between the unit's criteria and the candidate's dossier.





Committee Meeting: Department Chair's Role

- Best Practice: Department Chair should attend the peer committee meeting.
 - Bring the candidate's personnel file.
 - Respond to factual questions from the committee.
 - e.g., “What year was Professor X appointed?”
 - “Did Professor X have a course buy-out from her grant in the spring?”
- Department Chair should NOT
 - Set the agenda or run the meeting.
 - Participate in deliberations.
 - Respond to non-factual questions.
 - e.g., “Do you think the Dean will like this?”
 - “Do you think this person should get tenure?”

Committee Meeting: Department Chair's Role

- From the [Timetable and Administrative Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure at the University of Maine](http://www.umaine.edu/hr/faculty/promten/guidelimestime.html)
 - <http://www.umaine.edu/hr/faculty/promten/guidelimestime.html>

“The department chairperson should not chair the Peer Committee nor act as its secretary. The department chairperson should convene the Committee and be present during its deliberations, **BUT MAY NOT BE A VOTING MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE.**”



Peer Committee Meeting: Confidentiality

- The peer committee has access to sensitive and confidential information as part of the review process.
- Best Practice: **Refrain from discussing candidates and evaluative materials outside of the peer review meeting.**
- Only individuals involved in the peer review process should have knowledge of the content of the review.
- Violation of confidentiality may be grounds for removal from the peer review committee.



Confidentiality: Why so important?

- Discussing the candidate outside of the formal peer review process is problematic because it may
 1. Embarrass the candidate.
 2. Erode the integrity of the review process.
 3. Undermine the legitimacy of the committee's recommendation.
 4. Damage relationships among colleagues

Evaluating teaching



- Include student feedback from a standard form plus signed comments
- Best Practice: include observation of teaching and review syllabi and other teaching materials

Evaluating Scholarship



- Discipline specific.
- Expertise of peer committee is essential.
- Input from external reviewers must be considered.
- Evaluate relevant to the P & T criteria.

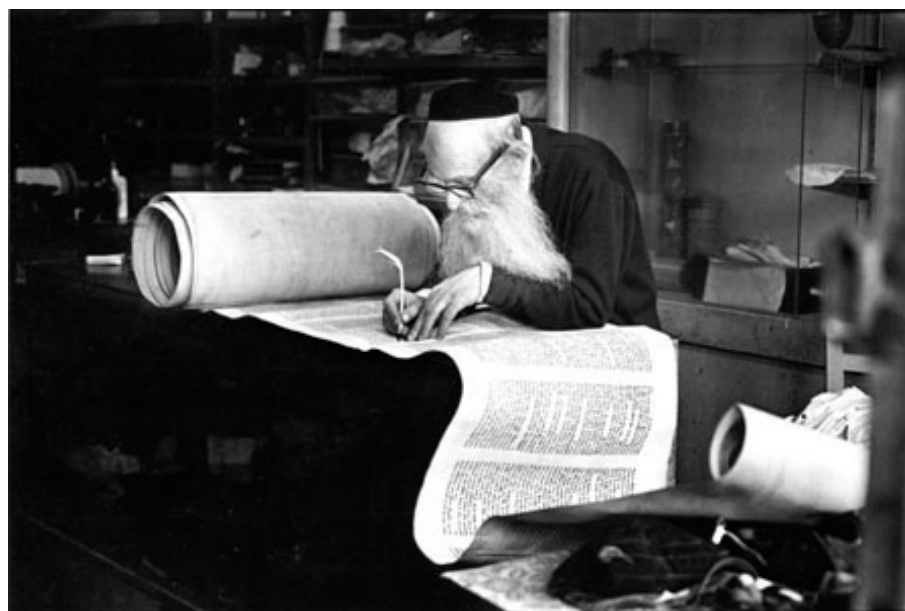
Evaluating Service

- Evaluate against language in P & T criteria.
- Consider unit norms
- Same expectations for men and women.





THE LETTER





The Peer Committee Letter: Best Practices

- Should make the case for (or against) promotion and/or tenure based upon the information contained in the candidate's dossier and personnel file, as it relates to the department's P & T criteria.
- Should discuss performance during the relevant time period (i.e., past five years for tenure or since last promotion for advancement).
- Should support conclusions with evidence.
- Should discuss evidence that is contradictory to the recommendation (e.g., a negative external review letter).
- If not unanimous, should summarize majority and minority views (Majority and minority letters are acceptable but single letter is better).



Letters: Be aware of implicit biases

- Implicit bias (sometimes called hidden or unconscious bias) refers to learned stereotypes that influence how we behave, including how we evaluate others.
- Implicit biases exist outside of conscious awareness.
- Implicit biases regarding gender, race, and age can impact peer evaluations.
- External reviewers and peer committees may unintentionally use biased language in their letters.
- Studies shows people tend to use different words when evaluating men and women.
- These subtle word choices can impact others' impressions.
- Gender-based differences in evaluative language tend to appear whether the evaluator is male or female.



Examples of implicit bias

Male faculty member

- Highly skilled
- Highly effective
- Important figure
- Expert scientist
- Skilled diplomat
- Enormous credibility

Female faculty member

- Excellent citizen
- Diligent
- Committed
- Determined
- Enthusiastic
- Energetic



Guarding against implicit biases

- Increase awareness of biases and be conscientious.
- Have multiple reviewers edit letter.
- Ask oneself – “Would I use the same language to describe candidate X if she was a man (or he was a woman)?”



The Letter: Signatures

- According to the contract:

“Peer recommendations both majority and minority (if any) must be signed by all of the peer committee members participating in the recommendation. The names of all peer committee members must be listed and a tally of the vote including any abstentions must be recorded.”

- Peer committee members are not required to indicate in the recommendation letter whether they voted for or against promotion/tenure. Practices vary among units in this regard.



THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR OR UNIT DIRECTOR



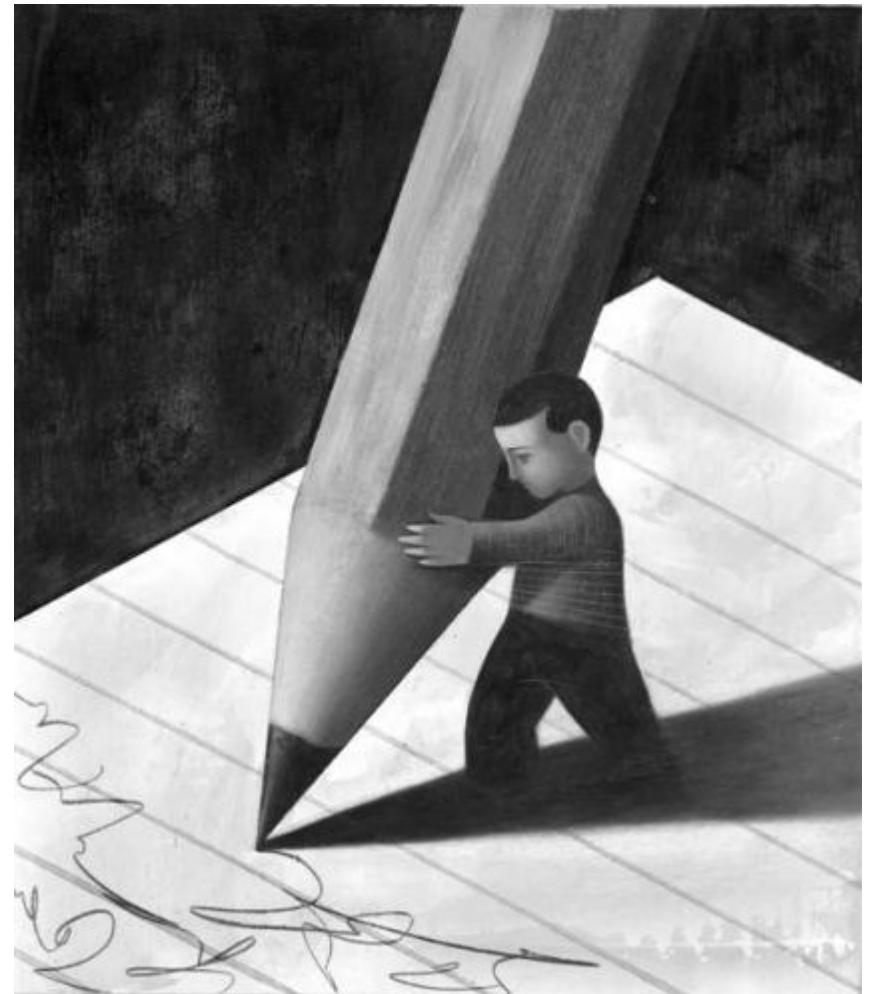
Department Chair's Evaluation

- Is separate from the peer committee evaluation.
- Considers the entire dossier including the peer committee's letter.
- The chair's letter
 - should make the case for (or against) promotion and/or tenure based upon the information contained in the candidate's dossier, the peer committee letter, and the department's criteria.
 - Should discuss performance during the relevant time period (i.e., past five years for tenure or since last promotion for advancement).
 - Should support conclusions with evidence.
 - Should discuss evidence that is contradictory to the recommendation (e.g., a negative external review letter).
 - Avoid implicit bias.

What deans and other administrators want

Clear, logical, and evidence-based letters from peer committees and chairs/directors.

Balanced letters that consider all the data are stronger than letters that selectively abstract information consistent with ultimate recommendation.





COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS?

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