

Nuts & Bolts Of P&T: The Department Level

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P&T is the most important EO responsibility

Asst Profs are responsible for doing the work; the EO cannot “make” an Asst Prof successful.

However, the EO can and should be one who guides, leverages resources, removes unnecessary obstacles, prevents and intervenes against injustice/unfairness, and otherwise supports the Asst Prof

Successful P&T starts before a specific Assist Prof is hired

- Build and sustain a positive department culture that will explicitly include new people and facilitate their success
 - Articulate why people would want to join your department and what you offer
 - Be proactive about anti-bias and pro-DEI trainings/conversations
- Establish and convey clear and written expectations/guidelines for faculty of all ranks; transparency and fairness are key
 - This includes having a department system that meets the new guidelines for teaching evaluation
- Hire people who you sincerely believe can succeed at UIUC
 - Unsuccessful people, in my observation, have often been hired for the wrong reasons or hired into ill-defined positions
- EO and their admin assistant should be fluent in Comm 9/related policies, criteria, process and preparation, evaluation of the candidate's performance and potential, and instructions for completing the Promotion and Tenure outline

Years 1 & 2

- Establish expectations about department culture and how Comm 9 is evaluated
- Establish and implement mentoring (different models)
- Provide adequate start up arrangements and connect to other resources
- Monitor and promote social inclusion
- Annual review (HDFS reviews all Asst Profs in Feb, based upon their accomplishments in the previous calendar year; mentors invited)
 - Use Comm 9
 - Provide detailed written feedback on each domain that connects back to stated expectations
 - Link 2Y feedback to 1Y review
 - Track relevant metrics across all faculty so you can benchmark individual performance by rank and expectations (different ways of sharing)
 - Numeric metrics should be used as only one piece of a wholistic evaluation that considers specific circumstances. Comm 9 is clear that we are not a “bean counting” institution.
 - Benchmarks can prevent bias and unfair/escalating expectations

Year 3: “The 3Y”

- October: EO meet with Asst Prof to review 3Y process
- February: Meet with Asst Prof prior to formal 3Y review by P&T committee. Go over the process and provide feedback on their Comm 9
- March: Asst Prof submits Comm 9 to P&T committee. May also share 1Y and 2Y annual reviews
- March: EO meets with P&T and listens to their thorough evaluation. This evaluation should be consistent with the stated department expectations document. EO writes detailed evaluation based upon P&T review and submits to the Dean. The Dean revises/concurs
- April: All 3Y faculty in ACES give college “speed research talk”
- April: EO meets with Asst Prof to go over the 3Y letter, point by point (see example). Does NOT give the 3Y letter to Asst Prof before this meeting. Instead, prepare them for a rigorous evaluation and normalize it as part of the process

Year 4

- Annual review in February (previous calendar year accomplishments)
 - Link 4Y feedback to 3Y letter
 - Consider offering a one-course teaching release in year 4 or 5 or other resources that can remove obstacles to success
- In the case of a negative 3Y evaluation, 4Y can be a difficult year of transition away from UIUC. Please help the Asst Prof leave in the most positive way possible

Year 5

- October: Asst Prof submits their updated Comm 9 to P&T for informal review. P&T may provide feedback on statements or other aspects of the document.
- March: Asst Prof submits their penultimate Comm 9 to P&T for straw vote. EO shares vote (but nothing else) with Asst Prof.
 - If vote is favorable, then P&T process formally starts and the EO solicits external letters (April or May at the latest, due September 1st).
 - The Asst Prof finalizes their Comm 9 and uploads it to Interfolio
 - Follow Comm 9 carefully regarding how to select reviewers (and how many dept v. candidate)
 - The EO assigns internal reviewers (no COI) – they must use same Comm 9 as sent to external.
 - Internal evaluations are due September 1st.

Note – if the straw vote is unfavorable, Asst Prof can still request that their case goes forward as the “official” vote has not yet occurred.

Year 6 “going up”

- September 1st: All internal and external reviews should be submitted into the portal. Entire dossier is assembled and given to P&T
- October: P&T meets to evaluate the entire dossier and vote on whether to recommend for tenure and promotion. This vote is OFFICIAL AND RECORDED (and in our dept. it is anonymous)
 - EO attends and listens, asks clarifying questions, takes notes
 - EO decides whether to endorse the P&T recommendation
 - If endorsed, EO writes their statement and follows procedure to submit to college P&T. The EO statement must address all split, negative, or absent votes, should address any weaknesses noted by evaluators, and should make a compelling case for why moving this case forward is in the best interest of UIUC. It can also help to frame the case using department expectations or disciplinary norms. **EO statements are one of the most important things you will ever write – treat them with care!**
 - If the EO declines to recommend the Asst Prof for P&T, they must carefully follow Communication 10. The Asst Prof has one appeal per Comm 10
- Share the department vote (and nothing else) with the Asst Prof and, if case is going forward, tell them that “no news is good news”

Year 7

- If P&T was successful, celebrate!
- If this is a year of transition out of UIUC (or into a non-TT position) please help the Asst Prof leave in as positive a manner as possible

Three random but important items

- Insist that faculty start and maintain their Comm 9 with proper formatting. I tell them that sloppy documents will prevent reviewers from seeing their accomplishments and contributions
- My response to “should I go up early?” is “before we answer that you should know that if you go up early and are turned down, we will have to get all new external reviewers, and this can mean being evaluated by people with less expertise in your area”
- Rollbacks are legitimate and should not hurt the Asst Prof. Asst Profs should be evaluated against their “tenure clock year” regardless of whether it matches their actual years in the position

Nuts & Bolts Of P&T: The Campus Level

Greg Elliott, Professor
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Tuesday, September 5, 2023

Thanks for all you do!

Campus Evaluation of P&T Cases

- Committee is made up of faculty (~ 12 Full Professors) from a variety of Colleges plus non-voting representative from the office of the provost (i.e. Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs)
- We evaluate on the order of 100+ promotion cases (116 cases last year + off-cycle cases) starting in February and going through April every other week.
- Each member reviews every dossier and indicates that a discussion is not needed (~ 25%) or to discuss the case (only takes one faculty member on the committee)
- What are we looking for:
 - The dossier is in order, free of mistakes, and includes all necessary information as required in Provost Communication #9
 - That the Executive Officer's statement reflects the dossier and sufficiently addresses any areas of concern
 - The individual represented by the dossier is worthy of promotion at the University of Illinois
- Recourse:
 - Request more information or explanation from the EO
 - Request that the Dean address the committee in person

Most Common Requests for Information from EO

- Years of service does not line up with tenure code year
 - Check for inconsistencies in dates
 - Address any roll-backs or reasons for early promotion in EO letter
- Reason(s) for early promotion cases not given in EO letter
- Poor teaching evaluations that were not addressed
- Internal teaching evaluation did not have evidence of multiple class observations (PC #9: Page 16)
- EO letter did not sufficiently address the following:
 - External letter writers from non-peer institutions, apparent conflict of interest, multiple reviewers from same institution (PC #9: Pages 22-24)
 - Low teaching evaluations or low research productivity
 - Critical/moderate statements in external letters that were not addressed
 - Negative votes at the department level

What would help the process?

- Read through provost communication #9
- Use most recent dossier format and external letter templates
- Check any external letter writer conflicts of interest (saves time if you decide to get another letter)
- Justify if external letter writers are not from peer institutions. Avoid getting multiple letters from the same institution.
- Justify peer institutions if they are not obvious to person on P&T committee representing your College
- If collaborative research is significant obtain letter from PI indicating candidate's contribution (PC #9: Page 21)
- Have faculty bold student names in their list of publications
- Realize that you may need to include a few sentences that address what is sufficient examples of research or performance worthy of promotion for your discipline. Don't just rely on your College representative.