

Standard Operating Procedures

Promotion & Tenure Subcommittee, Linfield College, 2020

In a spirit of transparency, and in concordance with existing practice, the promotion and tenure subcommittee (P&T Committee) respectfully share the following Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) describing how we approach our committee's charge as indicated in the Faculty Handbook (III.1.5). Specifically, the responsibility charged from the Handbook of this subcommittee are:

1. Develop and review promotion and tenure materials and procedures
2. Develop appropriate assessment tools for faculty work performance
3. Make recommendations to the Dean of Faculty, the President, and the Board of Trustees regarding individual cases of granting tenure and/or promotion
4. Address other issues as directed by Faculty Assembly and the Faculty Executive Council

I. Mentoring

It is a long-held belief of the P&T Committee that mentorship is a vital component in the growth of faculty. As such, it is incumbent on members of the P&T Committee to be willing to provide mentorship to any members of the faculty who may require it. Often, this mentorship is visible in the following forms.

A. Faculty Development meetings

The P&T Committee views Professional Development Meetings as an essential mentoring tool. It is an important opportunity to provide colleagues with timely, pertinent feedback with an eye toward the evaluation process (Section IV.6.1) associated with tenure and/or promotion.

- The P&T Committee member carefully reviews all material provided for a Faculty Development Meeting and is prepared to provide specific feedback on the CV, self-appraisal, colleague appraisals, student evaluations, and/or any other supporting material that is provided. We find the discipline-specific guidelines very helpful in providing a disciplinary perspective on the evaluation process discussed in the handbook (IV.6.1).
- Within a Faculty Development Meeting, if a P&T Committee member has a concern related to any of the three areas (Teaching Effectiveness, Professional Achievement, or Service) or the Professional Plan, then it should be identified and communicated in the meeting, as well as recorded in the summary report prepared by the office of Academic Affairs. If a P&T Committee member has no concerns, then that should also be communicated. A specific P&T Committee member offers only his/her perspective and is not speaking for the entire P&T Committee nor guaranteeing any results through the process.
- To assist the P&T Committee member and Dean of Faculty in providing their perspectives in a Faculty Development Meeting, it is important that all required material be provided prior to the meeting; we ask for it at least one week in advance.
- Faculty development meetings occur during two bursts in the year: in the Fall, candidates for promotion and tenure require meetings with P&T representatives. In the Spring, assistant faculty who are in their 2nd or 4th years will also need meetings. Also in the spring, associate

faculty who are considering promotion may have a meeting with P&T. The content and recommendations of these respective meetings may differ.

- Faculty in their 2nd or 4th years will need feedback on how their career track seems to be progressing. These meetings are early enough that constructive criticism could be helpful.
- Faculty considering whether to apply for promotion in the Fall are often asking for whether they should bother trying. We cannot answer that question. Rather, we can help them consider how to frame their successes and to think about future goals.
- Faculty applying for promotion and tenure in the Fall need help crafting their narratives. One should expect to see a solid draft of their narrative and to be able to provide suggestions for strengthening it.

B. Availability

The P&T Committee holds Open Meetings on the McMinnville and Portland Campuses to discuss and answer questions regarding the P&T eFile Preparation Instructions. Dates for the Open Meetings are announced in the P&T eFile Dates calendar. In addition, members of the P&T Committee are available to meet individually with candidates and provide feedback on drafts of material for their P&T eFiles. Actually, we will meet with any colleague (not just candidates) who wants to discuss any aspect of the P&T process.

By reading drafts and offering feedback, members of the P&T Committee—by division or otherwise, are always happy to assist candidates for tenure and/or promotion in preparing their P&T eFile so that it clearly articulates their story. It is our philosophy that we all (P&T Committee, Dean of Faculty, departments, and candidates) have a shared goal: the creation of a P&T eFile that accurately communicates a candidate's record in the three areas (Teaching Effectiveness, Professional Achievement, and Service) of evaluation.

II. P&T Meetings

The P&T Committee meets as needed through the Fall and Spring semesters. We also commit to attending faculty development meetings when able.

Minutes of P&T meetings are kept by the chair and distributed in a timely manner to the rest of the committee. Although these are not actively published to the larger Linfield College community, they are not considered secretive either. In a spirit of openness, these minutes can be made available upon request.

Executive Session. It is common to enter into Executive session during times in which specific candidates are discussed. In fact, the Deliberations in December are entirely Executive Session. During these times, minutes are not kept nor distributed.

In the process of preparing for Deliberations, members will often make notes as they read candidate files. These notes should be kept until after the Board of Trustees's meeting in case a legal dispute arises from the deliberations. After the trustees meet, the Chair will indicate when it is safe to shred the documentation.

III. Deliberations

The P&T Committee members deal with Personnel issues for Tenure and Tenure-track Faculty. Therefore, we are bound to maintain confidentiality regarding all discussions and information presented in P&T eFiles, deliberations, and reporting to the administration (President and Provost) and Board of Trustees.

The P&T Committee advises and evaluates candidates for tenure and/or promotion relative to the standards as described in the Faculty Handbook (IV.6.1), which includes Departmental Guidelines, if adopted.

Our discussions are limited to the eFile that the candidate provides. Having knowledge of other details of a candidate outside the scope of the eFile is not pertinent to the discussion. Whether the insight is positive or negative is inconsequential. Suggestions for improvement should be done as a matter of mentoring prior to the submission of the eFile.

After files close and prior to deliberations, members of the P&T Committee carefully read each candidate's P&T eFile relative to the handbook (IV.6.1).

Deliberations are done in person over several days. There is no set time limit. They are typically scheduled to occur the week after finals for the Fall semester.

We preface our discussions with a reading of the handbook. The chair moderates the discussions, ensuring that the committee be focused on the contents of the P&T eFile relative to the handbook, as well as that everyone's voice is heard. We discuss each candidate until there is nothing further to be gained by continuing the discussion, with each P&T Committee member noting they have said all they want to say. Then the chair calls the vote, with a simple majority necessary for a positive recommendation.

We discuss each candidate individually. We do not compare candidates within the same cohort, or with past or future candidates. It's always about the candidate's P&T eFile relative to the handbook (IV.6.1).

The committee is in executive session during all its deliberations. All conversations are confidential. We approach deliberations as follows.

Per the handbook (IV.6.1.4.3 Use of the document), the P&T Committee uses approved guidelines in the following manner:

The Promotion and Tenure Subcommittee will use the document containing the guidelines as the discipline-specific interpretation of Sections IV.6.1.1, IV.6.1.2, and IV.6.1.3 in the Faculty Handbook, and therefore use the guidelines to evaluate the materials submitted by candidates within that discipline.

As specified by the handbook, approved Discipline-Specific Guidelines provide us with the disciplinary expertise and we use them as the discipline-specific interpretation of the three areas (Teaching Effectiveness, Professional Achievement, and Service) during our deliberations. Draft discipline-specific guidelines are helpful as well and we encourage candidates to use and refer to them in their P&T eFile documents.

All components of the P&T eFile are important and are seriously considered during our deliberations. Every member of the committee should open and read every component of each eFile in preparation.

Colleague Appraisals. Consistent with the handbook (IV.6.5.3), we view colleague appraisals as providing the format by which faculty receive feedback from colleagues in the formative professional development process and summative evaluation components in the P&T process. Recognizing that departmental colleagues have a unique disciplinary expertise and provide valuable perspective regarding a colleague's record in the three areas (Teaching Effectiveness, Professional Achievement, and Service), we view colleague appraisals as an opportunity to inform and provide a discipline-specific perspective on the evaluation process (IV.6.1).

We encourage our colleagues to include the following attributes while writing their appraisals:

- Colleague appraisals that provide context and perspective regarding the three areas (Teaching Effectiveness, Professional Achievement and Service) and the Professional Plan—not just reporting on items listed in a CV.
- Colleague appraisals that align the candidate's record in the three areas and Professional Plan with the discipline-specific guidelines.
- Colleague appraisals that clearly communicate the colleague's recommendation in regard to the candidate's promotion and/or tenure, providing evidence with reference to the candidate's record in the three areas and Professional Plan, as well as with respect to the discipline-specific guidelines. Along this line, the P&T Committee gives the following advice to all chairs of candidates for promotion to full professor to share with colleagues, "Assuming one is supporting the candidate for promotion to full professor, in a colleague appraisal please identify special merit in each of the three areas and please use that phrase. If you do not use that phrase, it will be confusing to the P&T Committee".

Materials from Previous Evaluations. The materials from previous evaluations are the historical record of a candidate's accomplishments and of the feedback the candidate has received during the mentoring process. We view the summary reports of previous Professional Development Meetings as an important component and record of the formative professional development process. In particular, if there were any concerns identified in a Professional Development Meeting, we look for how the candidate addresses them.

Student Evaluations. Per the handbook, we view student evaluations as one of the components in a P&T eFile that address teaching effectiveness. We focus our attention on identifying trends and not outliers, and on the candidate's perspective and interpretation in the self-appraisal and Section 2 of the P&T eFile, as well as on colleagues' appraisals.

We recognize that student evaluation scores are ordinal categorical variables. The ratings fall into categories that have a natural order, but the associated integers are labels, not numerical values. Therefore, it is the order of the values that is important and significant since the differences between values are not really known. In other words, the difference between a score 5 and a 4 cannot be quantified. It does not make statistical sense to average labels or compare averages. Moreover, since the standard deviation is not reported by our evaluation software, it is difficult to determine whether deviation from the mean is statistically significant.

Rather, members of the committee focus on interpreting the self-appraisal to provide context, reflection (not simply reporting the mean values), and a discussion of how the information provided in student evaluations is incorporated into one's self-assessment of teaching. It is also helpful to the P&T Committee when colleague appraisals provide context and reflection.

Recusals.

Recusals from the P&T Committee are identified shortly after nominations for tenure and/or promotion close on September 30th. Participation on the P&T Committee requires objective evaluation at all times regarding the entire P&T process, as well as relative to any particular candidate (III p.21, 9/26/2017). If a P&T Committee member has a departmental colleague that is a candidate, then their recusal is required by the handbook from the subcommittee's actions as to that candidate (deliberations, voting, creation of the committee report about the candidate, and its delivery to the administration). Each member of the P&T Committee informs the chair if they need to be disqualified from the P&T process, and/or whether they need to be recused relative to a particular candidate.

III. Reporting to the Administration and Board of Trustees

The reports to the administration (President and Provost) and Board of Trustees are confidential. We are in executive session during discussions with the administration and the Board of Trustees.

- The report to the administration discusses each candidate individually. For each candidate, it includes the committee's recommendation, as well as a summary of the reasons for the recommendation related to the three areas (Teaching Effectiveness, Professional Achievement, and Service) and the Professional Plan. All members of the P&T Committee are present when we meet with the administration. We are in executive session and the administration may ask us questions related to our report and deliberations.
- In the event that there is disagreement between the committee and the administration, the committee will hold a second meeting with the president and the Provost (and, in the case of a candidate from the Portland campus, the dean of nursing) to discuss and clearly understand the differences of opinion. These meetings must occur before the February meeting of the Board of Trustees. (If the meeting cannot occur before BoT, those individual cases in question will be deferred until the parties have met and then be submitted to the Executive Committee of the Board by March 1.)
- Regarding the creation of the report, we partition the candidates among us with the summary for a candidate being shepherded by a P&T Committee member. He/she drafts and circulates a summary, incorporating feedback from all members. The chair assembles the individual summaries into one report that is approved by all members of the committee before it is shared with the administration.
- The chair delivers a report to the Board of Trustees during the February meeting, which contains the individual summaries on candidates that require their consideration—i.e., candidates who receive a recommendation for tenure and/or promotion. For the Board of Trustees reference, the report also contains introductory material that outlines the P&T process.

IV. Calendar considerations

The considerations below are intended to be a summary of requirements by the Faculty Handbook and by tradition within the committee. The logic is included when possible.

- Summer – the P&T committee provides to all faculty the P&T eFile Preparation Instructions so that candidates are able to start preparing their files as soon as possible for review in the fall. Members of the P&T Committee will be available to provide feedback on drafts during the summer. The instructions are emailed in timely fashion to the Faculty Assembly and posted on the Faculty Resource page.
- Prior to academic year – The P&T committee provides to all faculty the P&T eFile Dates
- Prior to academic year – The P&T Committee provides to all faculty the Calendar for Deliberations and Report to the Administration early in the fall semester. Note: it is necessary to schedule the meetings with the Administration early before their calendars fill.
- Early Fall – shortly after the first Faculty Assembly of the semester (to advertise more easily), the P&T Committee will offer Open Information Meetings in both McMinnville and Portland.
- September 30 – Deadline for nominations for promotion and tenure. This date must be early so that Faculty development meetings can be scheduled by the Academic Affairs office. Any member of the department may nominate the candidate. The nomination itself only needs to include the candidate's name and to what the candidate will apply (i.e. promotion to Associate Professor, promotion to Full Professor, and/or tenure).
- Around November 15 – Files close for all but the candidates. This allows time for the candidate to respond to any last minute additions to the appraisal letters, for instance.
- Around November 30 – Files close to the candidates and the P&T committee may start reading materials in preparation for deliberations. Note: only the Provost has the authority to add to a candidate's file at this time, as may occur if a book contract materializes after the closing date (recall, the committee cannot consider even positive news if it is not included in the eFile).
- Week after finals for Fall semester – Deliberations, lasting several days
- End of deliberation week – Notifications to candidates and to Administration are sent out regarding committee recommendations. Candidates will receive an email and will be mailed a formal letter from the committee chair.
- Within one week of deliberations – Handbook (III.2) specifies that committee meets with the administration "within seven days of subcommittee deliberations to inform them of the subcommittee recommendations and answer questions." In practice, the college is often closed one week after deliberations. Therefore, to satisfy the spirit of the directive, the P&T Committee submits its formal report to the administration by this time. The in-person meeting is scheduled at an agreed upon time before the February meeting of the Board of Trustees.
- January – meeting with Administration to discuss each committee decision. A second meeting is also scheduled in case disagreements are found between Committee and Administration recommendations.

V. Discipline-Specific Guidelines.

Members of the P&T Committee are happy to assist departments draft discipline-specific guidelines. It is our philosophy that we all (P&T Committee, Dean of Faculty, departments, and candidates) have a shared goal: discipline-specific guidelines that meet the criteria in the handbook (Section IV.6.1.4 or the

rubric), are helpful to the P&T Committee in evaluating candidates from the department, as well as being helpful to the department as a mentoring tool with an eye toward the P&T process (Section IV.6.1 Evaluation Process).

The P&T Committee and the Dean of Faculty approve discipline-specific guidelines as outlined in the handbook (IV.6.1.4) and reiterated in the corresponding rubric. It was agreed by Faculty Assembly that a Working Group would be formed to do the initial analysis of a given department, basing all comments on a set rubric. The Working Group will pull 5 members from a pool of the faculty. These five should be a mixture of fields and a mixture of rank. One member will be from the Faculty Development Subcommittee. The names of these members will be kept confidential to all except the Chair and to members of Faculty Executive Council.

Members of the Working Group will read their assigned Guidelines and provide feedback, based on the rubric. These comments will be collected by the Chair and shared with members of the P&T committee and the Dean of Faculty. Then the Committee and Dean will independently choose to accept or reject the Guidelines. They may also choose to incorporate some or all of the comments to ask the department to make changes to their guidelines.

Once the Committee and Dean agree on a set of guidelines, those guidelines will be published online at <https://www.linfield.edu/faculty/departmental-guidelines.html> as well as a report summarizing why the guidelines were approved.