

Informal Promotion and Tenure Assistance

College of Engineering Council on P&T, 2005

The intent of this document is to assist all personnel involved in the P&T process in the departments and the college. Selected essential issues emerging from working with this process in the past few years are summarized here, with some suggestions for improvements.

This informal document is not intended to be complete and is not a part of the official P&T process and guidelines.

Please send your feedback (criticism, suggestions, improvements, etc.) to the College P&T Council, pt@engr.washington.edu, or contact any committee member or the College Human Resources Administrator at any time.

Important Deadlines

Deadlines for each step in the process of evaluating and promoting faculty can be found at: <http://www.engr.washington.edu/personnel/policies/gen-hr/annual-hr-due-dates.pdf>. All deadlines are identical to those used last year, with the exception of the date a candidate's dossier is due in the College of Engineering. This date will be **November 1, 2005**. Moving this date forward was necessitated by an increase in mandatory cases in our now more populated college.

Selected Suggestions for a Smoother P&T Process

1. Do not assume that the dossier is secondary to other factors

Promotion decisions are based almost exclusively on the dossier. Dossiers that are incomplete, contain errors and/or inconsistencies, or in other ways do not do justice to the candidate weaken any case. These issues usually cannot be satisfactorily resolved in meetings and interviews (e.g., meetings with Chairs, etc.).

Suggestions:

- Assist the candidate with preparation of his or her dossier. Of particular importance is the candidate's statement, which should include not simply what his/her research is, but why it is significant. Check <http://www.engr.washington.edu/personnel/policies/>, section VII. Promotion and Tenure, for details.
- Ensure that the package reflects all aspects considered in the P&T process. Particular attention should be paid to the Chair's letter (including an explanation of the faculty discussion and vote), committee reports, how external reviewers were selected, and whether the letters fall into the A or B category and why. More detail on this can be found on the web-based promotion and tenure guidelines, <http://www.engr.washington.edu/personnel/policies/>.
- Solicit letters from experts in the field(s) in ample time, in order to meet deadlines, and re-solicit if appropriate. (Re-solicitation may be necessary, for example, if reviewers decline to comment or reveal in their letter a tie to the candidate that would obviate class A status.) Ideal letters would be from experts in the best comparable departments, who have no relationship to the candidate and who state that the candidate would be promoted at their institutions. For a candidate who does multi-disciplinary research, make certain that qualified reviewers are sought from all subfields, so that we can evaluate his or her entire research record.
- Small things help a lot:
 - Tell us which publication forums are most prestigious in the candidate's field(s), both journals and conferences, whichever are appropriate.

- Submitted papers and proposals must be in separate categories from accepted papers and funded proposals. We need to evaluate the past record of accomplishment.
- Summarize the credentials of the reviewers. Do not submit their CVs.
- For all proposals, tell us the percentage of the funding that was attributable to the candidate.
- Ensure that the package is properly formatted; this reduces our reading and evaluation time.
- For promotion from associate for full, the dossier must describe substantial contributions since tenure, not from the time of the candidate's initial hire.

2. **Provide adequate mentoring before and during the P&T process**

Some candidates might not have been adequately mentored, both during their years before promotion and in the P&T process. This inadequacy might lead to misassumptions about the relative importance of various activities (research, teaching, service) and to weaker dossiers.

Suggestions:

- Explain the university P&T process thoroughly using information from the department, college, and university web sites.
- Articulate expectations for promotion frequently and early enough so that any corrections have time to make an impact.
- Set up formal and informal mentoring opportunities and monitor the candidate's progress at regular intervals, particularly for assistant professors and newly hired faculty of all ranks.
- Encourage partnerships among faculty across various ranks.

3. **Appropriate candidates**

Carry out thorough due diligence on the candidate before you decide whether to promote, and delay promotion or deny promotion at the department level if it really is warranted.

4. **Early promotion consideration**

Sometimes early promotion is warranted. Other times the cases seem to be used to "test the water." These premature cases involve just as much work in preparation yet might not benefit the candidate either now or in future promotion opportunities. Please consider early promotion only when the candidate has met normal expectations for the particular level.

5. **Lateral promotions**

Lateral promotions, for example, from research to tenure track or a hire from industry, are always difficult to evaluate. One issue is the lack of or a minimal teaching record.

Suggestion:

- Research-to-tenure track appointments can usually be anticipated by several years. If this is the case, encourage the candidate to teach within the department, so that he or she develops a record of teaching accomplishment.