

**A Guide to Washington State University's Policies and Procedures for Evaluating  
Tenure-track Faculty Members: Tips for Faculty Members, Mentors, Department  
Chairs, and Deans**

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## 1. Introduction

To compete as a world-class University, Washington State University must have a distinguished faculty. This goal can be achieved only through careful and fair mentoring, evaluation, and support. The responsibility for mentoring and evaluation rests primarily with the senior, experienced, faculty including the faculty members' Departmental colleagues, the Department Chair, and the Dean. The University has no detailed or rigid guidelines to help with this process. Nevertheless, some guidelines must exist to maintain a balance between due process for the faculty member and the goals and objectives of the University, Colleges, and Departments.

This manual informally describes our guidelines for faculty evaluation. It does not replace the information in the *Faculty Manual* ([http://facsen.wsu.edu/facsen.wsu.edu\\_non\\_ssl/faculty\\_manual/manual](http://facsen.wsu.edu/facsen.wsu.edu_non_ssl/faculty_manual/manual)), the *Provost's Instructions for Tenure and Promotion* ([http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage\\_documents/2003\\_PT\\_Guidelines.doc](http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage_documents/2003_PT_Guidelines.doc)), the *Provost's Instructions for Annual Review* ([http://provost.wsu.edu/manuals\\_forms/documents/annual\\_review.html](http://provost.wsu.edu/manuals_forms/documents/annual_review.html)), or the Departmental and College guidelines for tenure and promotion. Instead, this manual supplements those documents by describing the procedures and standards in more detail. The original documents should be consulted for further information. The *Faculty Manual* (with the letter of initial appointment) is a faculty member's contract with the University. The present manual is not contractual. It serves only as a guide. If the information presented in this manual conflicts with information in the *Faculty Manual*, the *Provost's Instructions for Tenure and Promotion*, or individual College or Departmental policies, then the information provided in the *Faculty Manual*, *Provost's Instructions*, or other policies should be followed.

Faculty members are the primary audience for this manual. As a result, the manual is usually written from a faculty perspective. However, the perspective shifts from time to time as information is presented that is of primary interest to administrators. In addition, information is repeated when necessary so that each section of the manual can be understood on its own without the preceding material.

Although the present guide is designed to help faculty members in the performance of their duties and administrators in the evaluation of that performance, the ultimate responsibility for these tasks lies with the people involved. The most important information is who to call when you have a question. Faculty members should rely first on their Department Chairs and Mentors. Department Chairs should rely on their Deans. The staff of the Provost's Office, the Ombudsman, and the Faculty Senate Officers are ready to help in all situations and should be consulted if the matter cannot be resolved at the Departmental or College level.

## 2. The Letter of Initial Appointment

### **The Letter, in conjunction with the *Faculty Manual*, is a Contract**

The letter of initial appointment has the status of a contract between the faculty member and the University. As a result, it must be worded carefully. For example, Department Chairs should avoid promising a particular teaching load or a particular office location. Such promises reduce the Department's flexibility in responding to changing demands. The Provost's Office provides templates for each type of faculty appointment to assist in the preparation of these letters. These templates should be used whenever possible and the Provost's Office or Human Resource Services should be consulted if questions arise.

### **Contents of the Letter**

Most letters of initial appointment contain some information that is of use to the faculty member only during his transition to the University. For example, the letter may describe initial salary, moving expenses, start up costs, initial teaching loads, special travel funds, summer salary, etc.

Other information in the letter of initial appointment may be important to evaluating the faculty member throughout her career. For example, the title and term of the position should be indicated (e.g., Assistant Professor on a 9 month appointment). The duties of the faculty member should be specified. In some Colleges, this is achieved by attaching a percentage appointment to each of the faculty responsibilities of teaching, scholarship, and service. When a particular percentage is not listed, it is usually assumed that teaching and scholarship make up the major part of the job with service weighted less (e.g., approximately 40% teaching, 40% scholarship, 20% service). If the letter is not sufficiently clear, a newly hired faculty member should ask about the assumptions about faculty assignments that are made in his/her Department. Clarifications should be committed to writing and signed as an addendum to the letter of initial appointment.

Any deviation from the University, College, or Departmental criteria for tenure and promotion should be described in the letter of initial appointment. For example, if the faculty member's scholarly activity focuses on electronic publishing, it should be explicitly stated that electronic publications will be considered as part of the process for evaluating scholarly activity.

The year in which the faculty member will be considered for tenure and promotion should be specified. When a person is appointed to an Assistant Professor position, tenure (if granted) usually becomes effective on August 16 of the year that follows the initial appointment by six years. Those appointed as Associate Professors are normally considered for tenure in their third year of service to the University. Those

appointed as Professors are normally considered in their first year. In all cases, the time to tenure may be shortened if the faculty member explicitly negotiates early consideration because of, for example, time spent at other universities. If the time of consideration for tenure and promotion is three or more years from the date of initial appointment, the letter should also specify the dates for conducting the Intensive Pre-tenure (Third-year) Review. Hiring authorities are cautioned against negotiating a period so brief that it does not allow for adequate review of the candidate.

Hires are made at the level of Assistant Professor unless the search was explicitly conducted for someone at a higher level. Permission to advertise at a higher level must be obtained in advance of the search. The faculty and Chair of the Department, in consultation with the Dean, have some discretion over whether to hire at the Associate or Professor level.

In rare cases (e.g., appointment of a Professor), the initial appointment letter may contain an offer of tenure. **The Provost must approve this offer, through the normal process (see “5. Tenure and Promotion”), before tenure can be included in the initial offer letter.** That is, a tenure file must be prepared according to the Provost’s guidelines. The letters of recommendation submitted as part of the hiring process may be used as external letters if they contain information relevant to tenure (i.e., information about the quality of the candidate’s teaching, scholarship, and service). A fourth external letter must be solicited if there are only three letters of recommendation. As usual, the appropriate Departmental faculty members vote and the Chair makes a recommendation. The case is then forwarded to the Dean and Provost for their approvals. The only exception to the normal tenure process is that these tenure cases will be considered in an expedited manner outside of the normal timeline. To repeat, no promise of tenure can be made until the full tenure and promotion process is completed and approved by the Provost.

In cases where a faculty member’s appointment is split between two or more Departments or Units, a lead Department must be specified. This Department will be responsible for conducting all faculty performance reviews. The lead Department is required to consult the other Departments during reviews.

If the letter of initial appointment is not sufficiently detailed, or if the duties of a faculty member change, the new details should be specified in a document in the faculty member’s file. This document should be signed by both the faculty member and his supervisor (e.g., Department Chair, Unit Director). Mentors or mentoring committees and any faculty member voting on the candidate’s performance (e.g., the senior faculty in the unit) should be notified of this change in assignment. A copy of the letter must be provided to Human Resource Services (HRS) and the chair must follow up with HRS to ensure that the central personnel file is fully updated.

To reduce the probability of a misunderstanding, copies of Departmental and College criteria for tenure and promotion should be attached to the letter of initial

appointment. The appointment letter should contain a specific reference to these attachments.

### **3. Annual and Progress-towards-tenure (Pre-tenure) Reviews**

The performance of every faculty member is reviewed every year in the spring semester. **Assistant professors must also be given a second, Progress-towards-tenure (Pre-tenure) Review every year to provide feedback on how they are progressing towards tenure.**

Annual and Progress-towards-tenure Reviews are helpful to faculty members. They provide information about strengths upon which to build and weaknesses to correct. The reviews also provide faculty members with explicit information about how they are doing relative to the University's standards for tenure and/or promotion. As a result, the Annual and Progress-towards-tenure Reviews form an important part of due process in relation to tenure decisions. Tenure and promotion decisions should never be a surprise. Instead, tenure and promotion decisions should follow logically from prior annual evaluations.

Annual and Progress-towards-tenure Reviews are also helpful to administrators, providing information needed for the allocation of special considerations such as increases in salary, extra space, etc. The Reviews also provide information that may help administrators to describe faculty productivity to external constituencies such as the legislature. Pressure has mounted in recent years to institute post-tenure review. To date, we have avoided post-tenure review because our Annual Review policy ensures that each faculty member is reviewed every year.

The University is developing a University-wide standardized Annual Review system. For now, the conduct of Annual Reviews differs somewhat from Department to Department and from College to College. The information that follows should be interpreted in the context of the culture of the Department and College.

#### **Annual Review for All Faculty Members**

All faculty members are reviewed on their performance during the previous calendar year. For example, the Annual Review conducted in the spring semester, 2005 reviewed performance during the 2004 calendar year.

The Annual Review process begins with faculty members providing information about their performance during the review year in each of the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. In many cases, the Department provides a standardized form for reporting these activities. In other cases, the faculty member may be asked for a description of his activities.

If a faculty member resides on an urban campus, the Department Chair obtains additional information by consulting the appropriate Area Director. If a faculty member has a joint (split) appointment, responsibility for conducting Annual Review rests with

the Chair of the Department that is assigned lead status in the letter of initial appointment. When conducting the Annual Review, the lead Chair should consult with the Chairs of other appointing Departments.

After all of this information is collected, the Department Chair fills out a standardized (University-wide) form for each faculty member in the Department. The form asks for a description and evaluation of the faculty member's performance. It also asks the Chair to assign a number on a 5-point scale that reflects how well the faculty member performed during the past year. A rating of 3.0 represents satisfactory performance. Ratings exceeding 3.0 indicate better performance. Ratings less than 3.0 represent less than satisfactory performance.

The Chair reports the mean and standard deviation of all of the numerical ratings given in the Department. This information provides a context for faculty members to use in evaluating their own ratings. For example, a numerical rating of 3.5 means something different in a Department with a mean rating of 3.0 than in a Department with a mean rating of 4.0. The mean and standard deviations also help Deans to maintain uniform standards for rating all faculty members in their Colleges. A Department Chair who reports a mean that is out of line with the means in other Departments will be asked to adjust his standards for assigning ratings. Finally, the mean and standard deviation may be helpful for interpreting the ratings when changes occur in the standards used to evaluate performance in a Department (e.g., with a new Department Chair). Faculty members will have a guide for interpreting their new ratings if they compare the mean and standard deviation of the new Chair's ratings to the same statistics for the previous Chair. For example, a decrease in Annual Review rating from 4.5 in the previous year to 3.5 in the current year will have a different meaning for a faculty member if the Department mean did not change than if the Department mean decreased. If the mean did not change, then the faculty member's performance is judged to be poorer this year than last. If the Department mean decreased, then the faculty member's performance may not be poorer, and may even be better, this year than last.

The Chair is **not** required to meet with each faculty member to discuss the results of his/her Annual Review, but any faculty member may request a meeting with the Chair for this purpose. Each faculty member must sign the annual review form that is submitted by the Department Chair to the Dean. The signature indicates only that the faculty member has read the form. Signing the annual review does not indicate that the faculty member agrees with the review. A faculty member may attach a written response to the annual review if (s)he believes the review is unfair, inaccurate, or misrepresents activities reported for the previous year. If the faculty member refuses to sign the review, the Chair may simply note that the document was provided and that the faculty member refused to sign it.

After the Chair or Director has completed the annual review, the form goes to the appropriate College Dean who adds a College-wide numerical rating. Although the rating given by the Dean often agrees with that of the Chair, ratings may differ for several reasons. For example, the Dean might introduce greater uniformity in the ratings within



the College by increasing the ratings of a Department that assigned numbers more severely than other Departments. The ratings assigned by the Dean are also made known to faculty members who again have the right to object to the rating in writing.

### **Progress-towards-tenure (Pre-tenure) Review for Untenured Faculty**

The annual review of the senior (tenured) faculty covers only their activities during the preceding calendar year. Pre-tenure faculty members receive an additional review that describes their cumulative progress towards tenure. The Progress-towards-tenure Review is the responsibility of the Chair but, unlike the annual review, the Chair **must** enlist the input of the other tenured faculty members in the Department or Unit. The entire tenured faculty participates to ensure that the faculty member is not given idiosyncratic or misleading information and to ensure that the faculty members who will vote on tenure are informed about the candidate's progress. In some Departments, evaluation of the pre-tenure faculty member's performance is presented to the tenured faculty by a particular faculty member (a mentor or a member of a mentoring committee) or by a committee appointed for this task (e.g., a Departmental Tenure and Promotion Committee).

If a pre-tenure faculty member resides on an urban campus, the Department Chair **must** consult with the tenured Departmental faculty on that campus, as well as with the appropriate Area Director, before writing the Progress-towards-tenure Review. If a pre-tenure faculty member has a joint (split) appointment, responsibility for conducting the review rests with the Chair of the Department that is assigned lead status in the letter of initial appointment. When conducting the review, that Chair **must** consult with the tenured faculty in other appointing Departments, as well as with her own tenured Departmental faculty.

Ideally, a meeting is held in which all of the tenured faculty members of the appropriate unit (or units) meet to discuss the progress of the candidate. The discussion is based on a file that contains at least, the unit's guidelines for tenure and promotion, the candidate's curriculum vitae, evaluations of teaching, and the previous progress-towards-tenure reviews. The Chair then prepares a summary of the comments made by the tenured faculty. Each tenured faculty member **must** be given the opportunity to review the Chair's summary before it is shared with the candidate as his/her Progress-towards-tenure Review.

The Chair **must** meet with each pre-tenure faculty member to discuss the contents and implications of his Progress-towards-tenure Review. Failure to conduct the meeting has serious implications for due process if litigation results from a failure to achieve tenure. In cases where a pre-tenure faculty member is failing to meet the standards for tenure, the Chair must communicate this information to the candidate. Again, failure to communicate inadequate progress towards tenure has serious implications for due process. The faculty member must sign the Progress-towards-tenure Review to indicate that he has read the form. The signature does not indicate that the faculty member agrees with the review. If the faculty member fails to sign, the chair may note this on the

review. The faculty member has the right to attach a written response to the review if (s)he believes the review is unfair or if he wishes to comment on the contents of the review.

### **Suggestions for Faculty Members**

Obtain a copy of your Department's Annual Review form - If your Department uses a standardized Annual Review form, ask your Chair for a copy of the form as soon as you arrive on campus. That way, you will know what information to record as you plan and conduct your teaching, scholarly and service activities. You will also know the explicit type of teaching, scholarly and service activity your Department values.

Keep a file – You may not be able to remember all of the specific activity that you accomplished during the preceding year when it comes time to write your Annual Review. It is useful to file information about those guest lectures and other scholarly activities as you go.

Request a mentor - New faculty members should request a mentor or a mentoring committee to help with all reviews and with tenure and promotion. A mentor can also inform new faculty about Departmental culture. If a mentor is not identified, ask your Department Chair to appoint one. The mentor (or mentors) should usually be a trusted senior faculty member with a scholarly focus as close as possible to your own. The Department Chair or Unit Director should not serve as mentor due to a potential conflict of interest during evaluations and reviews. In addition, non-tenured faculty members should receive advice from a broad range of tenured faculty, not just from the Chair.

Faculty members should choose between a single mentor and a mentoring committee on the basis of what is comfortable and what fits with the Departmental culture. There are advantages and disadvantages to having a single mentor rather than a committee. For example, having a single mentor clearly delegates responsibility for mentoring to one person. This avoids diffusion of responsibility. (“Oh, I thought you were handling it.”) On the other hand, having a single mentor does not provide the broad range of insight that a committee provides. Having only a single mentor can be problematic if friction arises between you and your mentor, if your mentor's views differ from those of other senior faculty members, if your mentor is not up-to-date on expectations or procedures for the reviews, or if your mentor leaves the University. If you have a joint appointment, you will need a mentoring committee with representation from each of your units.

The function that the mentor serves differs somewhat from Unit to Unit. The mentoring function should be clear to both the junior faculty member and the mentor. In some Departments, mentors are asked only to give advice that will help the junior faculty member in the various performance reviews. In other cases, the mentoring committee may give advice and may also describe the progress of the candidate to the tenured faculty during the yearly reviews. In still other cases, the mentor may advocate for the junior faculty member. If the role of your mentor is not clear to you, ask the Department

Chair for clarification. You should also note that the relationship between you and your mentor is not protected by privilege or confidentiality should legal problems arise.

As a final point, make sure that your mentor is willing to act in that capacity. In most cases, senior faculty members are eager to help. Nevertheless, make sure that your mentor doesn't regard mentoring as a burden. If you perceive that mentoring is a burden or if other conflicts develop, ask your Chair to assign a different mentor.

### **Suggestions for Department Chairs**

Annual Review Advisory Committees - The Department Chair is ultimately responsible for conducting the Annual Review for each faculty member in the Department. However, our rules do not specify how the Chair carries out the Annual Review responsibility. Many Departments use a system in which an Annual Review Advisory Committee examines the materials submitted by each faculty member. The Committee then meets to discuss each case. The information described by the Chair in the annual review is based on these discussions, but the Chair bears ultimate responsibility for the content and rating of the annual review.

An Annual Review Advisory Committee may be elected or appointed for the specific purpose of advising on Annual Review. Alternatively, advising on annual reviews may be an additional assignment for a committee that already exists for other purposes (e.g., a Departmental Executive Committee). The committee may be composed solely of senior faculty members or it may include one or more junior faculty members. Including junior faculty members can add a new perspective to the reviews and can help to educate the junior faculty about Departmental expectations and standards.

Having an Advisory Committee can be particularly useful when Chairs are called on to defend their numerical ratings. Members of the committee will usually assign similar ratings to a particular faculty member. The Chairs' rating will seem more reasoned if it follows oversight from other faculty members. Although sharing the responsibility for Annual Review with other faculty members has advantages, Chairs should not try to impose this process if it violates the Departmental culture. Members of some Departments prefer that their annual reviews be evaluated only by their Department Chair.

The importance of accurate feedback – Although it is difficult to convey bad news, faculty members must be given accurate feedback on their performance during Annual and Progress-towards-tenure Reviews. A Chair assigning poor ratings when faculty members are performing well can undermine the morale of his faculty and reduce their performance. A Chair assigning good ratings to faculty members who are performing poorly may engender even worse consequences. To begin with, faculty members cannot improve their performance without accurate guidance about the problems in that performance. But also, a faculty member who is not making adequate progress towards tenure should be informed of this inadequacy as soon as possible to prepare for future career opportunities and decisions. Department Chairs should not burden their

Departments with continuing employment of faculty members that are not meeting the University's standards. Controversy will arise if tenured faculty members vote to deny tenure when a candidate has been given consistently high ratings by the Department Chair.

The basis for feedback – The evaluations given during Annual and Progress-towards-tenure Reviews must be based on the faculty member's actual performance. The promise of future performance is given little weight because no one can predict the future. Faculty members must also be evaluated for achievements, rather than for changes from past performance. For example, a faculty member performing poorly must not receive a high rating because performance improved during the last year. Likewise, a faculty member performing consistently well every year should not be penalized because performance has not improved. The University encourages faculty members to perform well every year, recognizing that it is difficult to improve performance year after year.

Collegiality can play a role in Annual and Progress-towards-tenure Reviews but only to the extent that problems with collegiality result in problems in teaching, scholarship, and service. Faculty members should not be rated poorly if they are unpopular. Faculty members should be rated poorly if their behavior results in problems for their own productivity or the productivity of colleagues.

Merit ratings – Some Department Chairs believe that faculty members focus on the merit rating assigned in the Annual Review process at the expense of other information. As a result, some Chairs argue that Annual Review meetings with faculty members will be more productive if the faculty member does not know the merit rating until after or near the end of the meeting. Department Chairs have discretion about when to reveal merit ratings.

Mentoring - The Department Chair bears the responsibility for assuring mentoring of faculty members until they reach the level of Professor. It is not expected that all Assistant Professors will achieve tenure or all Associate Professors will become Professors. Nevertheless, all faculty members should be given guidance during their progress towards tenure and/or promotion. Again, the Chair is responsible for appointment of either a mentor or a mentoring committee for each faculty member who will eventually be considered for promotion. Chairs should not serve on mentoring committees so that the faculty member can profit from the guidance of the maximum number of senior faculty. Chairs should also delegate mentoring service to avoid a conflict of interest during future evaluations in the promotional process.

#### 4. Intensive Pre-tenure (Third-year) Review

For faculty members employed three or more years at Washington State University before their evaluation for tenure, one of their Annual Reviews will be an intensive review that serves as a rehearsal for the final tenure process. The date of this review is specified in the letter of initial appointment. The review ordinarily occurs in the spring of the third year of employment, but it can be conducted in other years under extraordinary circumstances. Because the review follows the procedures used for tenure except for the solicitation of external letters, this review helps to prepare faculty members to meet expectations at the time of tenure.

Because the Intensive Pre-tenure Review resembles the tenure and promotion review, please refer to “5 - Tenure and Promotion” for more details, particularly regarding the preparation and contents of the tenure packet. The present chapter contains only information that is specific to the Intensive Pre-tenure Review.

The Intensive Pre-tenure Review results in one of the following three evaluations of the faculty member’s performance:

- Progress Satisfactory
- Improvement Required
- Unsatisfactory.

The rating of “Progress Satisfactory” indicates that the faculty member is making reasonable progress toward making tenure if productivity continues. If the faculty member has questions about the aspects of performance and productivity leading to this rating, she should ask the Department Chair for additional information.

The rating of “Improvement Required” indicates that tenure and promotion may not be granted unless the faculty member’s performance and productivity improves. A faculty member receiving such a rating should pay careful attention to the feedback from the Chair and Dean about required improvement in performance and productivity. This feedback should be as specific as possible. **Administrators should not assign a rating of “Improvement Required” on the assumption that every faculty member can improve.** Instead, this rating should be given only when present performance falls short of the expected standards for the granting of tenure. Specific instructions and explanations must be provided so that the faculty member can meet future tenure and promotion expectations.

A rating of “Unsatisfactory” is assigned when the faculty member’s performance falls short of expectations by such a wide margin that success is unlikely. A rating of “Unsatisfactory” is usually accompanied by non-renewal of the faculty member’s appointment with the University. When this occurs, the faculty member will ordinarily have one more year of appointment to find another position. All untenured faculty members are employed on year-by-year appointments. Although rare, untenured faculty

may be dismissed from the University at any time given adequate notice as specified in the *Faculty Manual*.

A faculty member not reappointed as a result of an unsatisfactory review can appeal the decision to the Faculty Status Committee (FSC) within 30 calendar days of receiving the notification of unsatisfactory review. The appeal can be based on inadequate consideration, violation of academic freedom, or substantial procedural irregularity. The appeal cannot request that FSC reconsider the merits of the decision. Only the senior faculty members in the Department, the Department Chair, the Dean, and the Provost can judge the academic merits of an Intensive Pre-tenure Review. After an investigation, the FSC recommends to the President that the termination decision either be upheld or set aside. The President then decides whether to accept or reject the FSC recommendation. The FSC and its appeal procedure are described in more detail in the next chapter. Further details are available at the FSC website ([http://facsen.wsu.edu/committees/faculty\\_status\\_committee.html](http://facsen.wsu.edu/committees/faculty_status_committee.html)).

The evaluation that follows from the Intensive Pre-tenure Review should not come as a surprise to the candidate faculty member. Unless something extraordinary occurs, exceptional Annual Review ratings (e.g., 4.0 - 5.0) should lead to a rating of “Progress Satisfactory.” Intermediate Annual Review ratings (3.0 - 4.0) should lead to ratings of either “Progress Satisfactory” or “Improvement Required.” Barring extraordinary improvement over the prior year’s performance, ratings of 3.0 or less may lead either to ratings of “Improvement Required” or “Unsatisfactory.”

## 5. Tenure and Promotion

### Introduction

Tenure is an unusual right. A person who holds tenure cannot be dismissed from employment without cause. This right protects the freedom of faculty members to espouse unpopular views that may be essential to the pursuit of truth. Tenure has been under fire recently. Some have argued that tenure is no longer needed because of the decline in political attacks on academia. Nevertheless, Washington State University and most other comparable universities continue to award tenure and probably rightly so. Faculty members still come under attack when they reach unpopular conclusions.

Along with this unusual right, comes an unusual jeopardy. Faculty members are given a thorough performance review after a few years of service to the University. This review is particularly thorough because the review will determine whether the University will make a long-term commitment to employing the candidate. Guidelines issued by the American Association of University Professors and adopted at Washington State University also dictate that a candidate can be considered for tenure only once. That is, a faculty member who is considered for tenure cannot be asked to wait a few years if performance and productivity fall short of established standards. Instead, it's up or out. A decision of this magnitude needs to be made carefully.

On the positive side, faculty members are hired on the assumption that they have the education and skills necessary to teach and perform scholarly activities commensurate with the granting of tenure. Most senior faculty members are committed to helping candidates achieve this goal. Incoming faculty members are often provided start up money, temporary reductions in teaching loads, travel funds, etc., to help them to initiate and establish their careers. Incoming faculty members are also assigned either mentors or mentoring committees and receive a yearly Progress-towards-tenure Review to improve their understanding of tenure expectations. As a result, most tenure-track faculty achieve tenure and promotion, but it is not easy.

### Tenure-track Faculty Titles

The tenure-track faculty titles are, in order of attainment:

Assistant Professor,  
Associate Professor,  
Professor, and  
Regents Professor.

These titles are granted only by a letter from the Provost issued in accordance with University policy. The titles are not achieved solely through time spent at the University, misnaming of the title through administrative oversight, or otherwise.

Faculty members usually start their appointments at the rank of Assistant Professor, tenure track. During this time, they are not tenured. Therefore, their appointments with the University may be terminated at any time as long as adequate notice is given as specified in the *Faculty Manual*. In practice, untenured faculty members are rarely terminated before they are considered for tenure. Exceptions may occur if the faculty member's Department or Program is eliminated, if that Unit or College changes its direction, or if the faculty member receives an "Unsatisfactory" rating on the Intensive Pre-tenure Review (see "4. Intensive Pre-tenure (Third year) Review").

Tenure is usually accompanied by promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. A faculty member making normal progress will spend six years as an Associate Professor before promotion to Professor. Because it takes almost a year to prepare and evaluate a case for promotion, cases are really based on five, not six, years of teaching, scholarship, and service. Faculty members should be forewarned that achieving a certain time in rank is insufficient evidence for promotion. Instead, candidates must meet the standards of performance and productivity for their new rank before they will be promoted. Some faculty members will not be promoted beyond Associate Professor.

The rank of Regents Professor is reserved for those who have performed exceptionally well as faculty members for many years. No more than 30 faculty members can hold this rank at any time (approximately 2.5% of the eligible academic faculty). No more than five new Regents Professors are chosen every year through a detailed process described below.

### **Accelerating or Stopping the Tenure Clock**

The time at which a faculty member will be considered for tenure and/or promotion is specified in the initial letter of appointment (usually six years after initial appointment). Under exceptional circumstances, a Department Chair may petition the Dean and then the Provost for early consideration for a faculty member who is performing exceptionally well. To be considered early for tenure, a faculty member must do more than just meet the requirements for tenure. The faculty member must exhibit truly exceptional performance and productivity in teaching, scholarship, and service. Chairs and Deans requesting early consideration for a faculty member, and the faculty member consenting to early consideration, must be prepared to document the candidate's achievements fully and convincingly. They should also consider carefully before requesting early tenure consideration. Guidelines of the American Association of University Professors, adopted at Washington State University, specify that a candidate can stand for tenure only once. A faculty member who falls short in an early bid for tenure will leave the University even if that faculty member is very promising.

Under extraordinary circumstances, the tenure clock can be stopped. A faculty member may request a one-year extension of the clock for giving birth. Up to two extensions will be granted to an individual faculty member. In addition, the clock may be stopped in the case of catastrophic illness or family emergency. If a faculty member



takes leave without pay, whether or not that year will count towards tenure should be evaluated and then specified in writing to the Provost at the time the leave is granted. All requests for extensions of the tenure clock must be made to the Provost prior to September 1 of the year of tenure consideration. Requests for delays are optional. That is, a faculty member need not make such a request if the requirements for tenure can be met without such an extension.

### **Myths about Tenure and Promotion**

Probably because of its unusual nature, many myths surround the tenure and promotion process. Some myths appear in the underlined passages below. Each myth is followed by a description of the problems in its reasoning.

Tenure is a right. I should receive tenure if I do a reasonable job. - No faculty member has a right to tenure. When the University awards tenure, it is making a commitment to employ the faculty member for many years. As a result, the University requires that the faculty member perform at a higher standard than simply getting by. For example, faculty members who consistently receive ratings of 3.0 on their Annual Reviews should not assume that they will receive tenure, as it is quite likely that they will not. A rating of 3.0 usually indicates average, unexceptional, performance. The University may expect faculty to perform at a higher level before offering tenured faculty positions.

Tenure is an insurmountable hurdle. Most faculty members who are considered for tenure fail to receive it. – This may be true at some Universities, but not here. If our tenure and promotional processes are working well, there should be no surprises following tenure evaluations. Faculty members who are unlikely to receive tenure should be counseled before their dossier is evaluated. Those considered for tenure should have a reasonable chance of achieving it. Our current process is working well. More than 95% of faculty members considered for tenure do receive it. This does not mean that all tenure-track faculty members will receive tenure. Some faculty members leave the University before they are evaluated for tenure.

Research and grant funding are the only factors that count towards tenure at a research university. – To receive tenure at Washington State University, the candidate must demonstrate adequate performance and productivity in all of the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service, not just in research. In many Departments, teaching and scholarship are weighted approximately equally and service is weighted somewhat less. When tenure denials occur, they usually occur either because a candidate has not established an adequate program of scholarship or because his/her teaching is inadequate.

The exact combination of factors that weigh into tenure decisions vary by Department and discipline. For example, research funding is difficult to achieve in some areas and, therefore, obtaining external research funding is not required for tenure in those areas. In other areas, external funding is required, must come from a prestigious federal source, and must be renewed for tenure to be awarded. In some areas, the faculty

member must write a book to be awarded tenure. In other areas, book writing is discouraged in favor of refereed journal articles. **Each faculty member should learn, and remain informed about, the factors that count towards tenure and about the relative weights of those factors, in his/her Department or Unit.** The mentor, Department Chair or Unit Director, and senior colleagues, can assist in this learning, as can familiarity with norms of the Department and discipline learned through faculty meetings, seminars, and the like.

Tenured faculty members cannot be fired. Tenure is a license to retire. – It is sometimes argued that tenure is a guarantee of lifetime employment. Therefore, a faculty member can continue to collect a salary without working once tenure is awarded. This is not the case today, if it ever was. First, tenured faculty members can be terminated from employment, although they cannot be terminated frivolously. The Faculty Disciplinary Policy in the *Faculty Manual* ([http://facsen.wsu.edu/facsen.wsu.edu\\_non\\_ssl/faculty\\_manual/manual/](http://facsen.wsu.edu/facsen.wsu.edu_non_ssl/faculty_manual/manual/)) lists several conditions under which a tenured faculty member can be dismissed. The conditions include financial exigency, the termination or discontinuation of a Program, unethical and some illegal behaviors (a faculty member would probably be fired for murder, but not for a speeding ticket), research misconduct, and poor performance over a prolonged period. Disability separation is also authorized when a physical or mental condition precludes a faculty member from meeting the essential functions of his/her employment, with or without reasonable accommodation.

To protect the rights of the faculty member, a heavy burden is placed on the University before it can dismiss a tenured faculty member. This burden includes the right to be heard by a committee of one's peers. Faculty members also have appeal rights as described in the *Faculty Manual*. Nevertheless, it is not impossible to meet the burden for termination and faculty member have been terminated from the University for cause, albeit rarely.

Tenured faculty members should also bear in mind that some parts of faculty salary increments are based on performance (merit). As a result, the salary of an unproductive faculty member will quickly fall behind the salary of his peers and of incoming faculty members. You must continue to be productive after you receive tenure if you expect to receive a competitive salary.

Tenure requires a simple majority vote of the Departmental faculty. – Tenure is a judgment call that is based on many factors. The ballots cast by the tenured faculty members carry heavy weight. Faculty ballots are weighted heavily because the senior faculty understand the standards in the discipline, have the most information about the candidate's performance, and must associate professionally and socially with the candidate for many years. Nevertheless, the external letters, evaluation of the Dean, and other evaluative tools also enter into tenure decisions and can be decisive.

The interpretation of faculty ballots is more complex than calculating a majority. In most cases, a candidate should have more support than just a majority to be worthy of

tenure. The ballots of productive faculty members who write a thoughtful justification for their votes will also be considered more seriously than, for example, the ballots of those who simply vote to either grant or deny tenure.

If one faculty member votes against me, I won't get tenure. – There is no such thing as a single vote veto at the faculty voting level of the tenure process. A negative vote by a single faculty member will not necessarily lead to a denial even if that faculty member is the Department Chair or a powerful senior faculty member. A negative vote by a powerful faculty member will undoubtedly receive serious consideration, but the matter will be investigated before any final decision is made. Many other factors will be weighed in this process.

Tenure is a popularity contest. If you're well liked by your colleagues, you'll receive tenure. If you aren't well liked, you won't. – Academics are surprisingly tolerant of unusual behavior in their colleagues. You will probably receive tenure if you are productive and other aspects of your behavior are merely annoying or eccentric rather than destructive. If, however, your behavior is perceived as interfering with the Department's ability to achieve its goals, you will probably not be awarded tenure. To put that more simply, people are rarely rejected for tenure on the basis of collegiality alone. They are rejected if problems with collegiality interfere with the candidate's ability to teach or to contribute to scholarship or service. Having said that, the flip side is also true. Faculty members who are well liked will undoubtedly achieve tenure more easily than faculty members who are not liked because well-liked faculty members are perceived to be furthering the Department's missions and goals, as well as contributing to its productivity.

I'll get tenure if I have x publications. – First, as argued earlier, scholarship is not the sole factor in consideration for tenure. Teaching and service also count, and grantsmanship is important in some areas. Additionally, the quality of publications, not just their number, weighs heavily in tenure considerations. Faculty members are sometimes awarded tenure with only a few publications if those publications are in high quality outlets as established by generally accepted indicators (citation counts, rejection rates of journals, number of experiments in the publication, etc.). Finally, your contribution to your publications is also important. Publications to which you made the major contribution are more important than those on which you were a minor contributor. Independent publications are more important than those that you did with your dissertation mentor or other senior faculty members. Publications that are part of a systematic program of scholarship are more important than stand alone publications. All in all, tenure considerations are based on more complex standards than a simple count of publications.

If Professor X got tenure, I'll get tenure. – Evaluators judge cases on their merits relative to expectations, not in comparison with other cases. It is natural to make such comparisons, but each tenure and/or promotion case must stand on its own merit. This occurs for good reasons. There may be something about Professor X that you don't know. You may be vastly underestimating his/her contributions. In addition, standards

change over time and with changes in the administration and emphases. Try to make sure that your own case for tenure has merit, not that it is as good as or better than someone else's.

The faculty vote doesn't matter. The Dean and Provost make the real decision. – The faculty, Chair, Dean and Provost vote in the same way in the vast majority of tenure cases. It is not impossible for the Dean and Provost to overturn the opinions offered at an earlier level, but it is very rare. Faculty votes weigh heavily in tenure decisions because the other faculty members in the department are in the best position to judge the candidate's work. As a result, faculty members should not only vote, but they should also write thoughtful and informed ballots to help to guide decision making later in the process.

### Procedures

The procedures used for tenure and promotion are designed to be thorough. They allow for input from the candidate, students, colleagues within and outside of the University, the Chair, the Dean, the Vice Provosts and Provost. In most cases, there is general agreement on the merits of the case at all of these levels.

Procedures vary somewhat from Department to Department. The description below outlines a typical procedure. Upon employment by the University, a faculty member should ascertain his/her Department's approach by obtaining copies of College and Departmental guidelines for tenure and promotion, as well as by reviewing the *Faculty Manual*. The faculty member should remain apprised of any changes adopted by the Department, College, or University.

Again, under most circumstances, tenure becomes effective after the completion of six years of service as a tenure-track faculty member at Washington State University. Because tenure reviews are thorough and take most of a year to complete, faculty members are asked to have materials ready to send to external reviewers by the summer after their fifth year on the faculty. **That means that most people really have five years to complete the activities that will be considered for tenure.** Although items are occasionally added to files during tenure consideration, additions are limited to minor changes such as indicating acceptance of submitted papers or changing a paper that is in press to a published citation. The limitations regarding these additions are strict to ensure that everyone (senior faculty, Chair, Dean, Provost) evaluates the same file.

The faculty member assembles a file. – Candidates for promotion and/or tenure are ultimately responsible for reporting their accomplishments. Therefore, the process starts with the candidate assembling a file. The file includes a current curriculum vitae, a teaching portfolio, a context statement, and exhibits of creative activity such as publications, grant proposals, art work etc. No more than ten exhibits can be included in the file.

The teaching portfolio provides a place for the faculty member to describe a teaching philosophy, to give examples of how that philosophy is translated into action (e.g., through course syllabi), and to show how well this teaching is received (e.g., through student evaluations, letters from outside observers). The teaching portfolio is limited to five pages. It is described in detail in the *Faculty Manual* ([http://facsen.wsu.edu/facsen.wsu.edu\\_non\\_ssl/faculty\\_manual/manual/](http://facsen.wsu.edu/facsen.wsu.edu_non_ssl/faculty_manual/manual/)).

The context statement provides a place for a faculty member to describe any unusual situations that affected previous and ongoing performance (e.g., difficulties obtaining equipment, vandalism of a research laboratory) or to justify any apparent weaknesses in the case. The context statement is limited to two pages. Again, the faculty member should consult the *Faculty Manual* for more details about this statement.

The Department Chair solicits external letters. – The Chair must obtain at least four letters of evaluation from faculty members at other universities who are perceived as experts in the candidate’s field of scholarly pursuit. The external reviewers must hold at least the rank to which the candidate aspires. **No letter writer may have a personal relationship with the candidate that goes beyond the normal relationship of colleague.** That is, letter writer may not be related to the candidate, be a graduate school friend, a dissertation advisor, a research collaborator, etc. Faculty members at Washington State University may not write external letters of evaluation.

Candidates are allowed to suggest writers for these letters, but they are not allowed to pick all of the writers. The Chair solicits a letter from some of the people suggested by the candidate (usually two) and from other reviewers who are not suggested by the candidate (usually two). The faculty member does not have veto power over the reviewers selected by the Chair. Faculty being evaluated usually are not informed from whom letters will be received and must not contact external reviewers about their letters. Chairs will be more successful in obtaining letters if they contact potential letter writers in advance to determine their willingness to evaluate the candidate.

The information that is sent to external evaluators should contain a letter with instructions to the evaluator, the candidate’s curriculum vitae, the candidate’s teaching portfolio, other evidence of success at teaching and scholarship, and the guidelines for tenure and promotion of the Department, College, and University. The Provost’s office can provide a sample letter to external evaluators. Such letters ask the evaluator’s opinion about the quality and quantity of the candidate’s teaching, scholarship, and service. The evaluator is asked to compare this work to the Department, College, and University standards for tenure and/or promotion. Because evaluators may also be asked if the candidate would be likely to achieve tenure and/or promotion at his/her home University, the external letter writers should be employed by universities that are at least as prestigious as Washington State University. Occasionally, an appropriate reviewer may be located at an institution that would not be regarded as a peer of our University. In that case, the Chair or Unit Director should take special care to describe why this reviewer was chosen when describing the reviewer’s credentials.

All external letters received by the time the file is considered at the Department level must be included in the file even if there are more than four. Occasionally, a letter may arrive after the case has been considered by the Department. Those letters do not go forward because all reviewers should look at the same file (the Department, the College, and the Provost).

The solicitation of external letters has implications for how candidates should direct professional activities. External letters will be more positive, the more strongly the candidate is established in the scholarly discipline. As a result, a series of papers that systematically address a particular question will be more successful than an equal number and quality of papers published on many different topics. Publishing on many different topics may be perceived as indicating a lack of focus. Candidates should promote their visibility in the field by presenting papers at meetings, building a network of peers, initiating contact with important people in the discipline, volunteering for responsibilities in professional organizations, etc.

The Department Chair adds information to the file. – In addition to copies of the external letters, the Department Chair adds the past Annual and Progress-towards-tenure Reviews to the file to ensure that tenure and promotion decisions follow logically from past performance reviews. The Chair must also briefly describe the qualifications of each person writing an external letter. The description must demonstrate that the writer is an expert in the field (e.g., a journal editor, member of a national grant review panel, highly cited author, winner of a prize, faculty member at a prestigious University etc.).

The senior faculty vote. – Usually, all of the faculty members in the Department or Unit who hold the rank to which the candidate aspires or a higher rank (called the “senior faculty”) vote on the candidate. The ballot indicates whether the candidate should or should not be tenured and/or promoted. The ballot also provides space for senior faculty members to justify and explain their votes.

There are only a few exceptions to the rule that all of the senior faculty members vote. No one is allowed to vote on a candidate more than once. Therefore, the Department Chair and Dean do not cast a faculty ballot even if they hold tenure in the Department. They will vote later in the process. For a similar reason, the Chancellor of an urban campus does not vote on a faculty member in his/her Department who is located at the urban campus. In addition, no one votes on a candidate with whom she has a personal relationship (e.g., spouse, parent, child.) To do so is a violation of the State Ethics Law and the University’s Nepotism Policy. Retired faculty and faculty with less than 0.5 FTE appointments cannot vote on tenure and promotion, even if the retired or part-time faculty member is teaching or actively involved in scholarship.

Beyond these few exceptions, it is the duty of all senior faculty members to cast thoughtful ballots on candidates for tenure and promotion. Tenure and/or promotion decisions are important to the candidate and to the Department, College, and the University. Therefore, the principal of shared governance must work properly on this issue. By casting thoughtful ballots, faculty members help to interpret the case to

administrators who are involved in later stages of the tenure and promotion process. Senior faculty members should not abstain from voting because of a lack of knowledge of the candidate. The Department Chair is responsible for ensuring that every voting senior faculty member is adequately apprised of the candidate's qualifications and provided the time necessary to write a thoughtful ballot. Abstaining or refusing to vote to protest a previous tenure and/or promotion decision is unacceptable.

Faculty ballots should address matters of performance only. Collegiality or personality difficulties should be described, but only insofar as those issues affect the ability of the faculty member to work to accomplish the goals of the unit. If collegiality issues are raised, the interference with the unit's performance should be specifically identified and explained.

Five faculty ballots must be cast for a file to be considered complete. If there are fewer than five senior faculty members in a unit, then the Chair and Dean work together to identify senior faculty members in other closely related units. Enough external senior faculty members will be asked to vote to achieve a total of five votes. These external senior faculty members will be provided with the candidate's file and will participate in all deliberations on the possible promotion and/or tenure.

The procedure that leads to faculty balloting differs from Department to Department. Candidates for tenure and/or promotion need to determine exactly how this evaluation takes place in their Department. For example, some Departments ask the candidate to provide a colloquium describing his/her performance and productivity in scholarly activities. Some Departments appoint a senior faculty member or a committee to summarize the candidate's achievements for the other faculty members. In doing so, Departments should take care to appoint a person who will present a balanced profile.

Barring exceptional circumstances, the faculty ballots should be consistent with the information contained in the previous Annual and Progress-towards-tenure Reviews. If the ballot is inconsistent with what went before (e.g., the vote is to deny tenure when the untenured faculty member has had Annual Review ratings between 4.0 and 4.5), a thorough justification must be given to support this result.

The Chair interprets the file. - The Chair votes whether to grant or deny tenure and/or promotion. (S)he also writes an evaluation of the case in the light of Departmental and College criteria. The Chair's evaluation usually contains a descriptive summary of the candidate's accomplishments (e.g., teaching assignments and evaluations, supervision of x graduate students, publication of y papers, receipt of z grant dollars). The evaluation should also put the importance of these activities in a context that will allow administrators to better understand the candidate's record. The Chair should indicate the quality of the journals or book publishers as well as the competitive nature of the grant funding sources. The Chair should define the significance of publications such as proceedings and abstracts. In some cases, abstracts provide only summaries of conference presentations. In other cases, they are competitive publications. If the

candidate does not meet Departmental, College or University expectations for tenure, the facts should be stated directly and explicitly.

The Chair should also help others to assess any disagreements that arise in the file. For example, the Chair should clarify the nature of the dispute if some members of the Department argue that the candidate's teaching is poor while others evaluate teaching favorably. The Chair should put negative comments into context. For example, some external letters writers may be from universities outside of the United States. They may judge a candidate's performance too harshly because their tenure and promotion process differs substantially from our own.

The Chair's vote need not be consistent with the ballots of the majority of the faculty. A Chair who presents a thoughtful case for voting differently may carry the day. However, a vote that differs substantially from the faculty ballot should be carefully explained in a way that will be meaningful to the Dean, Vice Provosts, and Provost (and possibly to the Faculty Status Committee and President) who will assess the matter subsequently. The Chair should describe, interpret, and evaluate any information that contradicts the Chair's ballot and/or the majority balloting of the faculty.

Again, collegiality or personality difficulties may be described but only insofar as those issues affect the ability of the faculty member to work to accomplish the mission and goals of the unit. If collegiality issues are raised, the interference must be specifically identified. Comments about family troubles, children, illness, disability, maternity leave, etc. should not be a part of the record except under unusual circumstances. The Chair should seek counsel at the Office of the Attorney General on the permissibility of considering these matters if such considerations are pertinent to the tenure decision.

If the faculty member resides on an urban campus, the Chair must solicit input from the appropriate Area Director at the urban campus. In the case of joint appointments, the Department Chair of the lead Department must consult with the Chair and appropriate senior faculty in the other Department.

As is the case concerning all evaluations of the tenure file, the Chair's evaluation should be consistent with the information contained in the previous Annual and Progress-towards-tenure Reviews except under unusual circumstances. If the Chair's evaluation is inconsistent with what went before, a thorough justification must be given for the deviation.

The Dean (and Chancellor for candidates from urban campuses) evaluates the file.  
– The procedure used to review files at the College level differs from College to College. Early in his/her career, the candidate should ask about College Tenure and Promotion Processes, and remain informed of any changes. In many Colleges, a Dean's Advisory Committee makes a recommendation to the Dean. The Advisory Committee is usually composed of representatives from each part of the College. Because no one is allowed to vote more than once on a case, Department Chairs do not usually serve on this committee, and anyone from the home Department of the candidate must excuse himself/



herself from the vote. Some Advisory Committees provide the Dean with an explicit recommendation on how to vote on a candidate. Others provide only a description and evaluation of the case.

The Dean holds the ultimate responsibility for evaluating the case at the College level. The Dean votes to grant or deny tenure. Again, the Dean is not constrained to vote as the Department did, but a Dean who deviates from the Departmental recommendation must clearly justify the deviation. The Dean's evaluation should also be consistent with the previous Annual and Progress-towards-tenure Reviews. If the Dean's evaluation is inconsistent with prior reviews, a thorough justification must be given for the deviation.

The Dean writes a summary to justify the tenure and promotion ballot. The Dean's summary should not merely repeat what is contained in the recommendation from the faculty and the Chair. Instead, the summary should interpret the recommendations from the Department in light of the standards of the broader disciplines represented by the College. The Dean should try to explain and evaluate any disputes that arose within the Department or any negative statements that were made in the ballots or external letters. The Dean's recommendation should be based mainly on past accomplishments, not on future promise. Finally, the Dean should refer to recommendations obtained from the College Advisory Committee.

The Provost reviews the file. - The Provost and all of the Vice Provosts dealing with academic concerns read each file for tenure and/or promotion. Currently, those Vice Provosts include the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, the Vice Provost for Research, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Once the files have been read, this group meets to discuss each case.

In most cases, the recommendations from the faculty, Chair, and Dean are clear and consistent, and their recommendation is accepted. In a few cases, more information is needed and discussions are held with those possessing the necessary information. In a very few cases, the Chair and Dean make conflicting recommendations and the Provost must decide which recommendation is persuasive.

Very rarely, the decision of the Provost may differ from the prior evaluations. This usually occurs when the standards of the Department and/or College differ from those of the University. Because a conflicting vote results in problems throughout the system, the Provost does everything possible to prevent contradictory decisions. In particular, the Provost tries to ensure that University-wide standards are clearly communicated and enforced.

Once the Provost makes a decision, the decision on tenure and/or promotion is final. Tenure and/or promotions that are granted become effective on the following August 16 for academic appointments and July 1 for annual appointments.

Decisions may be appealed. - Faculty members who are denied tenure and/or promotion may consult the *Faculty Manual* for a detailed description of their rights

[http://facsen.wsu.edu/facsen.wsu.edu\\_non\\_ssl/faculty\\_manual/manual/](http://facsen.wsu.edu/facsen.wsu.edu_non_ssl/faculty_manual/manual/)). If a faculty member resigns within 90 days of a tenure denial, the denial is not posted on the permanent faculty record. Alternatively, the faculty member can appeal to the Faculty Status Committee (FSC) within 30 days of the denial. The appeal must be based on inadequate consideration, violation of academic freedom, or a substantial procedural irregularity. The appeal cannot be based on the academic merits of the case. Only the senior faculty, the Department Chair or Unit Head, the Dean and the Provost are allowed to assess the academic merits in support of tenure and promotion.

FSC and the procedures used by the committee are described in the *Faculty Manual* and on the FSC home page ([http://facsen.wsu.edu/committees/faculty\\_status\\_committee.html](http://facsen.wsu.edu/committees/faculty_status_committee.html)). FSC is elected by the Faculty and is charged with investigating disputes and making a recommendation to the President. In most cases, FSC appoints a subcommittee to investigate a tenure or promotion denial. After its investigation, the subcommittee makes a recommendation to FSC as a whole to either uphold or set aside the denial. Once FSC decides and justifies their recommendation, the recommendation is forwarded to the President of the University. The President then makes a decision to accept or reject the recommendation from FSC. The President cannot grant tenure to, or promote, a faculty member. Rather, the President decides whether to accept the tenure or promotion denial or to set that denial aside. As a result, even if FSC recommends that the denial of tenure or promotion be set aside, the President is not required to accept the recommendation. Even if the President accepts the FSC recommendation, the faculty member is not granted tenure or promotion. Tenure and promotion can be granted only by the Provost. If the appeal to FSC is unsatisfactory to the candidate, the candidate may hire a lawyer and initiate litigation against the University.

Faculty members denied tenure are entitled to one additional academic or annual year of employment at Washington State University dependent on the term of their appointment. Employment of the faculty member ends after this year even if litigation against the University is not resolved.

Promotion to Regents Professor follows a slightly different procedure. - Each College may nominate as many as two faculty members per year for promotion to the rank of Regents Professor. To do this, the Dean submits a regular tenure and promotion file to a special committee convened for this purpose. The review committee selects no more than five candidates per year to recommend to the Provost for promotion to Regents Professor. No more than thirty faculty members can hold the title of Regents Professor at any time. Because a maximum of five candidates will be chosen from among those nominated, faculty members may remain in the pool for up to three years after initial nomination. Faculty members who remain in the pool are encouraged to update their files each year. The process for selecting Regents Professors is described in detail in the Provost's Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion ([http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage\\_documents/2003\\_PT\\_Guidelines.doc](http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage_documents/2003_PT_Guidelines.doc)).

## A Suggested Timeline for Completing Tasks Related to Tenure and Promotion

The timeline presented here is only a suggestion. Actual timelines for Colleges and Departments may differ. For example, Departments or Colleges with few candidates to consider can start the process later than those with many candidates. Following the suggested timeline will ensure timely completion of the process even in Colleges with many candidates. In addition, the Tenure and Promotion Advisory Committee of the College of Pharmacy provides advice to faculty members before those faculty members cast their individual ballots. Therefore, the College Advisory Committee meets earlier in Pharmacy than in other Colleges. Nevertheless, the following timeline describes the procedures followed in most Colleges.

April - The *Provost's Instructions and Forms on Tenure and Promotion* are distributed to the Colleges. These instructions may be found at: [http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage\\_documents/2004\\_PT\\_Guidelines.doc](http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage_documents/2004_PT_Guidelines.doc). A list of candidates for tenure is also distributed to each College. Most candidates for tenure will also be considered for promotion to Associate Professor. Candidates put forward for promotion to Professor or Regents Professor will be identified at this time by the Department Chair in consultation with the Dean. In rare cases, faculty members may put themselves forward for promotion without the approval of the Department or College as described in the *Faculty Manual*.

May - The Department Chair meets with the candidate to prepare a list of possible external evaluators. The Chair also helps the candidate prepare a dossier to send to external evaluators

June - The Department Chair contacts potential external evaluators to determine their ability and willingness to provide an evaluation. Packets are mailed to external evaluators willing to serve. External letters are due back in the Department by mid-August

August - The Department Chair helps the candidate complete the dossier that will be the final tenure and promotion file.

August and September - Departments follow published procedures for evaluating candidates. Evaluation may include the presentation of a colloquium by the candidate, a meeting of the appropriate faculty to discuss the performance and productivity of the candidate, consideration of the candidate by a Departmental tenure and promotion committee, formal balloting by the appropriate faculty, etc. **If the candidate resides on an urban campus, input must be solicited from the appropriate Area Director at the urban campus. In the case of joint (split) appointments, the Department Chair of the lead Department must consult with the Chair and appropriate senior faculty in other Departments.** The Department Chair then prepares a written summary of the tenure and promotion ballots and recommendations and forwards a recommendation to the Dean.

October and early November - Colleges follow published procedures for evaluating candidates. Each College must be especially careful to follow its written guidelines. Tenure and promotion guidelines should be revised if unwieldy or inappropriate. **In the case of faculty members at the urban campuses, the College Dean consults the campus Chancellor or his designee. Both the Dean and the Chancellor or designee prepare a summary statement to be forwarded with the candidate's dossier.** The Dean may also include evaluation of the candidate by the Dean's Advisory Committee

November – Completed tenure and promotion files are sent to the Provost's Office

January - The Provost and Vice Provosts evaluate the candidate. The Provost discusses any problematic candidate evaluations and recommendations with the relevant Dean.

February and March – Tenure and promotion decisions become final and letters describing the decision are sent to faculty members.

March - Successful faculty members are recognized at the Celebration of Excellence Banquet. The Banquet is held during the University Showcase (usually on a Friday night following spring break). The Banquet honors faculty achievements including recognition of University-wide faculty award winners and faculty members granted tenure and/or promotion. In recognition of faculty achievements, the University pays for dinner for each faculty honoree and a guest.

### **Standards for Tenure and Promotion**

A faculty member making normal progress will spend six years as an Assistant Professor and six years as an Associate Professor, but time in rank is not enough for promotion. Some faculty members may not be promoted beyond Associate Professor. As indicated earlier, judgment of the senior faculty in the Department is critical to determining when tenure and promotion standards are met or exceeded.

Faculty members must meet the required standards in all of the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service to obtain tenure and promotion. Teaching includes instruction in formal classroom settings and in small groups, advising, supervision of graduate and post-graduate students and continuing education or outreach activities. Scholarship involves the advancing of knowledge in a particular area. Writing and oral presentations of new discoveries are a vital part of scholarship. In many areas of the University, scholarship takes the form of research. In other areas, it may take the form of creative activities within the standards set forth in the discipline. As noted, each discipline defines its own standards of appropriate scholarship. Service involves activities that contribute to the success of a professional group. The group may be the Department, College, University, or the profession as a whole.

The exact weight given to faculty achievements in each of the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service will depend on the candidate's position description. For example, expectations will differ for a faculty member expected to allocate 75 percent of his time to teaching, with 20 percent to scholarship, and 5 percent to service when compared to a faculty member expected to allocate 65 percent of effort to scholarship, 20 percent instruction, and 15 percent to service. In the first instance, excellence in teaching is most important, but scholarly productivity and involvement in service is also expected. In the second example, evidence of effective teaching and active service is expected in addition to substantial scholarly productivity. A small assignment to a particular activity does **not** mean there is no performance expectation for this activity. For faculty members with no explicit job description, it is assumed that teaching and scholarship weigh heavily and service expectations are somewhat less (e.g., 40% teaching, 40% scholarship, and 20% service).

Promotion to Associate Professor - To earn promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, the candidate must have established a strong record of teaching and service as well as documenting a contribution to scholarship. The candidate should be a strong candidate for tenure and/or promotion at the most prestigious of our peer institutions. Although speculation on potential future performance and productivity is risky, the candidate must have a potential for national or international prominence, as well as the potential for continued contributions to the University.

Promotion to Associate Professor usually accompanies tenure and occurs after six years of employment by the University. Two circumstances permit assistant professors to be considered early for promotion and tenure. First, in rare cases, a faculty member may perform far beyond expectations so that early consideration is warranted. In such instances, prior approval for consideration must be obtained from the Provost. Second, faculty members serving on the faculty of other universities may request credit for productivity at the former institution. The decision about credit towards tenure is made before the candidate is hired and the date for tenure and promotion consideration is specified in the letter of initial appointment. This date is determined through consultation between the potential faculty member, the Department Chair, and the Dean. A wise Department Chair will also involve senior Departmental faculty. Faculty members are urged to use caution when requesting early consideration. As indicated earlier, under most circumstances, faculty members are considered for tenure only once. Therefore, a faculty member failing to meet the standards for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor by the specified date must leave the University no matter how strong their apparent potential.

Promotion to Professor – Candidates for promotion to Professor must show clear evidence of high levels of attainment in the criteria appropriate to their position descriptions and to the mission of their Program, Department, College, and University. While specific criteria for judging the merits of individual faculty may vary among units, overall standards may not vary. National or international prominence is required. Time in rank is not an adequate justification for promotion to Professor. Merely acceptable

performance at the Associate Professor rank is also insufficient. Some faculty members may complete academic careers without being promoted to Professor.

Professors will demonstrate and document excellent performance in teaching, scholarship, and service over many years. The quality and quantity of their accomplishments meet significantly higher expectations than the expectations for an Associate Professor. These accomplishments are expected to reach a broad national or international audience. Attainment of the rank of Professor is an indication that, in the opinion of colleagues, the individual made and continues to make outstanding contributions to the area of their major work assignment. Demonstrable national, and preferably, international prominence is required for promotion to Professor.

The progress made since the faculty member was promoted to Associate Professor should be clearly indicated. Items that were documented to achieve the earlier promotion will not be considered for promotion to Professor. For example, a book manuscript responsible for the promotion to Associate Professor will not be considered to justify promotion to Professor.

The rank of Professor is a faculty rank. As a result, administrative service usually will not justify promotion to Professor, no matter how excellent the work. Administrators can be rewarded for their contributions in other ways (e.g., through salary increases). Faculty members accepting heavy administrative burdens before achieving the rank of Professor may jeopardize their opportunity to meet the standards of teaching and scholarship necessary for promotion.

Only under exceptional circumstances will a faculty member be recommended for promotion to Professor prior to serving as an Associate Professor for fewer than six years. In such instances, prior approval for consideration for promotion to Professor must be obtained from the Provost.

Promotion to Regents Professor – The standards for promotion to Regents professor are high. To be considered, a faculty member must:

- be a tenured full Professor or equivalent;
- have served Washington State University for at least the immediately preceding seven years;
- have achieved the highest level of distinction in a discipline and raised the standards of the University through activities in teaching, scholarship, and public service; and
- have sustained a level of accomplishment, which has received national or international recognition.

A maximum of five faculty members per year are promoted from Professor to Regents Professor. No more than 30 active faculty members can hold the rank of Regents Professor at any one time (approximately 2.5% of the teaching faculty). Accordingly, a faculty member attaining the rank of Regents Professor must have demonstrated truly excellent performance for a long time.

## Frequently Asked Questions

Here are the answers to some frequently asked questions about tenure and/or promotion. Although answers to some of these questions were given earlier, the questions are asked so frequently that answers are repeated here.

1. Up to what point should candidates be allowed to withdraw from consideration for tenure and/or promotion?

In cases where a serious illness or other legitimate problems delay a candidate's progress towards tenure, the candidate may request (though the Department Chair and Dean) that tenure consideration be postponed. The request should be made by September 1 of the year of consideration. Unless the Provost grants the requested delay, the tenure process will be initiated as planned.

If the tenure process starts and it becomes apparent that the candidate will be denied tenure, the candidate may be given the option to resign at any time before the case is forwarded to the Provost. The resignation must be stated in writing and must be approved by the department chair and dean. The effective date of the resignation may be the same date that the candidate's appointment with WSU would have terminated if tenure were denied. The letter of resignation must also indicate the amount of notice that the candidate must give WSU if he or she wishes to leave the University earlier than the agreed upon resignation date.

Candidates for promotion to Professor or Regents Professor may withdraw at any time in the process before the file is submitted to the Provost's office.

2. Under what circumstances can the tenure or Third-year Review time clock be stopped?

A faculty member may request a one-year extension of tenure consideration for giving birth. Up to two extensions will be granted. In addition, consideration may be postponed in the case of catastrophic illness or family emergency. If a faculty member requests leave without pay, the decision about whether that year will count towards tenure should be specified in writing at the time that the leave is granted. If the leave was taken on an emergency basis and time did not permit making this decision in advance, the faculty member should address the matter with the Dean and Chair as early as possible during the leave. All requests for extensions of the clock for tenure consideration must be made to the Provost prior to September 1 of the year of tenure consideration. Requests for delays are optional, not mandatory. That is, a faculty member need not make such a request if the requirements for tenure can be met without such an extension.

3. Who writes the context statement and what should the statement contain?

Each faculty member is encouraged to write a context statement of no more than two pages for inclusion in the tenure and promotion file. The context statement is the candidate's opportunity to describe any unusual challenges and opportunities encountered in his faculty position and to clarify circumstances that may need explanation (e.g., a promised laboratory was not completed on time; research was conducted at a public school and difficulty was encountered getting permission for the research). The context statement is the candidate's opportunity to explain and justify contents of the file that may be unusual.

It is difficult to give general advice about the content of the context statement because the circumstances and conditions encountered by faculty members vary widely. Therefore, the contents of the context statements also vary. Faculty members who have questions about what should be included should consult their mentors, Department Chair, or trusted senior faculty colleagues. These informal advisors may be asked to read drafts of the context statement before it is submitted.

4. What are the appropriate standards for early promotion and tenure?

In unusual cases, a faculty member may be brought up early for promotion and/or tenure. The performance and productivity of such a faculty member must be truly exceptional. Early completion of the requirements is not enough to justify early consideration. Instead, the faculty member must clearly exceed the standards. High standards are required for early consideration because early consideration can rapidly become the norm if it is granted frequently. To avoid this erosion, a candidate for early promotion and/or tenure must obtain permission from the Provost before the tenure and/or promotion file can be brought forward.

5. To what extent can excellence in one of the areas of teaching, scholarship, or service make up for lesser performance in other areas?

A faculty member must meet the standards for promotion and/or tenure in each of the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service before tenure and/or promotion will be granted. Although truly outstanding performance in one area mitigates underperformance in another area, no faculty member will be granted tenure and/or promotion without documented performance in each of the specified areas. Of particular note, excellence in service cannot substitute for mediocre performance in teaching or scholarship.

6. What information should candidates be given once the tenure and promotion process starts?

In most cases, faculty members are not informed of deliberations until they receive a letter either granting or denying tenure and/or promotion. A Department Chair wishing to do so may give candidates a general assessment of progress each time their file makes a significant move (e.g., from the Chair to the Dean, from the Dean to the Provost). Chairs deciding to share information are cautioned to state their assessment carefully to



avoid misunderstandings. In particular, the Chair should make it clear that the tenure and/or promotion process is not complete. The candidacy might encounter problems later even if it has been successful to date.

7. How can we deal with the special problems of urban campus faculty members? In particular, how can we ensure full consultation between the Area Directors, the Chancellors, Deans, and Chairs involved in a tenure and/or promotion decision?

The Department Chair is required to consult with the appropriate Area Director whenever an urban campus faculty member is considered for Annual Review, Progress-towards-tenure Review, Intensive Third-year Review, or for tenure and/or promotion. The Dean is also required to consult with the Chancellor or designee in all of these cases. The Dean and Chancellor must both write summaries for inclusion in the tenure and/or promotion file. Tenure and promotion files that arrive at the Provost's office without evidence of this consultation will be considered incomplete.

8. What procedures should be followed when a Department wishes to offer a new faculty member an appointment with tenure?

Senior faculty members should carefully consider the candidate's professional performance and productivity before deciding to offer an initial appointment with tenure. Candidates should usually spend some time here before tenure consideration. Problems with the candidate might not be apparent during the interview or in reference evaluations.

In exceptional cases, however, tenure can be granted to candidates for faculty positions in the offer letter. In those cases, the candidate and the Department Chair assemble the standard file for tenure consideration. This file must contain the standard materials including ballots by the senior faculty members, the Chair and the Dean. If the letters of recommendation for the position address the information that usually appears in external letters of evaluation for tenure (e.g., an assessment of teaching, scholarship, and service), the letters of recommendation may be used as external letters. If only three letters of recommendation were obtained, a fourth external letter must be solicited. When the file is complete, it is submitted to the Provost's office for immediate consideration outside of the normal timeline for tenure and/or promotion.

Tenure cannot be guaranteed to the candidate either verbally or in writing before the completion of this entire process. Neither Deans, nor Department Chairs are authorized to promise tenure to any faculty member or candidate. Only the Provost can grant tenure.

9. What are the procedures for evaluating faculty members with joint (split) appointments?

When a faculty member has a joint appointment (e.g., appointments in more than one Department), extra steps must be taken in his evaluation. The lead Department, specified in the initial letter of appointment, is responsible for evaluating the candidate. The Chair of the lead Department must consult with the Chair of other involved Departments before writing an Annual Review, a Progress-towards-tenure Review, or a summary of the candidate's case for either Intensive Pre-tenure Review or tenure and/or promotion. The senior faculty of the other departments must be consulted in all of these cases except Annual Review. The Dean must also consult with the Dean of other involved Colleges before writing a summary for Intensive Pre-tenure Review or tenure and/or promotion. In addition, a faculty member with a joint appointment should be given a mentoring committee made up of senior faculty members from each of the appointing units. At the time of tenure and/or promotion consideration, the mentoring committee may be given more responsibility than most mentoring committees for presenting the candidate's case to the senior faculty in the concerned Departments.

10. What rules apply to faculty members on part-time appointment?

Under most circumstances, faculty members are eligible for tenure only if employed by the University for three-quarter time or more. Under exceptional circumstances, faculty members who are employed half time may be considered. Faculty members employed part-time must meet the same standards that apply to full-time faculty members. As a result, part-time faculty members may want to negotiate additional years to tenure as part of their initial employment contract. If these years are granted, the employment letter should also state that the extended period may be modified to meet timeliness standards if the assistant professor converts to full-time employment.

11. How should the situation be resolved when the tenure and promotion guidelines for different Units (e.g., College, Department) contain conflicting information?

We presume tenure and promotion guidelines for Colleges and Departments elaborate, but do not contradict, tenure and promotion guidelines for the University. In rare cases where conflicts arise, the most liberal or flexible standards and guidelines for the faculty member will be followed. In cases where Department or College guidelines conflict with the University guidelines, the Department or College guidelines should be amended as soon as possible.

12. Can a candidate add to the tenure and/or promotion file after the file is submitted?

All reviewers must evaluate the same file. Therefore, once the review begins at the Departmental level, the file is considered complete. If a candidate listed a manuscript or book as "in press" and the article is published, a citation of the published material may be added later to the file. If a faculty member listed a paper as "submitted" and the paper is accepted, the faculty member can request reconsideration of the file at the departmental level as long as the Provost has not yet reached a decision. The faculty member requests reconsideration by contacting the department chair and providing documentation of acceptance of the paper. The chair then requests reconsideration of the case by the voting

faculty. Both the original and subsequent votes become part of the file that is submitted to the college and to the Provost. Publications that are neither published nor accompanied by proof of impending publication (e.g., a letter of acceptance) cannot be considered as productivity toward tenure and/or promotion.

### 13. Checklists

#### **Checklist for Faculty Members - I have:**

- \_\_ Obtained the Department's guidelines for tenure and promotion.
- \_\_ Obtained the College's guidelines for tenure and promotion.
- \_\_ Obtained the Department's form for Annual Review.
- \_\_ Started a file for information I will need for my Annual Review.
- \_\_ Obtained a mentor or a mentoring committee.
- \_\_ Read *A Guide to Washington State University's Policies and Procedures for Evaluating Tenure-track Faculty Members*.
- \_\_ Read the *Faculty Manual's* description of Annual Review.
- \_\_ Read the *Faculty Manual's* description of tenure and/or promotion.
- \_\_ Read the descriptions in the *Faculty Manual* of the many rights and responsibilities of faculty members.
- \_\_ Read the *Faculty Manual's* description of the Faculty Disciplinary Policy.
- \_\_ Read the *Provost's Instructions for Tenure and Promotion*  
([http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage\\_documents/2003\\_PT\\_Guidelines.doc](http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage_documents/2003_PT_Guidelines.doc)).
- \_\_ Read the *Provost's Instructions for Annual Review*  
([http://provost.wsu.edu/manuals\\_forms/documents/annual\\_review.html](http://provost.wsu.edu/manuals_forms/documents/annual_review.html)).

**Checklist for Mentors - I have:**

- Distributed the Department's guidelines for tenure and promotion to those I mentor.
- Distributed the College's guidelines for tenure and promotion to those I mentor.
- Distributed the Department's forms for Annual Review to those I mentor.
- Read *A Guide to Washington State University's Policies and Procedures for Evaluating Tenure-track Faculty Members*.
- Read the *Faculty Manual's* description of Annual Review.
- Read the *Faculty Manual's* description of tenure and/or promotion.
- Read the descriptions in the *Faculty Manual* of the many rights and responsibilities of faculty members.
- Read the *Faculty Manual's* description of the Faculty Disciplinary Policy.
- Read the *Provost's Instructions for Tenure and Promotion* ([http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage\\_documents/2003\\_PT\\_Guidelines.doc](http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage_documents/2003_PT_Guidelines.doc)).
- Read the *Provost's Instructions for Annual Review* ([http://provost.wsu.edu/manuals\\_forms/documents/annual\\_review.html](http://provost.wsu.edu/manuals_forms/documents/annual_review.html)).

**Checklist for Department Chairs – I have:**

- Read *A Guide to Washington State University's Policies and Procedures for Evaluating Tenure-track Faculty Members*.
- Read the *Faculty Manual's* description of Annual Review.
- Read the *Faculty Manual's* description of tenure and/or promotion.
- Read the descriptions in the *Faculty Manual* of the many rights and responsibilities of faculty members.
- Read the *Faculty Manual's* description of the Faculty Disciplinary Policy.
- Read the *Provost's Instructions for Tenure and Promotion* ([http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage\\_documents/2003\\_PT\\_Guidelines.doc](http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage_documents/2003_PT_Guidelines.doc)).
- Read the *Provost's Instructions for Annual Review* ([http://provost.wsu.edu/manuals\\_forms/documents/annual\\_review.html](http://provost.wsu.edu/manuals_forms/documents/annual_review.html)).
- Ensured that senior faculty members understand their responsibilities in all of the faculty review processes.

**For each pre-tenured faculty member in my Department, I have:**

- Provided the Departmental guidelines for tenure and/or promotion.
- Provided the College guidelines for tenure and/or promotion.
- Provided the Departmental form for Annual Review.
- Appointed a mentor or a mentoring committee.
- Ensured that the pre-tenured faculty member understands all of the faculty performance reviews.
- Ensured that the mentors understand their responsibilities.
- In the case of an urban campus faculty member, consulted with the appropriate administrator on the urban campus for all faculty performance reviews.

\_\_In the case of joint appointments, consulted with the other Department Chairs on all faculty performance reviews.

\_\_Initiated all faculty performance review processes in a timely manner.

**Checklist for Deans – I have:**

- \_\_ Read *A Guide to Washington State University's Policies and Procedures for Evaluating Tenure-track Faculty Members*.
- \_\_ Read the *Faculty Manual's* description of Annual Review.
- \_\_ Read the *Faculty Manual's* description of tenure and/or promotion.
- \_\_ Read the descriptions in the *Faculty Manual* of the many rights and responsibilities of faculty members.
- \_\_ Read the *Faculty Manual's* description of the Faculty Disciplinary Policy.
- \_\_ Read the *Provost's Instructions for Tenure and Promotion* ([http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage\\_documents/2003\\_PT\\_Guidelines.doc](http://provost.wsu.edu/homepage_documents/2003_PT_Guidelines.doc)).
- \_\_ Read the *Provost's Instructions for Annual Review* ([http://provost.wsu.edu/manuals\\_forms/documents/annual\\_review.html](http://provost.wsu.edu/manuals_forms/documents/annual_review.html)).
- \_\_ Appointed a Dean's Advisory Committee.
- \_\_ Ensured that the College's Department Chairs understand their responsibilities for all faculty performance reviews.
- \_\_ In the case of urban campus faculty members, consulted with the appropriate administrator at the urban campus for all faculty performance reviews.