

Memorandum

TO: Deans, Chairs, Heads, and Directors

FROM: Donde Plowman, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer
Michael Boehm, Vice Chancellor, Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources

RE: Promotion and/or Tenure in 2017-18

DATE: July 26, 2017

Tenure and promotion reviews are among the most important activities in the academy. The colleagues we tenure and invite to join the senior faculty this year will shape the University's academic reputation for years to come. It is crucial that your reviews be conducted in strict accordance with University procedures and bylaws, that they be characterized (and be perceived to be characterized) by fairness, and that you apply appropriate and rigorous standards in forming your evaluations and recommendations.

Every tenure or promotion decision we make should be judged against the same standard: a proven record that suggests a sustained career typified by true excellence. The promotion and tenure process across our campus is governed by the Faculty Senate document *Guidelines for the Evaluation of Faculty: Annual Evaluations, Promotion, and Tenure*. As is stated in that document, "IANR, colleges, departments, and other administrative subunits shall supplement these guidelines with more detailed descriptions and interpretations of the criteria and standards that, when approved, will apply to faculty members in the particular unit". Like the *Guidelines*, this memo and its attachments apply campus-wide; your own units may have additional policies and procedures in place that supplement these.

The attached Documentation Formats outline the materials to be included in every promotion and tenure file. *Please note that these Formats have been updated!* Every file must be organized with clearly labeled sections in "Documentation Format" order. Please submit one copy of each file (electronic combined pdf document for files submitted through IANR; one hard copy for files submitted through the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor) to the appropriate Vice Chancellor's office. Referring to the Documentation Format, only the Administrative Section and the Candidate Section should be submitted to the Vice Chancellor's office; the Appendices need not be included.

Attached to this letter are the following forms and documents that apply to all candidates:

- Waiver of Right to See Information Form
- Course Listing and Evaluation Form
- Documentation Request (*Please note that this has been updated!*)
- Deadlines for reappointment, tenure, and promotion

Also attached are the following transmittal forms:

- Office of the EVC Transmittal Form for Promotion, Professor of Practice Faculty
- Office of the EVC Transmittal Form for Promotion, Research Faculty
- Office of the EVC Transmittal Form for Promotion and/or Tenure, Tenured or Tenure-Track Faculty

The transmittal form for IANR will be made available separately to those of you in the Institute.

We understand that you may have already sent materials out for external review using the previous version of the Waiver form. That is perfectly acceptable, as the only change to that form is in the header. Please do be sure to adhere to the updated documentation format, to use the new course listing forms, to adhere to the updated deadlines, and to use the appropriate new transmittal form.

As you prepare your promotion and tenure reviews, we ask that you attend to the following:

- *Candidates have the right to request reconsideration of a negative vote or decision at each stage of the process.* It is important that you build time for reconsideration into your process so that you can meet the deadlines in the attached schedule. We recommend that you schedule promotion and tenure meetings in advance to handle reconsideration requests rather than waiting to do so until reconsideration is requested, as this will likely result in fuller attendance at the meetings and a better reconsideration process.
- *All discussions, reviews, and evaluations must be based on the material submitted in the file.* While a candidate's colleagues may have other knowledge of the candidate based on departmental interactions, or other activities not cited in this file, it is important that the review be based only on material in the file. Part of the task of constructing an appropriate file is making sure that all relevant information is contained in it.
- *For each faculty group that votes, the file should include an accompanying letter from that faculty group, addressed to the administrator, explaining the vote.* To preserve the principle of faculty independence, faculty sentiment should be written by faculty rather than included as part of the administrator's letter. This means that there should be at least two, and up to four, internal evaluations in the file. In each case, any negative vote or rating should be addressed in the corresponding letter.
- *Each internal evaluation letter must address all aspects of a faculty member's responsibility.* This means that each area (teaching, research, service, extension, administration) in which the faculty member has non-zero apportionment must be assessed in each internal evaluation letter, and clear reasons for the recommendations must be given. Recommendations should take the relative weights of the different categories of apportionment into account.
- *Every tenure and/or promotion file must include three external (to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln) and independent letters of review.* It is the responsibility of the

department chair/head, the chair of the departmental promotion and tenure committee, or the dean – not the candidate – to solicit these letters. Generally, external reviewers should have full professorial rank at peer or aspirational peer (typically, R1) institutions. In any case they must occupy a rank equal to or above that being considered for the candidate. Reviewers must be chosen who are qualified to judge the quality of the candidate's work because of their own knowledge of the field. These letters are to be "independent" in the sense that they will be from individuals who have had at most limited professional or personal relationships with the candidate and who have been chosen by the department chair/head (or chair of the promotion and tenure committee, or dean, as appropriate) for their ability to provide an objective assessment. As such, external reviewers should not include dissertation advisors, current or former collaborators, former colleagues, personal friends, or others who have any special relationship to the candidate. In cases where the extreme prominence of a candidate makes independent letters impracticable, special care should be taken to solicit letters from exceptionally prominent reviewers.

Thank you for attending to these considerations and requirements. If you have any questions about the process, we encourage you to contact Judy Walker, Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty and Academic Affairs.