DEPAUW UNIVERSITY

To: Eligible Members of Personnel Committees for 2023-24 Faculty Reviews

From: Rebecca Alexander, Chair
Faculty Personnel Policy and Review Committee (Review Committee)

Subject: Personnel Committee (PC) Membership, Procedures, and Reports

Service on a PC is one of our most important and challenging responsibilities as faculty members. The Review Committee routinely holds informational sessions for review candidates and department chairs to discuss the personnel process, but since there are no routine opportunities to meet with our faculty colleagues who serve on PCs, we provide this memo to clarify several issues regarding the composition of personnel committees, the procedures followed by personnel committees, and the reports generated by personnel committees. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at rebeccaalexander@depauw.edu.

Personnel Committee Membership
It is important to safeguard our personnel process by carefully following the *Academic Handbook's* rules on the membership of personnel committees (By-Laws and Standing Rules of the Faculty Section IV.A.5.a.1).

> For a faculty member with an appointment in a single department or school, the Personnel Committee shall consist of all tenure-track faculty members, librarians with faculty rank, and term faculty members with significant administrative duties of the department or school except the person being reviewed and those in the first year or last year of service. Probationary tenure-track faculty members, term faculty members with significant administrative duties, and those on leave may excuse themselves from any case without prejudice. For a faculty member with an appointment in two or more departments or programs, the Personnel Committee will be constituted as stipulated in the letter of appointment in keeping with the general spirit of the preceding provision. (For definitions of types of full-time faculty, see Personnel Policies Section I. B.)
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> Membership exclusion based on Conflicts of Interest as covered by the policy established by the Faculty Personnel Policy and Review Committee and the Administration and published in the Personnel Policies section (Appendix 3) of the Academic Handbook apply. If you have concerns about your eligibility to serve on a PC, please contact either the Chair of the Review Committee or the VPAA.
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> If the description and actions above would create a Personnel Committee of two or fewer members, or if they would create a Personnel Committee with less than a majority of tenured members, then additional Personnel Committee members shall be selected from related departments, according to a procedure established by the Faculty Personnel Policy and Review Committee and the Administration. Enough additional members shall be selected so that there are at least three members total and a majority of tenured members.

The procedure for adding members to a PC, if needed, is that the Chair of the PC should consult with the members of the personnel committee to generate a list of nominees. The list of nominees along with rationale for each nominee should be sent to the VPAA for the VPAA and the Review Committee to review and make a recommendation(s). The VPAA then contacts and appoints the supplemental member(s).

Please note that tenured faculty members on academic leave, probationary tenure-track faculty members, and term faculty members with significant administrative duties may choose to serve or not serve on any PC for which they are eligible – they should not be pressured in this decision for any reason. Because "the PC" is a separate committee constituted for each case, those allowed to choose whether or not to serve may choose to serve on the PC for one case and not for the PC of another case in the same year.

The *Academic Handbook* specifies that "A faculty member may not serve on the Faculty Personnel Policy and Review Committee or the Grievance Committee for cases involving a member of their department or school." Members of the Review Committee participate on the PC for cases in their home departments; when these cases then come before the Review Committee, they do not participate in any way.

Responsibilities of Personnel Committee Members

Confidentiality

Members of a PC must be able to discuss the evidence in a decision file openly in order to reach an accurate and appropriate assessment of that evidence. This is possible only if all discussions and votes during the PC meetings remain confidential. Information about the business of a PC must never be shared with anyone who is not a member of the committee. In particular, information about the discussions (general or specific) of a PC should not be discussed with the candidate. A PC communicates with the candidate solely by way of its formal written report.

Participation

All members of the PC should participate fully in the committee's activities. This includes the reading of the decision file *before* the PC meets to discuss the case, discussions of the decision file, and preparing the PC's report.

Giving Evidence from Personal Experience

Any member of the PC who wishes to give evidence from personal experience to a case under review by the PC must contribute that evidence in written form to be placed in the file before the submission deadline date. It is not appropriate to give evidence orally in PC discussions.

Personnel Committee Procedures

As you read through the decision file, please keep the following in mind:

- All decisions reached by the PC must be based on *evidence found in the decision file*. A copy of the decision file's structure is attached to this memo so that you can familiarize yourself with its expected content.
- The evaluation of material in the decision file must be made with respect to the criteria found in the Personnel Policies section of the *Academic Handbook (V*. Criteria for Decisions on Faculty Status).

- If during its deliberations, the PC believes that additional information is needed for the decision file, it should contact the Chair of the Review Committee and the VPAA for appropriate procedures.
- The Review Committee requires that PCs meet to discuss the contents of the decision file and to reach a preliminary judgment on the case before beginning to write a final report. The practice of sending written comments to the chair who then drafts a preliminary report for review at the first formal meeting of the PC often leads to reports that are inconsistent with the decision file. PC members should openly and collectively discuss the decision file's strengths and weaknesses before reaching a conclusion and preparing the report.

Personnel Committee Report

Attached to this memo is a copy of a sample PC report for JC, a hypothetical candidate for tenure and promotion. PCs should consult this model when drafting or reviewing a PC report but should not regard the JC report as a straitjacket that must be followed exactly line by line. It was created as an *example* of a good PC report and as a reminder of what *categories* of assessment must be included and what *criteria* (including specific language) the *Handbook* requires you to apply. But every case is different and should be approached on its own merits. If the PC has questions about whether an issue should or should not be raised, or about how to make an effective case, it may be better to consult the Criteria for Decisions on Faculty Status, or the Chair of the Review Committee.

The Review Committee considers the following points crucial in the construction of a PC report.

Organization

The PC report should be well organized and evaluate the decision file using the categories provided in the *Academic Handbook*. In particular, under "Teaching" the areas of Professional Competence, Content and Rigor, Teaching Methods, and Effectiveness should be analyzed fully. Each category section should begin with a "Summary" and conclude with "Strengths" and "Weaknesses."

Argument

The PC report should present a clear argument for the stated conclusions that appear in the summaries of each section. The arguments should appeal directly and exclusively to the evidence in the decision file and should clearly state how the committee considered the evidence and how and why the information was weighted. When making the case that an area is "significant" (for promotion cases), the PC must state the criteria by which this evaluation was made.

Method

The PC report should state, usually in the introductory notes, what method(s) the PC took to collect any evidence it added to the decision file and describe the distribution of that evidence. If external evaluators were chosen, the report should state how, when, and in what manner such evidentiary material was gathered and, when appropriate, how the rules concerning the Open File Policy and the rules about selecting external evaluators were followed.

Documentation

The PC report should always document its claims by citing specific pieces of evidence found in the decision file. *If something is not in the decision file it cannot be used in the report.*

Required Language for Findings

The PC report is required to include the appropriate language to support the findings for each category.

Term Review Required: Strong teaching during the period under review, promise of accomplishment in the scholarly and artistic work category, and adequate service. Candidates who have not yet completed the terminal degree must show clear progress toward completion of the terminal degree for a satisfactory review as noted in Appendix 2 of the Personnel Policies.

Interim Review Required: Strong teaching during the probationary period, promise of accomplishment in the scholarly and artistic work category, and adequate service. Candidates who have not yet completed the terminal degree must show clear progress toward completion of the terminal degree for a satisfactory review as noted in Appendix 2 of the Personnel Policies.

Tenure Decision Required: Strong teaching, including teaching in the school or department in which tenure will be granted, demonstrable achievement or unquestioned promise of accomplishment in the scholarly and artistic work category; and adequate contributions in service.

Promotion to Associate or Professor Required: Continued strong teaching; significant achievement or contribution in either scholarly and artistic work or service and at least adequate performance in the other category.

Final Recommendation

The PC report must include a final recommendation made according to the criteria specified in the *Academic Handbook* for each category and rank, preferably on the signature page (e.g. for tenure review "we recommend/do not recommend tenure;" for promotion review "we recommend/do not recommend promotion;" for interim review "we conclude that JC is making satisfactory/ unsatisfactory progress toward tenure;" for a term review "we recommend continuation in case of need" or "we do not recommend continuation." It is important that the recommendation and signature page are formatted as a separate page from the rest of the report so that if minor editorial changes to the report are needed and all members of the PC concur with the changes, new signatures do not need to be collected.

Majority and Minority Reports

The *Academic Handbook* encourages PCs to reach a consensus recommendation and the JC report reflects this. Although a consensus report is preferable, at times PCs attempt to establish consensus by sacrificing clarity of presentation and argument. When there are disagreements, the Review Committee feels that it is preferable to have two opposing reports, each of which covers the evidence fully and presents cogent arguments grounded in evidence for its recommendations than to have a single document that achieves consensus but little else. In the event that the PC

cannot reach a consensus recommendation, one or more minority reports should be prepared and submitted by the person(s) not able to support the final judgments conveyed in the majority report. A minority report should follow the same format but address only points of disagreement with the majority report. The majority report and all minority reports shall be made available to all members of the PC.

Distribution of Report
A copy of the final PC report, including minority report(s) if written, should be brought to the Coordinator for the Review Committee, 377 Julian Science and Math Center, by the appropriate deadline (see below). The copy of the report(s) submitted to the Review Committee must contain the original signature page and should be personally signed by each member of the PC. The Chair of the Review Committee must approve any variation from this policy.

Once the VPAA and the Review Committee Chair have reviewed the report and authorized its release to the candidate, the Review Committee Coordinator will upload the report to Interfolio and share it with the Review Candidate. Occasionally the Review Committee Chair may find it necessary to return a PC report to the committee for revision.

Deadlines for PC Reports Deadlines for PC reports during the 2023-24 academic year are as follows:

Tenure and Promotion	October 2, 2023
Term	October 23, 2023
Interim	November 13, 2023
Promotion	February 19, 2024
Spring	March 4, 2024

Please plan your schedules accordingly to provide adequate time for PC committee meetings and time to read the decision file.