

UNIVERSITY REVIEW COMMITTEE'S REVIEWS FOR RETENTION AND TENURE

The members of the University Review Committee (URC) offer this description of the faculty review process in the hope that it may be of some assistance to untenured faculty members and departments or programs preparing for reviews. The statement reflects the Committee's current thinking on how best to accomplish its task as prescribed the Faculty Handbook. We have attempted to make this description as complete and informative as a general statement can be, and have devised several ways for concerned faculty members to obtain more particular information. We refer candidates to "Information for Candidates for Retention and Tenure" (Spring 1998) for additional information.

Early in the academic year, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the college deans include discussion of the evaluation process in their orientation of new faculty. On or before May 15 of each year, the URC and deans schedule a meeting with the upcoming year's group of candidates for retention and tenure and their department chairs or program directors. The meeting serves to clarify and amplify points contained herein; it also provides an opportunity for candidates to ask questions and to talk informally with each other and the members of the URC. Faculty members who have further questions regarding the review process are urged to contact their chairperson, the appropriate college dean or the chairperson of the URC.

The following pages refer to the typical case of a faculty member whose employment at Bucknell begins in the September following completion or near-completion of the Ph.D. Faculty who come to Bucknell under other circumstances are reviewed according to the same procedures but the schedule of reviews is a matter normally negotiated at the time of appointment, or soon thereafter, in accordance with the provisions of the Faculty Handbook. Other exceptions to the usual schedule are sometimes arranged through the college deans, in consultation with the URC.

I. DRC Structure and Criteria

Department or Program Review Committees (henceforth, DRCs) consist of at least four tenured members of the full-time instructional faculty. Departments (or programs) that lack a sufficient number of tenured members shall consult with the appropriate dean to constitute a DRC from tenured faculty within the relevant academic division. Untenured members of the faculty are not eligible to participate in or observe the deliberations of a DRC.

Departmental/program expectations in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service shall be clearly stated in the DRC procedural document, which shall also specify the expected content, length and format of the candidate's self-evaluation statement, as well as the supportive materials to be provided. DRC statements must include a schedule for any intermediate/internal dates for reviews including all submittal dates and differences between requirements/dates for different reviews (2, 4, and 6 year and promotion reviews). DRC review documents shall clearly indicate the criteria and procedures to be used for the selection of external reviewers for tenure and promotion reviews. The external reviewers will be informed of the details regarding their selection and the use of their letters. No prospective external reviewer shall be contacted prior to consultation with the appropriate dean.

DRC statements of procedures and criteria must be reviewed every five years by the department/program, the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. DRC procedures should be dated to indicate the most recent revision date. The department chairperson or program director will provide each member of a department/program with a copy of the DRC statement currently in use.

II. The URC Criteria

The University Review Committee seeks to confirm that each faculty member under review is progressing suitably in an evolving personal plan of professional development; that this plan is appropriate to the individual, legitimate to the discipline, and of value to the department or program in question; and that the faculty member's record signifies present and future levels of achievement commensurate with the University's expectations of fine teaching, estimable scholarly or artistic accomplishment, and active commitment to the well-being of the University community.

Because it respects and supports diversity in the professional aims and accomplishments of faculty members, the University Review Committee does not attempt to measure individuals against a particular set of narrowly defined requirements but attempts to assure that departmental (or program) standards and judgments, that may have a particular disciplinary orientation, are of a consistent quality throughout the University. When reviewing DRC evaluations, the URC attempts to recognize teacher-scholars of various descriptions whose excellence is affirmed by students, by colleagues, and by members of a larger academic community.

The following are guidelines for each stage in the progression toward tenure.

Second year: retention. A candidate retained beyond the second year has successfully completed all requirements for the Ph.D. or other appropriate terminal degree, and has otherwise inspired departmental confidence in the likelihood of future satisfactory progress toward tenure. The candidate has proved a capable and effective teacher. Efforts to ameliorate any early-career teaching problems are so encouraging as to justify further commitment on the part of the University. The candidate has initiated projects beyond the dissertation that give promise of a long-term program of scholarship.

Fourth year: retention. A successful candidate at this stage has consistently demonstrated highly competent and committed teaching indicative of further development toward excellence, has produced publications or other appropriate scholarly work of high quality, and has begun to assume a share of responsibility for the affairs of the University.

Sixth year: tenure and promotion. A candidate recommended for tenure has sustained a record of fine teaching which appears to assure long-term excellence. The candidate's scholarly or artistic work has matured, earning the esteem of department colleagues and experts outside the University. Finally, the candidate has contributed significantly to department, inter-department, or University affairs.

III. Review Materials

The University Review Committee bases its deliberations exclusively on data contained in materials submitted by DRCs, on previous official communications involving retention decisions, and on any additional materials solicited in consultation with DRCs and candidates.

All persons contributing material to an evaluation -- be they students, members of a candidate's department/program and/or DRC, other members of the University, or outside reviewers -- must do so by reporting or submitting their information directly to the DRC for its consideration. Statements from those not on the DRC are kept confidential in order to assure independent and candid judgments. DRCs must provide candidates with anonymous copies of communications received from all sources, including outside evaluators, students, alumni and colleagues. The candidate receives a copy of the DRC review and of any minority reports that may accompany it.

Once a DRC has submitted its documented recommendation, moreover, no additions of either fact or opinion may be made without the URC's prior approval. Should members of a DRC determine that unavoidably late material is of sufficient importance -- a letter from a dilatory outside reviewer, for example, or acceptance of a manuscript for publication, or a major misunderstanding which somehow has survived the review process -- they may contact the college dean to request

permission to submit the material after subjecting it to the usual provisions for evaluation, disclosure, and candidate response.

The URC may secure, after consultation with the candidate, additional evidence concerning the quality of a candidate's teaching and scholarship. Since such a request usually entails an extension of the review period beyond December 15, the URC in practice makes these requests only in those rare instances when it finds itself unable to reach a decision because of insufficient evaluative material or poor documentation; in such instances the Committee specifies the additional material required and requests the DRC to evaluate it.

It is of great importance that DRC reviews be as carefully evaluative and well-documented as possible. Although content and organization vary somewhat according to disciplinary preference the University Review Committee normally expects to receive all items listed on the attached check-list.

The following comments on certain of these items are intended to assist individuals and departments in the preparation of reviews.

Curriculum vitae. In addition to the usual summary of education and professional experience, the vita includes a list of scholarly or artistic accomplishments, grouped by type. (For example, a list of written scholarship might be separated into books, articles published in referred journals, conference papers, unpublished manuscripts, etc.) See "Information for Candidates for Retention and Tenure" (Spring 1998) for additional suggestions regarding the description of materials at various stages of completion. If a list of courses taught during the review period is not part of the curriculum vitae, it should be added separately to the dossier.

Candidate's statement. Statements prepared by candidates interpreting their ongoing professional expectations and aims are extremely helpful to Committee members. They serve to orient the Committee, to suggest the standards of evaluation the candidates themselves believe appropriate, and to inform the Committee of each person's assessment of his or her own position in the University with respect to teaching, scholarship, and service to the University community. For suggestions on the content and format of these statements, see individual DRC documents and "Information for Candidates for Retention and Tenure" (Spring 1998).

DRC evaluation of the candidate. This statement summarizes the information that the DRC has collected, carefully evaluates this information in light of the individual's own goals and the needs and criteria of the department (or program) and University, discusses possible alternative interpretations of the data available, and points out where (and why) disciplinary considerations are particularly important to the proper evaluation of materials. If necessary, DRC reviews are prefaced with a statement that informs the URC of unique disciplinary contexts and how they may pertain to a candidate being reviewed. DRC reviews shall indicate the bases for the recommendations and, in so doing, provide the URC with a statement that clearly presents an evaluation as well as an analysis of the candidate in each of the review areas.

Evaluation of teaching includes discussion of strengths and weaknesses, based on such evidence as observations of classroom or other presentations, interpretations of student evaluations, assessment of syllabi and other course materials, and reports of effectiveness in working with students. Written course evaluations of the form approved by the Committee on Instruction are collected and students are informed of their purpose according to procedures developed by each department or program. Each department or program will employ a method of involving students in the DRC evaluation of teaching (including advising) beyond the completion of written course evaluations. Such methods might include the presentation of an evaluative report by a Student Review Committee constituted by the DRC, systematic interviews of students, or letters systematically solicited from current students or alumni.

Evaluation of scholarship includes an assessment of the quality and significance of the candidate's published or creative work and of the reputation of the journals, presses, professional meetings, etc., where the candidate's work has appeared.

Evaluation of service addresses the candidate's quality as a colleague and effectiveness as a participant in campus life.

CHECK-LIST OF CONTENTS

Review of:

By (list members of DRC):

Date:

Materials Provided By The Candidate:

- _____ 1. Current curriculum vitae
- _____ 2. List of all courses taught during review period, with syllabi
- _____ 3. Candidate's statement
- _____ 4. All original student course evaluations
- _____ 5. All written scholarship and (where relevant) documentation of artistic work
- _____ 6. Other documents or data; please specify:

- _____ 7. Candidate's response (if any) to the DRC evaluation

Materials Provided By The Department/Program:

- _____ 8. Copy of CAFT- and VPAA-approved statement of procedures and criteria
- _____ 9. DRC's recommendation to the URC
- _____ 10. DRC's evaluation of the candidate
- _____ 11. Course-by-course numerical tabulation of teaching evaluations and a complete transcription of all student comments
- _____ 12. Additional evidence of student evaluation of teaching and advising, as specified by the DRC statement of procedures and criteria, and a statement explaining how this evidence was obtained
- _____ 13. Three or more letters from outside evaluators (required for promotion and tenure and secured with the concurrence of the candidate and the dean)
- _____ 14. Minority report, if submitted, or other department/program statements considered
- _____ 15. Other documents, letters, etc., that were considered; please specify: