

Memo

To: David Herring, Dean
From: Faculty Retention, Promotion & Tenure Committee
Date: 11/11/2013
Re: Annual Pre-Tenure Faculty Review Proposal

The Faculty Retention, Promotion & Tenure Committee (“FRPT Committee”) has been charged with forming review committees to assess tenure-track faculty through observation of classroom teaching, review of scholarly progress, and review of service. The charge also states that each review committee is charged with providing a report to the FRPT Committee and the Dean prior to the end of classes in April.

The FRPT Committee has considered possible ways to standardize the annual review process. Accordingly, the committee recommends the following policy going forward.

I. Purpose of the Annual Pre-Tenure Faculty Review

The purpose of the annual review is to provide pre-tenured faculty members with the guidance they need to advance to tenure while providing positive, encouraging support as they work their way through the promotion and tenure process.

UNM’s faculty handbook provides that reviews must be “initiated and completed” during the spring semester of each academic year of probationary appointment.¹ Given the foregoing purpose of the review, and the importance of its prospective application, the review should be completed as early in the spring semester each year as possible.

This process is not intended to replicate or substitute for the more comprehensive mid-probationary and tenure review processes. Rather, it is intended to be more informal, and to assist the faculty member to maintain progress toward those more comprehensive reviews. A brief written report should provide the relevant information regarding scholarship, teaching,

¹ Section III.C of the law school’s faculty handbook defines a faculty member’s first three pre-tenure years as a “term appointment” (specifically not a “probationary appointment”) and the second three pre-tenure years as a “probationary appointment.” For convenience, this memo shall use the term “probationary appointment” to mean all six pre-tenure years.

and service to help the Dean to conduct the written and face-to-face annual review of the pre-tenured faculty member.

The report is not intended to provide ultimate conclusions regarding whether the pre-tenured faculty member is making satisfactory progress toward tenure. Rather, it is the Dean's duty to evaluate the pre-tenured faculty member and provide notice to the faculty member regarding what needs to be improved, if anything, to achieve tenure.

II. Process for Selecting Review Committees

A two-person review committee should be appointed no later than December of each year for each pre-tenured faculty member who is not in the year of a mid-probationary review or a final tenure review. Each two-person review committee shall consist of at least one tenured faculty member.

The other member of a two-person review committee may be either a tenured faculty member or an emeritus faculty member. Each two-person review committee may allocate tasks as they choose between the members.

To ensure that all tenured faculty members participate in this process and get to know new faculty members, selection shall be made by an alphabetical rotation system, excepting only faculty members who are on sabbatical or leave and members of the FRPT Committee.

After assigning the mandatory tenured faculty members under this system, the FRPT Committee shall solicit volunteers from our emeritus faculty members who would like to serve as the second member of a two-person review committee. If there are insufficient emeritus volunteers to serve as second members of the two-person committees, then the Committee shall move forward alphabetically in the list of tenured faculty members to choose the second member of each two-person review committee. For the following year (and subsequent years), the committee shall move forward alphabetically in the list of tenured faculty members to appoint two-person committees following the same procedure outlined above.

III. Review Committee Reports

On or before March 1 of each year, each two-person review committee shall provide the FRPT Committee with a brief written report concerning a pre-tenured faculty member's scholarship, teaching, and service. It is worth noting that, although the FRPT has been charged with creating review committees to consider scholarship, teaching, and service, it has not been charged with creating review committees to consider personal characteristics. We mention this because subsection 4.2.3(c) of Section B.4 of UNM's faculty handbook provides as follows:

“The evaluation of all components (teaching, scholarly work, service, and personal characteristics) shall be summarized by the [Dean] in the written annual review provided to the probationary faculty member.”

The fact that the review committee reports do not address personal characteristics does not derogate from the Dean’s duty to provide the pre-tenured faculty member with a written evaluation of that faculty member’s teaching, scholarly work, service, and personal characteristics. The reports of the two-person review committees are aimed at providing the Dean with sufficient information to evaluate the faculty member’s teaching, scholarly work, and service.

With respect to personal characteristics, the Dean’s evaluation should include some information regarding whether the person adds to the quality of the institution. Does this person make the institution better or does the individual interfere with the institution’s academic mission? Do faculty and students like having the person around and want to interact with him or her? Does the individual attend faculty meetings and participate in faculty governance?

IV. Standards for Classroom Visits

Classroom visits by a member or members of the two-person review committees should focus on the following four broad categories:

1. **Organization.** Does the class appear to follow an organized plan for the semester? Is the professor following the course syllabus? If not, why not?
2. **Clarity.** Is the professor a clear teacher? Does he or she present the material in a way that students can understand?
3. **Student engagement.** How engaged and prepared do the students in the classroom appear to be? Do students arrive on time? Is attendance low? Is unrelated internet use high?
4. **Overall effectiveness.** Overall, does the professor appear to be an effective teacher? Why or why not? Is the course taught with a high level of intellectual or analytical rigor.

After the observation of a class, the observing faculty member or members shall meet with the pre-tenured faculty member to provide some constructive feedback about the class.

V. Standards for Reviewing Scholarship

UNM’s faculty handbook does not provide guidance regarding the standards for reviewing scholarship during the annual review, and the two-member review committees may not be knowledgeable regarding a particular pre-tenured faculty member’s area of expertise.

Accordingly, the review of scholarship of a pre-tenured faculty member should occur at a general level. Specifically, the two-person review committee should use its report to identify all works of scholarship that the pre-tenured faculty member has made progress on or completed during the prior twelve months. If the report is identifying a work-in-progress, it should state the degree of progress made by the faculty member.

The two-member review committees shall not analyze the caliber of the scholarship. The Dean should use the report in conducting an evaluation of whether the pre-tenured faculty member appears to be making progress on scholarship in accordance with Section II.B of the Promotion, Retention and Tenure Policy of the law school's faculty handbook.

VI. Standards for Reviewing Service

UNM's faculty handbook does not provide guidance regarding the standards for reviewing service during the annual review. Accordingly, the review of service of a pre-tenured faculty member should occur at a general level. Specifically, the two-person review committee should use its report to identify all service activities that the pre-tenured faculty member has engaged in during the prior twelve months.

The two-member review committees shall not analyze the caliber of the service. The Dean should use the report in conducting an evaluation of whether the pre-tenured faculty member appears to be making progress on service in accordance with Section II.C of the Promotion, Retention and Tenure Policy of the law school's faculty handbook.

VII. Use of the Report

The members of the FRPT Committee shall review each report provided by a two-person review committee, and may append other information to the report that it deems helpful to the Dean. The FRPT Committee shall then forward the report (the "FRPT Report") to the Dean no later than March 31.

The purpose of the FRPT Report is to provide the Dean with information that the Dean can use for purposes of doing the Dean's annual evaluation of pre-tenured faculty members and preparing the Dean's written annual review reports of pre-tenured faculty members. Subsection 4.2.3 of Section B.4 of UNM's faculty handbook requires the Dean to "discuss each annual review report with the probationary member before the end of the spring semester."

The Dean should use his individual meetings with pre-tenured faculty members as an opportunity to inform each faculty member regarding his or her progress and to encourage the faculty member regarding what can be done in the future to enhance his or her chances of obtaining tenure. As mentioned above, the UNM's faculty handbook requires that the Dean's written report be included in the pre-tenured faculty member's file.

VIII. Opportunity for Pre-Tenured Faculty Member to Respond

In accordance with subsection 4.2.3(c) of Section B.4 of UNM's faculty handbook, the pre-tenured faculty member must be provided with copies of the Dean's written evaluation and given an opportunity to respond. Any written response shall be included in the pre-tenured faculty member's record.