

Promotion Evaluation and Process

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Overview of Topics



- Challenges with Promotion Evaluation
- Applicable Policies & Standards
- Dean's perspective on evaluation
- Do's and Don'ts in Promotion Evaluation Process
- Promotion Scenarios and Feedback

Challenges with Promotion Evaluation

- No defined time frame for starting process
- Candidate needs to lead the process
- Committee only engaged once promotion sought
- Assessment is less structured vs. tenure
- Often no annual reviews

Challenges in Communicating Promotion Progress

- Less flexibility - evidence of achievement vs. potential
- Difficult to access candidate's achievement in narrow specialty
- Can be seen as more subjective to meet standards
- Fewer cases – less frequent process and fewer comparisons
- Fewer numbers of faculty on a committee – small departments
- If denied, challenge to re-engage candidate

Challenges in Communicating Promotion Progress

- Department chair responsible for having hard conversations with colleagues
- May be evaluating long-time colleague or friend
- Considering best interests of the candidate vs. department, college and University

Importance of Communicating Promotion Progress

- Regular communication with candidate on progress and improvement needed
- Identify departmental efforts/mentoring to assist with growth
- Departmental planning – communicating with potential candidates on time frames
- Claims by candidate of lack of notice of progress toward promotion

Faculty Policies



- Faculty Handbook Provisions – II.C & rank descriptions
- App. K: Promotion Procedures & Guidelines
- Departmental Procedures & Standards for Promotion
- Legal implications of these documents
- Policies are key – fewer of them for promotion

Faculty Policies



Handbook Language:

- Minimum of 5 years experience as associate professor
- “advanced degree of professional and personal maturity”
- “record of outstanding accomplishment in teaching, scholarship and general service”
- “attained stature of leaders in the academic community”
- “presence on faculty adds prestige to University”

Faculty Policies



- Procedures apply at time of application, not at time came to JCU or received tenure
- Department Promotion Committee → Dean via Department Chair → COAD → AVP/Provost
- Notice by December 15
- App. K – each faculty member receive copy of dept. standards

The Dean's Perspective on Promotion Evaluation

Clarity and Evidence.





CLARITY

1. The department is **clear about its expectations** and whether or not a candidate has met promotion expectations.
2. The department chair/promotion chair **confers regularly with tenured faculty** about their goals and holds them accountable.
3. The candidate is **clear in the presentation** of material to support promotion.

EVIDENCE

1. The department encourages the candidate to collect and act on evidence (data) at every step, and relies on evidence to evaluate the candidate.
2. The candidate presents his or her evidence in a clear and compelling way.
 - Encouraging the candidate to submit a complete, well-prepared dossier.

EVIDENCE

I. Evidence of “outstanding accomplishment” in teaching and student learning

A. Quantitative student evaluations

- **No:** Raw data only
- **No:** Obsession with weird outliers
- **Yes:** Examine patterns and trends over time
- **Yes:** Talk about how these compare relative to department
- **Yes:** Demonstrate how candidate has addressed issues in subsequent evaluations
- **Yes:** Best practices for administration and collection of data



B. Assessments and outcomes

- Graded work, student improvement
- Scores on relevant disciplinary exams
- **Placements into graduate schools or careers; alumni surveys**
- Pre- and post-tests approved by department
- Pedagogy workshops attended and techniques incorporated
- Discussion of best teaching practices, new methods, etc.

C. Classroom observation

- **No:** Florid descriptions are lovely, but not all that helpful
- **Yes:** Rubrics
- **Yes:** Links to other evidence

II. Evidence about “outstanding accomplishment” in scholarship, “leader” in academic community, adding “prestige” to JCU:

A. Clear description of publications and narrative about place in the field

- **No:** Assuming quantity speaks for itself
- **Yes:** Describe how work fits into larger field
- **Yes:** Discuss relative prestige of publications
- **Yes:** Clearly describe research agenda and plans for the future
- **Yes:** If you are “counting” something other than traditional peer-reviewed scholarship, you need to make the case for that and have approved by me.

B. Outside letters of support

- These are *de facto* required for promotion
- Typical: department sends portfolio of materials to names of colleagues supplied by candidate
- Compare tenure portfolio across institutions; speak to place in the field

C. Examples of recognition for expertise

- Editing journals, serving as officer on editorial boards
- Invited talks (regional, national)

D. Engaging undergraduates in research; mentoring graduate student research deserves its own discussion and evidence.

III. Evidence of “outstanding accomplishment” in service, “advanced degree of professional & personal maturity”

A. **For Full professor, “service” = “leadership”** **Yes:** Specific contributions and outcomes

B. Really asking: **Is this a campus leader?** Can he or she pull their weight?

C. Mission-oriented and/or strategic, entrepreneurial service deserves its own discussion and evidence

- Establishing partnerships
- Creating or revitalizing programs
- Creating value in the student experience

Do's and Don'ts In Promotion Evaluation/Process

- Do give each faculty member in department a copy of current department promotion standards (App. K)
- Don't stop providing feedback after tenure award.
- Do consider post-tenure mentoring arrangements in departments
- Do provide leadership opportunities to associate professors
- Do provide opportunities to collaborate on research, obtain evidence
- Don't make exceptions to process in an effort to try to help candidates.
- Don't alter process unless consented to by Dean's Office & candidate.



Do's and Don'ts In Promotion Evaluation/Process



- Do undertake a deeper review and research on candidate's specific field/specialty.
- Do obtain outside letters whenever possible and carefully review them for status in field and comparison to others.
- Do be sure recommendation reflects differing views in department, & input from "all members" of department (App. K).
- Do be careful to review the language used in evaluations/promotion recommendations/notes
i.e. sensitivity to candidate, diversity issues

Do's and Don'ts In Promotion Evaluation/Process

- Don't forget to communicate the results to the candidate in writing as required.
- Do provide reasons for unfavorable recommendation, if requested, and in writing if requested. Do include concrete ways to improve, stay engaged.
- Do be sure any meeting with candidate is consistent with written recommendation letter.
- Do treat all candidates in a similar manner & with same process.
- Don't hesitate to ask the Dean's Office (who may confer with Office of Legal Affairs) about process questions.



Best Practices in Promotion Evaluations

1. *Clarity* in standards and procedures used to evaluate
2. *Consistency* in evaluation over time and across candidates
3. *Candor* in evaluation of and feedback to faculty
4. *Caring* for unsuccessful candidates

ACE, AAUP, United Educators, Good Practice in Tenure Evaluation: Advice for Tenured Faculty, Department Chairs, and Academic Administrators (Washington D.C., American Council on Education, 2000).

Honest Feedback in Faculty Evaluations

1. *Clear explanation* of requirements
2. *Clear advice* about progress



“Most flawed academic evaluations tend to be excessively positive. A sugar-coated review is easiest for the chair to dispense and for the candidate to swallow. But over the long run, it can prove harmful to everyone.”

--ACE, AAUP, United Educators, Good Practice in Tenure Evaluation, p. 17

Chairs' Role in Promotion Evaluation

- Promotion Committee Chair and Dept. Chair

1. Communicates *expectations* for performance
2. Gives *feedback* on progress
3. Enhances *collegial review* processes
4. Encourages *mentoring* by senior faculty
5. Acts as *career sponsor*

Mary Sorcinelli, Principles of Good Practice: Supporting Early-Career Faculty. Guidance for Deans, Department Chairs, and Other Academic Leaders (Washington D.C.: American Council on Education, 2000).

Checklist for Promotion Criteria

- Promotion Committee Chair and evaluators should know what the criteria are and apply them at each stage.
- Before a candidate comes up for evaluation, evaluators should develop consensus on: 1) what is expected to meet the criteria (i.e. what work product is needed for research), and 2) the relative importance of criteria for promotion.
- Changes in criteria must be documented in departmental promotion standards voted on by all voting members of department and approved by Provost. Changes should be provided to all members of the department and implemented in a careful manner for new promotion candidates.

What Would You Say: Scenarios for Faculty Evaluations

In the following scenarios, consider:

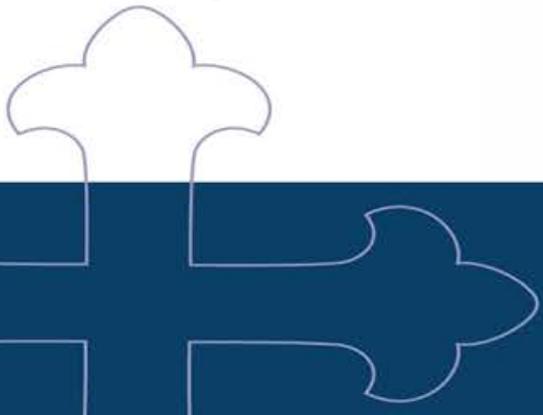
- What does your *annual evaluation letter* or *promotion recommendation letter* need to include?
- What does the *conversation* with the associate professor need to include?
- What could have avoided this situation?

Scenario #1: Try and Try Again

- Your colleague Zari went up for promotion 7 years after tenure and was denied. She is planning to apply again in her 9th year, but you suspect her portfolio hasn't changed much.

Scenario #2: Mid-Career Drift

- Your colleague Yuri had a solid but not extraordinary tenure case. However, he seems to have lost his focus in the 3 years since then. He's started a lot of writing projects but finished none of them, spends a lot of time on the various committees he serves on, and his teaching remains solid but not exceptional.



Scenario #3: The “Superstar”

- Your colleague Sofia publishes three times as much as anyone else in the department, and receives accolades for the big money grants she gets for the university. She’s just been invited to edit a well-regarded journal in the discipline.
- She provides minimal service to the department and university, and her teaching is middling.
- She plans to go up for promotion next year.

Key Take-Aways:

- Candid and open assessment
- Clarity, consistency, and concrete feedback
- Mentoring/coaching of colleagues and providing leadership opportunities
- Regular culture of assessment for tenured faculty
- Following process for evaluation is critical.

Assistance with Process

- Department Chairs Workshop Materials
- Associate Dean
- Dean
- Legal Affairs, for process questions.



Questions?

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