

## Oklahoma State University Policy and Procedures

<b>REAPPOINTMENT, PROMOTION AND TENURE PROCESS FOR RANKED FACULTY</b>	<b>2-0902 ACADEMIC AFFAIRS July 2023</b>
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### **PURPOSE**

1.01 The purpose of this policy and procedures document is to provide guidelines for the evaluation of faculty through annual evaluation, reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure.

The ability of a university to function, progress, and develop excellence depends both on the individual performance of each faculty member and on the collective performance of the faculty as a whole. The success and reputation of a university are highly dependent upon the talents which exist among its faculty and how effectively those talents are focused to accomplish the institution's mission. Accomplishing OSU's land-grant mission requires a creative, collective intermingling of individual faculty talents. Consequently, each faculty member will likely have a unique role in the institution, college, and unit, and a special assignment in terms of the focus and distribution of effort among instruction, research/creative work, outreach/extension, and service responsibilities.

As a land-grant university, Oklahoma State University places primary emphasis on the discovery, integration, application, dissemination, transfer, and use of knowledge. Scholarly investigation is the heart of the professorate, and it undergirds the mission of the land-grant system. Faculty are expected to participate continually in a broad range of scholarly activities which contribute to current knowledge in their field of expertise, and which support the mission and goals of their unit, college, and university. (OSU Policy and Procedures 2-0110, Guidelines to Govern the Workload Assignment of Faculty Members) The appraisal and development process, as well as the reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure (RPT) process, are the means used to encourage and evaluate the professional growth of individual faculty members. The goal is to attract, retain, and reward those faculty who demonstrate excellence.

1.02 Faculty Evaluation. The evaluation process at Oklahoma State University is designed to assist the institution in attracting promising faculty members, help them reach their potential, retain only the outstanding faculty, and to reward their proficiency. Evaluation of the performance of faculty members is also conducted for the purpose of compensation review and at the appropriate times for the purpose of reappointment and/or for the awarding of tenure and/or promotion. (OSU Policy and Procedures 2-0112, Faculty Appraisal and Development Program)

1.03 Promotion in Academic Rank. Initial academic rank is based on evidence the faculty member has met the qualifications for the rank to which the faculty member is being appointed. Faculty members are hired to accomplish objectives of specific academic units and are to be judged accordingly.

Consequently, the evaluation of faculty is to be carried out in the context of the faculty member's

particular role in the institution with a clear understanding of what is expected of the individual. Accomplishments of the faculty member are judged against these expectations. Promotion in rank recognizes exemplary performance of a faculty member. The evaluation process provides an assessment of a faculty member's growth and performance since the initial appointment or last promotion.

The evaluation process must be based on a comprehensive assessment of the candidate's record of research/creative work, teaching, outreach/extension, and service. This assessment should take into account the quality of outcomes as well as their quantity; it should also acknowledge the creativity of faculty work and the impact of the faculty member's work on students, on the field(s) in which the faculty member works, and on others the university serves. Interdisciplinary work, public scholarship and engagement, international accomplishments and initiatives, technology transfer initiatives, and other special kinds of professional activity by the candidate should be considered when appropriate.

The relative importance of these criteria may vary in different academic units, and particular faculty members within units may vary in the extent to which their responsibilities emphasize one or more parts of the university's mission. Criteria against which individual faculty members are judged must reflect these varying assignments and must align with the work assignment specified in annual appraisal documents.

1.04 Academic Unit Standards. The primary responsibility for establishing the criteria for promotion and/or tenure rests with the academic unit. Each department or equivalent academic unit must have a document clearly specifying (1) the indices and standards used to determine whether candidates meet the requirements for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, (2) the indices and standards used to determine whether candidates meet requirements for promotion to Professor, and (3) the goals and expectations used in evaluating faculty performance in annual appraisal and developments.

The academic unit standards will define the criteria of teaching, research/creative work, outreach/extension, and service in ways which reflect the discipline and its mission. The unit's refined criteria shall be applied to all faculty members in ways which equitably reflect a particular faculty member's responsibilities and assignments. How the unit's standards apply to a specific faculty member's duties should be made clear at the time of appointment and reviewed in the annual appraisal and development process. Adjustments in the workload expectations for faculty members may occur over time in keeping with changing institutional and personal priorities, but these should be discussed and documented in annual Appraisal and Development reviews signed by the faculty member and unit administrator.

The unit standards serve as the basis for the evaluation of the faculty member's dossier at all levels of review. The unit standards must be consistent with university and college policies but may exceed them. Each academic unit document must be approved by a vote of all tenured and tenure-track faculty within the unit, by the appropriate college dean, and by the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA).

- a. *Instructor*. The rank of instructor is appropriate only in disciplines where a master's degree is a commonly accepted professional degree but is not the highest academic

degree. An instructor should have earned a master's degree in their field and should have professional skills and expertise needed in the discipline. Such expertise should be certified by the discipline's professional organization, as appropriate. An instructor demonstrates excellent performance in teaching and other assigned duties. The record of an instructor should include maintenance of professional expertise and participation in professional organizations.

The rank of instructor is only available for non-tenure track faculty appointments as outlined in OSU Policy and Procedures 2-0903, Non-Tenure Track Faculty Positions, and OSU Policy and Procedures 2-0904, Research Faculty Positions (Non-Tenure Track).

- b. *Assistant Professor.* The assistant professor rank is recognition the faculty member has exhibited the potential to grow in an academic career in accordance with the institution's mission and the academic unit's objectives. An assistant professor should have earned the accepted highest degree in their field or, in exceptional cases, should have demonstrated potential via professional experience judged by the unit as beneficial and desirable for the particular appointment. In the period between appointment as an assistant professor and promotion to associate professor, terms expressed in the academic unit, college, and university standards, the letter of offer, the position description, and the annual evaluations provide guidance regarding professional development of the faculty member to peers and administrators charged with judging progress toward promotion.
- c. *Associate Professor.* To attain the rank of associate professor, the candidate must establish they are an accomplished teacher, where teaching is an assigned responsibility, and have a significant record of research, artistic, and/or creative work, teaching, outreach/extension, and service in keeping with the academic unit, college, and university standards, and job responsibilities. Clear evidence should be presented the individual has established a solid academic reputation and shows promise of further development and productivity in their academic field.

Promotion to Associate Professor with tenure requires tangible evidence of sustained excellence in accomplishments as measured by an appropriate assessment of the faculty member's work, as defined in the academic unit standards. The dossier must provide tangible evidence the faculty member shows clear promise of becoming a leading scholar, teacher, creative artist, and/or provider of outreach/extension, according to the primary assigned responsibilities. A recommendation for tenure should be based upon an assessment the candidate has made contributions of an appropriate magnitude and quality in research/creative work, teaching, outreach/extension and service, and has demonstrated a high likelihood of sustaining contributions to the field and to the academic unit, so that granting tenure is in the long-term best interests of the academic unit and the university.

- d. *Professor.* The rank of professor, the highest rank in the university, designates the faculty member's academic achievement merits recognition as a distinguished

authority in their field. Professional colleagues, both within the university and nationally, recognize the professor's contributions to the discipline. A professor is an outstanding member of the academic community and sustains excellent performance in teaching, where teaching is an assigned responsibility, research/creative work, outreach/extension and service in keeping with the unit criteria and the faculty member's job responsibilities. The record of a successful candidate for professor must show evidence of sustained excellence over an extended period of time.

Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor requires tangible evidence the faculty member has attained a national or international reputation in a field and is a leading scholar, teacher, creative artist, and/or provider of outreach/extension, according to the primary assigned responsibilities and the criteria established in the academic unit, college, and university standards. A recommendation for promotion to professor should be based upon an assessment that, since the last promotion, the candidate has made sustained contributions of appropriate magnitude, independence and quality in research/creative work, teaching, outreach/extension and service, and has demonstrated the ability to continue to sustain contributions to the field and to the academic unit, so that granting the promotion is in the best interest of the academic unit and the university.

1.05 Tenure. The awarding of tenure (continuous appointment) is the most significant decision made relative to an institution's future and, therefore, is the highest honor bestowed on a faculty member. The *Policy Statement to Govern Appointments, Tenure, Promotions, and Related Matters of the Faculty at Oklahoma State University* (hereafter referred to as the *Faculty Policy Statement*) states that tenure, a means to assure academic freedom, is indispensable to the success of the university in fulfilling its obligations to students, to the state of Oklahoma and to society in general.

Intellectual curiosity is an essential requirement for effective instruction, as well as for continuing scholarly pursuits. When tenure is conferred, it is the university's expectation the faculty member will (1) consistently contribute to the instructional, research/creative work, and/or outreach/extension mission of the university; (2) remain current and intellectually curious; and (3) continue to be a wise investment for the university. The decision is a judgment made with appropriate faculty counsel. The granting of tenure is a major decision for the institution and shall not be granted unless the faculty member has demonstrated by consistent performance the university will benefit from making a career-long commitment to the faculty member.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE RPT PROCESS**

Operationally, the function of the RPT process is to determine whether each candidate has met the detailed academic qualifications and criteria specified by their respective academic unit. In this process, the candidate, unit personnel committee, unit administrator, dean, and academic vice president have unique responsibilities they must carry out with the highest professional integrity. Throughout this review process, committee members, unit administrators, deans, and others must

be able to freely discuss personnel-related issues in an open and honest manner and without fear of repercussion, retaliation, or negative impact on their professional relationships with colleagues. As such, all discussions and/or votes of individual committee members shall remain confidential. Briefly, the role of each participant follows.

2.01 Candidate. It shall be the personal responsibility of the faculty member to show applicable qualifications for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure have been met. (*Faculty Policy Statement*, Section 1.2.1) To carry out this responsibility, the candidate must develop, in cooperation with the unit administrator, a file documenting each of the detailed qualifications and criteria of the unit have been specifically achieved. The "Development of the RPT Documentation File" form lists the required documentation and should be used as a guide in the development of the file.

In the review process, some of the reviewers may not personally know the candidate and will rely exclusively on materials included or referred to in this file as the basis for their recommendation. The candidate must not assume the reviewers will know they are an excellent teacher, scholar, and colleague. It is essential the candidate include in the file all the materials necessary to document and affirmatively establish all applicable criteria and qualifications have been met. Once the unit personnel committee recommendation is made, the candidate is not allowed to add or delete materials. However, the candidate is allowed to respond to each negative Statement of Recommendation and have said response added to the documentation file (Section 3.03.d). Candidates should be aware the [University Ombudsperson \(ombuds@okstate.edu\)](mailto:ombuds@okstate.edu) is available for voluntary, confidential consultation throughout the RPT process.

2.02 Unit Personnel Committee. The responsibility of the unit personnel committee is to recommend whether or not the candidate has met each of the applicable criterion and qualifications for the personnel action being considered. The written recommendation to the unit administrator shall specifically address how each criterion and qualification in the academic unit, college, and university standards has or has not been met. If there is a divergence of opinion within the committee, both majority and minority opinions shall be indicated within a single recommendation letter.

The composition of the unit personnel committee and identification of those members eligible to vote on personnel actions shall be specified in the unit's RPT guidelines. These guidelines shall address the following:

- a. Voting faculty members are required to be tenure-track faculty members at the same level as, or above, the level being sought by the candidate. Only tenured faculty members shall vote on reappointment and tenure.
- b. Each academic unit will formalize a mechanism by which all unit faculty may provide input to the personnel committee. The input received will be addressed in the committee's written recommendation to the unit administrator.
- c. If a unit cannot complete its personnel committee with voting faculty of appropriate rank from within the unit, members of the committee, in consultation with the unit

administrator, will solicit faculty from similar departments or disciplines at the university to assist the personnel committee with the review and recommendation.

- d. Given that faculty from a given unit may serve on the unit and/or college level committee, they must vote only once and only at one level.
- e. A faculty member applying for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure may serve on a unit personnel committee but must recuse themselves during consideration of their application.

2.03 Unit Administrator. The unit administrator is responsible for making sure the candidate and personnel committee are familiar with all relevant policies, procedures, and applicable qualifications and criteria. The unit administrator assists the candidate in constructing the documentation file and makes a final assessment of the candidate after the recommendation of the unit personnel committee has been received. The unit administrator has a special responsibility to ensure all policies and procedures are rigorously followed and the final recommendation submitted for the unit is free of bias and based on a professional application of the standards of the unit. After reviewing the candidate's materials, the unit administrator shall attach a recommendation letter which reflects their professional judgment about the qualifications and merit of the candidate for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure and shall forward all materials to the dean.

2.04 College-Level Committee. Each college must have a college-level RPT committee. The committee must examine the documentation provided by the faculty member, the standards adopted by the unit, and the Statements of Recommendation provided by the unit personnel committee and the unit administrator for fairness in procedure and review at the departmental level and for consistency within the college. The committee will then provide a written recommendation to the dean indicating whether the personnel action being considered is supported. Where specific college policies so designate, the college-level committee may also be charged with including in their recommendation a professional opinion about the qualifications and merit of the candidate for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure. If there is a divergence of opinion within the committee, both majority and minority opinions shall be indicated within a single recommendation letter. Guidelines for the college-level RPT committee shall take into account the following:

- a. The committee shall consist of members of its tenured faculty elected by its tenured and tenure-track faculty. Committee members voting on a personnel action under consideration must be at the same rank as, or above, that being sought by the candidate.
- b. The composition of the committee shall be representative of the disciplines within the college.
- c. Faculty members applying for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure may not serve on the committee in the year of their application.

College-level policies must be approved by a vote of all tenured and tenure-track faculty within the college, by the appropriate college dean, and by the VPAA.

2.05 Dean. The dean has several vital responsibilities both prior to and during the evaluation process. The dean works continuously with departments, making sure the academic unit standards for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure are clear and consistent with the level of excellence expected in the college and university and that the department's emphasis on differing aspects of faculty activities matches the role the department plays in the college and university. The dean provides explicit and detailed guidance regarding the type and quality of documentation required of candidates whose applications for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure are to be forwarded to the VPAA. Upon receiving recommendations from departments, the dean, with input from the college-level committee, shall carefully review the candidate's documentation file, including the recommendations of the unit personnel committee and unit administrator. The dean shall make a professional assessment regarding whether (1) the department's evaluation of each candidate has been rigorous, fair, and based on departmentally approved criteria and standards, (2) the documentation provided adequately supports the recommendations of the unit, and (3) the action recommended by the unit is warranted. Additionally, after reviewing the candidate's materials, including all internal and external input, the dean's recommendation letter shall reflect their professional judgment about the qualifications and merit of the candidate for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure. This written report will be added to the documentation file and forwarded to the VPAA as part of their Statement of Recommendation.

2.06 Vice President for Academic Affairs. The VPAA is responsible for examining the files and Statements of Recommendation written by all involved groups and administrators. The VPAA may seek additional counsel from the Faculty Committee of the Faculty Council and other university-level administrators, including, but not limited to, the Vice President for Research. It is the responsibility of the VPAA to be certain all applicable standards and policies approved by the university have been applied fairly to each individual. Additionally, the VPAA's recommendation shall reflect their professional judgment about the qualifications and merit of the candidate for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure and will be submitted to the President for recommendation to the Board of Regents.

### **3.0 REAPPOINTMENT, PROMOTION, AND/OR TENURE PROCESS**

Prior to the beginning of the RPT process, it is recommended faculty members, unit administrators, members of unit personnel committees, and others review related sections in the *Faculty Policy Statement*:

- \* Section 1.1.1, Qualifications;
- \* Section 1.2, Recommendations for Faculty Appointment, Reappointments, Non- Reappointments, and Promotions;
- \*
- \* Section 1.4, Appointment and Tenure for Tenure-Track Faculty;
- \* Section 1.5, Non-Tenure Track Faculty Appointment and Titles;
- \* Section 1.6, Promotions in Rank; and
- \* Section 1.7, Reappointment and Non-Reappointment

Reappointment, especially when tenure is conferred, is an action taken because of superior performance and the promise of continued professional and intellectual growth. It is the process

upon which the quality of an academic unit depends. All faculty committees and administrators must consider the academic unit, college, and university standards and judge carefully the faculty member's past contributions and potential for future contributions when making reappointment recommendations. Promotion is a reward and recognition for performance, not longevity. Consequently, the attainment of a minimum number of years of service alone does not justify promotion.

The following steps are taken at OSU when a faculty member is being considered for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure.

### **3.01 Identifying RPT Candidates – On or About September 1**

- a. *Notification of Process.* Early in the Fall semester, each dean receives a memorandum from the VPAA outlining deadlines and requirements for the current year's RPT process. Included is a Departmental Faculty Reappointment and Tenure Report which lists faculty for whom it is believed personnel decisions must be made. This includes all faculty who are within their pre-tenure period and are scheduled that year for review of reappointment in rank. An informational copy of the VPAA's memorandum is shared with the unit administrator.

When feasible, informational notification is also sent by the VPAA office to each faculty member identified on the report, with a statement notifying the faculty member their name has been sent forward to the dean and unit administrator and encouraging the faculty member to contact the unit administrator to verify action will be taken as scheduled. (See Attachment 1 of this document.) Faculty will also be encouraged to review the *Faculty Policy Statement* and this policy and procedures document. For reference, an overview of faculty appointment periods and time in rank is provided below.

- b. *Appointment Periods and Time in Rank.* Appointment period guidelines are governed by the *Faculty Policy Statement*. This information is summarized below:
  - (1) Academic appointments normally coincide with the beginning of the academic year (September 1 for 9-month appointments or July 1 for 11-month appointments). For faculty appointed after this date but before January 1, the period for tenure consideration or for renewal of appointment will commence at the beginning of that academic year. The pre-tenure period for faculty appointed on or after January 1 will commence at the beginning of the following academic year.

Except for extenuating circumstances (see Section 1.4.7 of the *Faculty Policy Statement*), the period for tenure consideration shall never exceed a total of seven years of continuous appointment with the university, beginning with the initial appointment to a tenure-track position. Any credit for prior service included within the seven-year pre-tenure period shall be agreed upon in writing as part of the letter of offer at the time of employment.



- (2) Extensions of Appointment for Pre-Tenure Faculty. Policies are in place for a tenure-track faculty member to request an extension of their appointment and pre-tenure period as follows:
- i. Circumstances Covered Under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) - Upon receipt of a written request from the faculty member, the unit administrator shall transmit to the dean of the college the extension request of the faculty member's pre-tenure appointment period for qualifying FMLA events as determined by OSU Human Resources. Such an extension shall be granted upon approval by the VPAA. (See Section 1.4.8.1 of the Faculty Policy Statement)
  - ii. Other Extenuating Circumstances - Upon written request by the faculty member and recommendation by the unit administrator and dean of the college, an extension of the faculty member's pre-tenure appointment period may be extended up to three (3) years upon approval by the VPAA for extenuating circumstances, such as a leave of absence without pay, an extended sick leave not covered by FMLA, significant changes in published criteria for tenure, etc. (See Section 1.4.8 of the Faculty Policy Statement).
- (3) *Assistant Professor*. At the time of initial appointment, the first appointment period for an assistant professor is four years. Reappointment may be granted for three (3) additional years. This allows for a maximum seven-year pre-tenure period as an assistant professor.

In the normal process, two actions are required for an assistant professor. The first action is the review for reappointment, which occurs during the third year in rank as assistant professor. Options at this time are: (1) first reappointment as an assistant professor for three (3) additional years or (2) non-reappointment. Either action would be effective at the end of the following year (fourth year). For non-reappointment actions, this timing allows for the required one year's notice of termination and would be effective at the end of the fourth year in rank (which coincides with the end of the initial four-year appointment period).

The second action occurs during the sixth year in rank as an assistant professor. Options are: (1) promotion to associate professor which confers tenure or (2) non-reappointment. The non-reappointment would be effective at the end of the seventh year in rank and provides the required one year's notice of termination.

- (4) *Associate Professor*. When an individual is initially appointed at OSU into the rank of associate professor (without tenure), the initial appointment period is normally five (5) years. During the fourth year in rank, a recommendation must be made to: (1) reappoint as associate professor which confers tenure; (2) promote to professor which confers tenure; or (3) not reappoint and give the required one year's notice of termination. A special tenure review may be made after one year of service (see

*Faculty Policy Statement*, Sections 1.4.4 and 1.4.2.d). In certain circumstances tenure may be expressly granted at the time of the initial appointment.

(5) *Professor*. When an individual is initially appointed to the rank of professor, tenure is often granted at the time of appointment. However, a pre-tenure period, not to exceed three (3) years, may be specified. If a pre-tenure period is specified, then a special tenure review must be completed at least one year before the end of this period, so the required one year's notice of termination can be given should the review result in a decision not to grant tenure.

c. *Verification of RPT Report*. To help maintain confidence in the Departmental Faculty Reappointment and Tenure Report, it is the responsibility of the dean and unit administrator to examine the departmental reports for completeness and accuracy. The dean transmits the appropriate portion of the tenure report to each academic department. The unit administrator is asked to verify information regarding reappointment, promotion, or non-reappointment for each person flagged and for those not flagged but scheduled for review. The unit administrator shall review, record, initial, and return corrections in the report to the dean's office so corrections to faculty data may be entered into the HR/personnel system.

### **3.02 Preparing RPT Documentation File - On or About September 15 - January 15**

Faculty members should be notified by the unit administrator on or about September 15 they have through January 15 to assemble and submit materials believed helpful to a full review. It is the responsibility of the faculty member and the unit administrator to prepare a documentation file clearly summarizing the history of the faculty member's appointment before any deliberations begin regarding reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure. Since only limited changes can be made to the candidate's documentation file after the unit personnel committee votes (Section 2.02 of this policy), care must be taken if the candidate has pending administration actions. Examples include research misconduct investigations or a pending appeal of a sanction. In these cases, the VPAA will have the option to delay the assembly of the candidate's documentation file and the unit personnel committee's vote until after these issues have been resolved. Such a delay can also be requested from the VPAA by the candidate, the unit administrator, or other relevant parties.

The OSU Reappointment, Promotion/Tenure Recommendations Form, "Development of the RPT Documentation File," (RPT form) is used as a guide in preparing materials and is a required document in each candidate's packet. The form is completed as follows:

- a. The unit administrator must ensure all dates of academic appointments, reappointments, and promotions while at OSU are consistent with the departmental report, employment action forms and the candidate's vita.
- b. Materials for the candidate's documentation file should be compiled and arranged by the unit administrator. The following is intended to be a minimal list of items to be

provided, not necessarily a listing of the *only* items to be included.

- (1) For those candidates who have not yet been awarded tenure, the unit administrator should provide all initial appointment documents including letter of offer, position announcement, and/or description.
- (2) A statement describing the work assignment within the university (teaching, research/creative work, outreach/extension, service, administration, and/or advisement) during the time period considered for the proposed action and a summary of percentages for each category of activity should be provided by the unit administrator.
- (3) Annual appraisal and development documents prepared by the unit administrator and the faculty member during the period considered for this proposed personnel action should be provided. For tenured faculty, only the documents for the three most recent formal appraisals need be included. Any written statement submitted by the faculty member as a part of, or in response to, the appraisals should be included. If the faculty member has appealed any of the appraisals to the dean, the dean's written resolution of the appeal should be included.
- (4) Sanctions in the personnel file shall be included.
- (5) The unit administrator should provide written statements, if any, documenting either special achievements or deficiencies related to the proposed personnel action.
- (6) Records of sabbatical or other periods of leave (not to include annual leave) should be included by the unit administrator.
- (7) The unit administrator should ensure copies of all applicable departmental standards, policies and procedures for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure decisions are provided. Major revisions of the above which have occurred during the tenure of the faculty member, and which may affect this personnel action must be indicated.
- (8) The documentation file for a candidate being considered for tenure and/or promotion should include a minimum of three (3) letters from external reviewers who have been asked to evaluate the candidate's accomplishments and potential. Units may require additional external appraisals where appropriate or desirable for their disciplines. External evaluators should be leading scholars in their disciplines and especially knowledgeable about the candidate's areas of expertise. The three (3) required external reviews must be obtained from individuals with no direct professional or personal interest in the advancement of the candidate's career (for example, they should not be former advisors or mentors, and generally should not be co-authors or co-investigators on previous work). The file must clearly specify the relationship of each external reviewer to the candidate and should contain a brief description of each external reviewer and their credentials.

All solicited external review letters received before the deadline must be included in the file.

All units shall solicit outside reviews as a part of the RPT review process and shall develop rules for solicitation of such reviews consistent with policies of the academic college and with this document.

In determining who are selected as reviewers, the candidate should be asked to provide a slate of names; the unit administrator and the unit personnel committee should also provide names; and from these two lists a group of at least three (3) should be selected in a fair and objective manner for contact. The candidate may also specify the names of persons who should not be considered as possible reviewers, provided the candidate specifies valid personal or professional reasons for the exclusion.

External review letters will be used by departmental personnel committees, unit administrators, school and college personnel committees, deans, and other university administrators for personnel decisions with respect to tenure and promotion.

A copy of the letter sent to external reviewers shall be provided to the faculty member and included in the documentation file. Units should be careful to allow sufficient time to gather outside peer review letters so they can be included in the file by January 15.

A candidate may waive the right to access outside reviews. Such waivers shall not be assumed, implied or coerced, and must be executed in writing prior to solicitation of outside reviews (see Attachment 2 of this document). The scope of the waiver shall be clearly indicated in writing prior to solicitation of outside reviews. A copy of the executed waiver shall become a part of the documentation file. Any letter soliciting an outside review shall inform the potential reviewer of the extent to which the contents of the review will be known to the candidate.

- c. The following materials for the RPT documentation file should be provided by the faculty member. This is intended to be a minimal list of items to be provided, not necessarily a listing of the *only* items to be included.
  - (1) A current vita including a complete list of publications, instructional accomplishments, other creative activities, and important achievements should be provided by the faculty member. Reprints of publications need not be included; however, it is helpful if the faculty member designates which publications are in refereed journals. Documentation of instructional accomplishments could include teaching awards, peer evaluations, course syllabi and tests, student evaluations, other testimonies, etc.
  - (2) Self-assessment statement(s) on instruction, research/creative work, outreach/

extension, and/or service/professionalism activities are to be provided, as appropriate to the work assignment, by faculty members being considered for promotion and/or tenure.

- d. With the exception of peer review letters which the faculty member has waived their right to access, all materials in the documentation file should be available for review by the faculty member. Peer review letters should be placed in a colored file folder with the signed waiver form attached to the outside of the folder.
- e. If the faculty member finds the information provided by the unit administrator is incomplete or inaccurate, or if there is additional documentation the faculty member would like reviewed, documentation should be added by the candidate to clarify and complete the file prior to the signing of the RPT form.
- f. The faculty member signs the RPT form, Section 3, which indicates the opportunity has been given to review the materials contained in the documentation file up to this point in the process, including all materials submitted by the unit administrator and faculty member, and the file is complete. Such signature *does not* indicate the faculty member agrees with the substance of each document. Deliberations about the recommendation on the candidate will not begin until the file is complete; therefore, the Statements of Recommendation from the unit personnel committee, unit administrator, college-level committee, and dean *are not* included in the file at this point in the process.

### **3.03 Adding Additional Materials to Documentation File**

- a. Materials can be added to/deleted from the documentation file until the unit personnel committee recommendation concerning the action is made. However, both the candidate and the unit administrator *must* be informed of the changes and be provided with an opportunity to make additional modifications.
- b. Faculty Appraisal and Development (A&D) materials covering the period of time from the last appraisal and development document through the most recent fall semester shall be added to the RPT documentation file as soon as finalized. These documents shall be considered by the unit personnel committee and unit administrator prior to making their recommendations. It is expected this most recent material may have to be added to the file *after* the RPT documentation file is otherwise complete, and *after* the faculty member has signified in writing the file is otherwise complete; however, unit administrators should make strenuous efforts to complete the latest A&D review for each candidate by January 15. No new documentation regarding faculty performance or accomplishments occurring after the end of the immediately preceding calendar year may be added to the file.
- c. After the Statement of Recommendation is formulated by the unit personnel committee and recorded, the only documentation which may be added, except as noted in d. and e. below, to a candidate's RPT packet are the Statements of Recommendation

from the unit personnel committee, the unit administrator, the college-level committee, and the dean.

- d. The candidate will be provided an opportunity to respond to each negative Statement of Recommendation and to have said response added to the RPT packet. The candidate will have three (3) working days following receipt of the Statement noting denial of the proposed action to formulate a response no longer than 1,000 words. The candidate will submit the response to the next higher review level, i.e., if the Statement noting denial is received from the unit administrator, the response will be submitted to the dean's office within three (3) working days.

At each review level, all reasonable efforts will be made to notify the faculty member, in a confidential manner, of the Statement of Recommendation. However, if the faculty member is not readily available due to current assignment or is unwilling to accept sensitive documents sent via U.S. mail, the opportunity to respond to a negative Statement of Recommendation is lost. The faculty member should bear the responsibility of keeping their unit administrator informed of their whereabouts during this critical review process.

- e. If during the review process the reviewer(s) determines supplemental written materials are to be added to the file, all documentation, including the new materials, should be sent back to the unit administrator, who will contact the faculty member and the unit personnel committee, and restart the review process. This is to ensure all reviewers have an opportunity to deliberate on the additional materials in the event they have a bearing on the outcome of the reviewer's recommendation.

#### **4.0 Reviewing the Documentation File and Statements of Recommendation**

##### **4.01 On or About January 15 – February 14**

Once the faculty member has acknowledged the contents of the RPT documentation file, the process of seeking faculty counsel and administrative input begins. Unit administrators are charged with the responsibility of recommending reappointment, promotion, tenure, and/or non-reappointment actions. They shall obtain appropriate faculty counsel prior to making these recommendations. The manner in which input and subsequent recommendations are sought is noted below. Throughout this review process, committee members, unit administrators, deans, and others must be able to freely discuss personnel-related issues in an open and honest manner and without fear of repercussion, retaliation, or negative impact on their professional relationships with colleagues. As such, all discussions and/or votes of individual committee members shall remain confidential.

- a. *Appropriate Faculty Counsel.* Appropriate faculty counsel is sought when the unit personnel committee or a special or permanent committee of faculty for the academic unit involved is to review all pertinent data for those individuals who are being considered. The committee evaluates each individual's contributions in the three (3)

major areas of instruction, research/creative work, and outreach/extension, as appropriate. This evaluation is extensive, for the decision will have a direct bearing on the welfare of both the individual and the department. Consequently, the committee members will analyze annual appraisal forms, student evaluation summaries, journal articles and other publications, research results, and other outputs that can assess the individual's status as a professional. Standards established in the academic unit for quality as well as quantity are a matter of professional judgment in the discipline relative to the mission and role of the unit within the college and university.

After deliberating, the unit personnel committee shall prepare a Statement of Recommendation regarding reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure for the faculty member. The statement must address, in specific terms, how the faculty member has or has not satisfied applicable academic unit, college, and university standards for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure. This statement shall include the numerical vote of the recommended action, as well as the signature of each committee member. This statement must be added to the candidate's RPT packet prior to review by the unit administrator. Additionally, the chair of the unit personnel committee or an appropriately elected representative of the faculty will record the committee's recommendation on the RPT Summary of Recommendations form, along with their signature.

A copy of the unit personnel committee's Statement of Recommendation, as defined above, shall be given to the faculty member in a confidential manner, normally within five (5) working days, after the recommendation is finalized.

- b. *Unit Administrator Review.* The unit administrator's Statement of Recommendation to the dean must address, in specific terms, how the faculty member has or has not satisfied each applicable departmental criteria for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure. The statement must detail whether or not the performance of the faculty member adequately fulfills the published academic unit, college, and university standards for the proposed personnel action. It is understood an individual could greatly surpass some criteria and may fall short of others. Standards for quality as well as quantity are a matter of professional judgment in the discipline relative to the mission and role of the unit within the college and university. As such, the unit administrator should provide an accurate and balanced description of the person being considered. The statement of the unit administrator must be added to the candidate's RPT packet prior to review by the college-level committee, and the dean.

If the faculty member being reviewed for promotion and/or tenure also holds the position of unit administrator, it will be necessary for the dean to appoint a senior member of the departmental faculty to serve in the role of the unit administrator. The "acting" unit administrator will review the documentation file and write a Statement of Recommendation as described above. The "acting" unit administrator will also record their recommended action and signature on the RPT Summary of Recommendations form.

If a faculty member has a split appointment, the Statement of Recommendation is to be completed by the unit administrator of the home department after consulting with the other unit administrator(s) to whom the faculty member reports. All relevant unit administrators are expected to sign or initial the statement. If they disagree significantly with the recommendation, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the dean of the home college for resolution of differences.

When the unit administrator is unable to act in accord with the faculty recommendation, the reasons shall be communicated in writing to the faculty committee that provided the counsel.

The unit administrator is also responsible for ensuring the OSU Reappointment, Promotion/Tenure Recommendation Form is complete, and all appropriate documentation is attached.

The unit administrator then transmits the documentation file to the dean of the college.

A copy of the unit administrator's Statement of Recommendation, as defined above, shall be given to the faculty member in a confidential manner, normally within five (5) working days, after the unit administrator's recommendation is finalized.

*c. Transmittal of the RPT Documentation File:*

- (1) If a candidate is being considered for reappointment or for tenure (and promotion in the case of an assistant professor) said individual's documentation file must be forwarded to the dean for evaluation and further transmittal to the VPAA for review and action regardless of whether the recommendation is positive or negative.
- (2) If a tenured candidate is considered for promotion or an untenured candidate is considered for tenure and promotion prior to the mandatory review year, and both the unit administrator and the unit personnel committee recommend against the proposed action, said individual's documentation file will not be forwarded to the dean for further consideration unless the candidate requests otherwise. However, if the unit administrator and the unit personnel committee do not agree on a recommendation, the documentation file will be forwarded to the dean for evaluation and further transmittal to the VPAA.
- (3) At any point in the process, a candidate for promotion may elect by written request to withdraw their name from further consideration.
- (4) It is the policy of the university for the promotion of individuals to be made for outstanding performance in assigned duties over a period of time. Individuals who are considered for promotion in a given year, but are not granted a promotion, may be reconsidered. However, before such reconsideration is given, it is expected substantial change in the candidate's performance can be documented.



Normally a period of two years should elapse before the candidate is reconsidered. Unit administrators who have candidates who wish to be reconsidered earlier must demonstrate to the dean of the college the candidate has made substantial accomplishments since the last consideration before the review process is initiated. After review by the dean and consultation with the VPAA, if needed, the unit administrator will be notified whether or not approval is granted for reconsideration of the candidate.

- (5) If the unit administrator's recommendation is for non-reappointment, the documentation file should be sent forward to the dean along with a DRAFT copy of the non-reappointment letter.

#### **4.02 On or About February 15 – March 14**

- a. *College-Level Committee Review.* Each college must have a college-level RPT committee constituted and functioning as described in Section 2.04 above. Following a review of all documents provided on each candidate, the college-level committee shall prepare a Statement of Recommendation regarding whether the department's evaluation of each candidate has been rigorous, fair, and based on departmentally approved criteria and standards and, where applicable, any additional evaluations specified in approved college policies. This statement shall include the numerical vote of the recommended action, as well as the signature of each committee member. This statement is to be added to the candidate's RPT packet prior to review by the dean. Additionally, the chair of the committee or an appropriately elected representative will record the committee's recommendation on the RPT Summary of Recommendations form, along with their signature.

A copy of the college-level committee's Statement of Recommendation shall be given to the faculty member in a confidential manner, normally within five (5) working days, after the recommendation is finalized.

- b. *Dean's Review.* The dean, after reviewing all materials and other recommendations, submits a Statement of Recommendation to the VPAA. This statement shall assess whether (1) the department's evaluation has been rigorous, fair, and based on departmentally approved criteria and standards, (2) the documentation provided adequately supports the recommendations of the unit, and (3) whether the action recommended by the unit is warranted. Additionally, after reviewing the candidate's materials, including all internal and external input, the dean's recommendation letter shall reflect their professional judgment about the qualifications and merit of the candidate for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure. If the recommendation of the dean is that the action recommended by the appropriate faculty counsel or unit administrator is not warranted, the reasons must be explained in the statement. This statement shall include any confidential information which conditions this recommendation. Even if the recommendation of the dean agrees with the unit personnel committee and unit administrator, the dean is nevertheless encouraged to include in the documentation file a written statement setting forth rationale for their

recommendation. The dean's Statement of Recommendation must be added to the candidate's documentation file, along with a notation of the recommended action and signature on the RPT Summary of Recommendations form. The dean transmits the documentation file to the VPAA.

In addition to the RPT form and the documentation specified above, a DRAFT copy of the non-reappointment letter should be sent forward to the VPAA with all requested documentation, if the dean's recommendation is for non-reappointment.

A copy of the dean's Statement of Recommendation shall be given to the faculty member in a confidential manner, normally within five (5) working days, after the recommendation is finalized.

#### **4.03 On or About March 15 - May 31**

Materials on all candidates under review are to be submitted to the Office of the VPAA on or about March 15 of each year.

- a. *Administrative Review.* College recommendations and documentation are submitted for review by the VPAA. In the process of this review, the VPAA may seek counsel as deemed appropriate, e.g., from the Faculty Committee of the Faculty Council and other university-level administrators, including, but not limited, to the Vice President for Research.

Counsel from the Faculty Committee of the Faculty Council and other university-level administrators shall be sought for cases in which a negative recommendation by the VPAA is being considered and conflicting recommendations have come from lower levels of evaluation. Written input from the Faculty Committee of the Faculty Council and the individual administrators consulted shall become a part of the respective candidate's packet and their Statements of Recommendation will be considered by the VPAA in their final deliberations.

A copy of the Statements of Recommendation shall be given to the faculty member in a confidential manner, normally within five (5) working days, after the recommendations are finalized.

It is the responsibility of the VPAA to be certain all applicable standards and policies approved by the university have been applied fairly to each individual. Additionally, the VPAA's recommendation shall reflect their professional judgment about the qualifications and suitability of the candidate for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure.

If the VPAA's recommendation is negative and differs from that of the dean, the VPAA is responsible for communicating in writing to the dean, unit administrator, and faculty member the reasons for the disagreement.

A copy of the VPAA's Statement of Recommendation shall be given to the faculty

member in a confidential manner, normally within five (5) working days, after the recommendation is finalized.

#### **4.04 On or About June 1 – 30**

Final institutional review of the personnel actions submitted by the VPAA may be conducted by the President. A list of actions is then developed which the university administration recommends to the Board of Regents for final action. Reappointments, promotions, and confirmation of tenure must be approved by the governing Board of Regents except as authorized by Board of Regents policies. Normally, recommendations are submitted to the Board of Regents for consideration during a June meeting. When approved, the Board specifies the date on which the reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure will become effective.

Non-reappointment actions are provided to the Board of Regents for "information only" when the affected faculty member actually separates from the university.

#### **5.0 Recording Effective Dates**

When the Employment Action form is prepared by the college/department for the proposed personnel action, the form is to include the effective date for the action. Additionally, when all RPT actions are submitted to the Board of Regents for approval, the date on which the reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure is effective shall be specified. A guide for the effective date of actions follows:

- a. Reappointment to the rank of instructor (non-tenure track titles only) is effective the *calendar year following completion* of the RPT review and on September 1 of that year for faculty on 9-month appointments or on July 1 for faculty on 11-month appointments.
- b. Reappointment to the rank of assistant professor without tenure is effective on September 1 (9-month) or July 1 (11-month) of the *calendar year following* the completion of the RPT review. As such, the effective date for reappointment coincides with the end date of the initial appointment period.
- c. Reappointment to the rank of associate professor grants tenure and is effective on July 1 of the *same calendar year* as the completion of RPT review, independent of the faculty member's appointment length.
- d. Promotion in rank which grants tenure is effective on July 1 of the *same calendar year* as the completion of the RPT review, independent of the faculty member's appointment length.
- e. Promotion in rank which does not grant tenure is effective on July 1 of the *same calendar year* as the completion of the RPT review, independent of the faculty member's appointment length.

## 6.0 Providing Feedback to Faculty on Final RPT Action

- a. The VPAA shall inform the affected faculty member either: (1) a recommendation for promotion, reappointment and/or tenure *will be* presented to the Board of Regents in mid- to late June, or (2) the university does not intend to continue the appointment beyond a specified date. Notification of non-reappointment must be sent on or before May 31, except in case of a non-reappointment of an instructor in the first year of appointment, who must be notified by March 1.
- b. Formal notification of Board of Regents approval will be sent to each faculty candidate from the dean and/or unit administrator relaying the final decision of their reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure action. This notification should occur as soon as practical after, but normally within five (5) working days of, the completion of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Regents, typically in mid- to late June.
- c. Once Board of Regents approval is secured on RPT actions, all documentation files will be returned to the academic dean and will be retained intact by the academic college for one year.
- d. In order to eliminate an inadvertent breach of confidentiality, when the RPT files are returned to the respective dean's office by the VPAA's office, the external peer review letters will be removed from the file and will be retained in the dean's office (or college personnel office).
  - (1) All external review letters, accompanied by the signed waiver, will be placed in a sealed envelope in the faculty member's personnel file, normally located in the college fiscal office.
  - (2) Each folder will have a notice affixed stating these are confidential letters and may not be read by the individuals who waived their rights.
  - (3) Authorization to access these letters must be obtained in writing from the dean (the full notice is attached).
- e. The RPT files, less the external letters, will be returned to departments for retention as required by policy.

Approved by:  
Faculty Council, June 1999  
Deans Council, November 1999  
President Halligan, November 1999  
Board of Regents, January 2000

NOTE: Modifications to this policy were made in Fall 2003 to reflect the title change of the chief academic officer from Executive Vice President to Provost and Senior Vice President and

identified using VPAA.

Revisions approved:

Council of Deans, Summer 2006

Executive Group, September 2006

Revisions (to be effective July 2014) approved:

Faculty Council, November 2013 and March 2014

Council of Deans, November 2013 and March 2014

Executive Team, January 2014

Board of Regents, April 2014

Revisions approved:

Faculty Council, March 2015

Council of Deans, May 2015

Executive Team, September 2015

Board of Regents, September 2015

Revisions approved:

Faculty Council and Deans Working Group, October 2022

Council of Deans, November 2022

Board of Regents, December 2022

Executive Team, September 2023

**Attachment 1**

**PROPOSED INFORMATIONAL NOTIFICATION LETTER TO BE SENT TO FACULTY**

Date

Dear Faculty Member XXX:

This is to inform you our records identify you as a faculty member for whom a reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure (RPT) decision must be made during this year's review process. A copy of the report noting this has been sent to your academic dean and unit administrator along with a memorandum from me outlining activities for this year's RPT process.

You are encouraged to contact your unit administrator as soon as possible to verify the timing of your RPT review is correct based on departmental and college personnel records. If an action is required, please work closely with your unit administrator to ensure appropriate documentation is included in your file. You are also encouraged to review related sections of the *Policy Statement to Govern Appointments, Tenure, Promotions, and Related Matters of the Faculty of Oklahoma State University*, and specifically Sections 1.1.1, 1.2, 1.2.1, 1.4, 1.6, and 1.7. Enclosed is a copy of Policy and Procedures 2-0902: Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure for Tenure-Track Faculty.

If our records are in error on this year's RPT report, please work with your unit administrator to correct appropriate dates so the database can be updated.

Sincerely,

XXXXXX  
Provost and Senior Vice President

Enclosure

**Attachment 2**

**WAIVER OF RIGHT TO INSPECT AND REVIEW CONFIDENTIAL LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby

waive,

do not waive,

and renounce all rights of access, including, but not limited to, those rights established by Title 51 O.S. 24A.7 (C), to any letter or letters of reference or confidential recommendations to be hereafter written on my behalf by all peer reviewers.

This waiver is not operative and becomes null and void if at any time said letter or letters of reference or confidential recommendations are used for any purpose other than those which are specifically recommended. My specific intention is respecting an application for promotion, tenure and/or reappointment.

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(Signature of Waiving Party)

(Date)