

From: Jamie Art, General Counsel
To: Lara Shore-Sheppard, Dean of the Faculty
Department and Program Chairs
Date: April 15, 2024
Re: Principles and Good Practices for Reappointment and Promotion Evaluation

Four Overlapping Themes: Clarity, Consistency, Candor & Compassion

Clarity

- The standards and procedures for evaluation should be clear and clearly communicated to the candidates
- Unit guidelines – procedural and substantive – should align with the procedures and criteria in the faculty handbook
- Base evaluations and recommendations on the substantive criteria
- Changes in rules or standards could be fundamentally unfair if not communicated clearly with sufficient notice
 - Work with Dean of the Faculty and CAP on updates
 - No surprises; provide candidates time to adjust

Consistency

- Know and follow the rules
 - Don't impose additional requirements
- Keep an open mind – don't prejudge candidates
- Evaluations and decisions should be consistent both over time and compared to different candidates
 - "How does this candidate compare to other recent candidates?"
 - Inconsistency opens the door to claims of discriminatory treatment
- Formal evaluations of an individual candidate should be consistent over time
 - Evaluations should fully reveal performance over time
 - Review guidance from last evaluation and measure performance over course of current evaluation period
 - Final recommendations should not be a surprise
- Procedural consistency **and** substantive consistency
 - Ongoing counseling of candidate that is consistent with unit's and college's tenure requirements
 - Tenure files should be complete and consistent with those of other candidates
 - Review practices should be consistent across candidates
- Informal conversations should be consistent with formal evaluations, which should be consistent with expectations described in the Faculty Handbook
 - Be wary of "if you do x, the department will support you" or "keep this up and tenure will be a sure bet"
 - Be wary of platitudes capable of multiple interpretations

Candor

- The unit chair's guidance and evaluations should be ongoing, candid and direct
- Accurately reflect performance, especially shortcomings, measured against unit and college standards
- Tell them what you expect, but don't prescribe the path to get there
 - Give candidate the leeway to succeed or fail
 - Candidates should have autonomy over their careers
- No excessive optimism, no kid gloves, no sugar coating, no hyperbole
- Offer detailed comments with reference to specific examples
 - Avoid generic / general assessments
- College owes faculty candid assessments of their performance
 - Assess progress to date
 - Provide guidance for the future, but no guarantees

Compassion

- Couple critical feedback with compassion for the individual
- Take care of unsuccessful candidates
- Interact professionally and sensitively
- Common courtesy can help candidate through difficult outcome
- Work with Dean of the Faculty on transitional support