

Guidelines to help Department Chairs prepare their colleagues for the tenure review

Some candidates have provided thousands of pages of supporting material, while others present fewer than a hundred pages. In addition, some candidates provide limited proof of teaching effectiveness, and some Department Chairs have presented little information beyond that provided by the candidate.

A larger document – “Tenure Review Preparation Guidelines” – gives candidates a broader picture of the whole process. This companion document focuses solely on the activities and deliverables for which the Department Chair is responsible. It offers a list of suggestions which will help Dept. Chairs generate the best possible evidence to give FRC a clear indication of the level of support that the department is offering for the tenure candidate. Note that, while fully considering this important departmental component of the portfolio, FRC makes its own independent recommendation of support or non-support of the candidate.

The Department Chair is responsible...

A. To guide the candidate's preparation

Few candidates will have gone through this process before, so even steps that seem self-evident and common-sense may be news to them and, thus, should be clearly articulated. As Chair, your responsibilities begin as soon as a faculty member is hired. Years before a junior colleague actually stands for tenure, you should be helping them become the best possible educator they can be and assisting them in building the portfolio and evidence that illustrate their development. See Faculty Handbook (FHbk) section 3.3.2 for

details. You should help tenurable faculty members prepare for their tenure review by:

- Providing the candidate with a copy of the department's statement of expectations for teaching, scholarship, service, and DEI reflection (<https://www.augustana.edu/academics/faculty-review/review-preparation/departments>) as they begin their first year at the College, and answering any questions about these expectations (FHbk 3.3.2.4);
- Encouraging them to participate in Center for Faculty Enrichment (CFE) and FRC activities that are designed to help them learn about, adjust to and navigate the rules and norms of the lengthy review process (FHbk 3.3.2.5);
- Observing their teaching and helping them administer the required IDEA course evaluations, beginning with their first semester and including every appropriate course taught; “helping” includes discussions about the selection of relevant choices (and appropriate number) of IDEA form essential, important and minor learning objectives (FHbk 3.3.2.1 & 3.3.2.3 & 3.3.2.3.2);
- Coordinating teaching observations of the candidate by the tenure committee (the tenured members of the department, or a separate committee in the case of departments with fewer than three tenured faculty) (FHbk 3.3.2.3 & 3.3.2.3.1 & 3.3.2.3.2);
- Helping them interpret the results of student evaluations and encouraging them to graph those results to show trends over time and across courses (FHbk 3.3.2.5). Please recognize that the standard deviation of most IDEA scores (for $n > 10$) lies between 0.5-1.0, so subtle changes in scores are not significant and should not be fretted over or touted (i.e., with an average score of 3.9 ± 1.0 , we are confident that two-thirds of all student responses lie between 2.9 and 4.9);
- Helping them improve their teaching in response to justifiable student critiques (FHbk 3.3.2.5) and talking with them about biases in SRI (Student Ratings of Instruction) scores against certain demographics,

like young, female, foreign, and non-white teachers. Help them get past the harsh, personal, outlier attacks and focus on patterns of criticism that are reasonable and actionable;

- Providing them with opportunities to participate in the life of the department and College and reminding them about the importance of factors beyond classroom teaching (FHbk 3.3.2.5);
- Providing an annual review of their progress, including a letter and conversation with the candidate (FHbk 3.2.1).

In the year before the tenure review, the Chair should:

- Explain the nature of the tenure review process (FHbk 3.3.2.3.4);
- Review the available teaching evaluations and observations of teaching made by tenured faculty about the candidate (FHbk 3.3.2.3.1);
- Conduct a thorough end-of-year annual review and compile all previously completed annual reviews (FHbk 3.3.2.3.4);
- Discuss prior case-making narratives (i.e., the 2- and 4-year statements) and any appropriate revisions, based on FRC comments and candidate's subsequent growth (FHbk 3.3.2.3.4);
- Help the candidate stay within reasonable quantitative limits in the submission of material. If you need help in defining "reasonable" limits, please contact your FRC representative.

B. To collect information from colleagues and students

During the spring semester before the fall tenure hearing, the Department Chair should attempt to directly observe the candidate's teaching on more than one occasion, survey current students and alumni who had the candidate as a teacher or advisor, and consult

with faculty colleagues who have observed the candidate's teaching (FHbk 3.3.2.3.1 & 3.3.2.3.3).

C. To share the candidate's compiled portfolio with tenured members of the department

This step should occur early enough in the fall semester (or possibly even earlier) to allow any concerns to be conveyed to and addressed by the candidate before the departmental vote. Ideally, most of the tenured members will have participated in the prior pre-tenure review process, so there should be no surprises or new demands made upon the candidate at this stage (FHbk 3.3.2.3.1).

It was FWC's opinion (3.30.21) that all previous Dept. Chair's annual letters be shared with the department's tenure committee, but that the FWC/FRC summary letters written back to the candidate only be shared IF the candidate explicitly (in writing) agrees to have those letters shared with the tenure committee.

D. To conduct a departmental meeting

The tenured members of the department should review the candidate's portfolio and then meet with the Chair to discuss the report compiled by the candidate and the information gathered by the Chair. The long-term needs of the department should be discussed, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate's portfolio. The Chair should take notes of the discussion to help in the writing of the Chair's letter. Following the meeting, each tenured member of the department should vote in a secret ballot whether or not to support a tenured appointment for the candidate (FHbk 3.3.2.3.1).

E. To write a summarizing departmental report

The report (Department Chair's letter) states the level of departmental support for the tenure candidate, including the number of tenured faculty members who support the granting of tenure, the number who are opposed and the number of abstentions. Further, this report will summarize the evidence for whether or not the candidate does not meet, meets, or exceeds expectations of the performance criteria in each of the areas of teaching and advising, scholarly/professional expression/achievement, and service as established in the departmental statement of tenure expectations and in the Faculty Handbook (FHbk 3.3.2.3 & 3.3.2.3.1).

The report should also assess the indications of promise for continued growth in effective teaching and advising, scholarly and professional achievements, and service, as well as the ways the interests, training, and capabilities of this individual meet the long-range needs of the department and College. The report will reflect the collective assessment of the tenure committee, and must be vetted by all members of the tenure committee. All committee members should sign the letter, which indicates their agreement with its contents. Note that if the letter fairly states the positives and negatives for a candidate and gives qualified support, then everyone should be able to sign, regardless of whether they vote yes or no. Voting anonymity is still preserved. If a committee member disagrees with the content of the letter, and the Dept. Chair is unwilling to make alterations to acknowledge those disagreements which are written, that person should not sign the letter. The dissenting committee member has two options: 1. voice their reasons for disagreement of the contents of the letter to the Dept. Chair, who will convey those opinions to the candidate and the rest of the tenure committee (comments may be either anonymous or attributed, depending on the dissenting committee member's wish); 2. write their opinion as a signed dissenting letter that is given to the candidate and the rest of the tenure committee well in advance of the FRC review. This secondary letter accompanies the main Dept. Chair's letter. It may be singly or co-authored (FHbk 3.3.2.3.1 & 3.3.2.5).

The full departmental report (Chair's Dept. letter and any dissenting letters) should be treated as confidential and should be shared only with the tenured members of the department, the candidate for tenure, and the Faculty Review Committee.

F. To share the department's report with the candidate

The Department Chair is responsible throughout the candidate's probationary period for notifying the candidate in writing of unfavorable information at the earliest opportunity. Fairness demands that a candidate have as much time as possible to assess and respond to any information that may damage the candidate's prospects for tenure, or to withdraw from the tenure process if a favorable outcome is considered unlikely (FHbk 3.3.2.3.4).

The Department Chair will share the department's written report (and any dissenting letter) with the candidate well in advance of the tenure review, and should address any questions and concerns the candidate has about the report before the tenure review (FHbk 3.3.2.5).

If the department is unable to give unqualified support to a candidate's tenure case, or if the Chair learns of information that may affect the candidate's case, the Chair must provide the candidate with a written summary of areas of concern (FHbk 3.3.2.5).

G. To report to FRC the recommendation of the department

If the department is unable to give unqualified support to a candidate's tenure case, or if the Chair learns of information that may affect the candidate's case, the Chair must document those concerns and provide the results of the departmental vote in the Department Chair's letter to FRC (FHbk 3.3.2.5). *During the tenure hearing, the Chair will not be permitted to introduce new information – information*

that has not been discussed with the candidate or written into the letter – only elaborate on the departmental letter or the discussion topics covered during the hearing (FHbk 3.3.3.2). This restriction is intended to protect the candidate from unsubstantiated hearsay, innuendo and rumor, which is why an honest, frank, thorough, and detailed written department report is so critical. This departmental report should be treated as confidential and should be shared only with the tenured members of the department, the candidate for tenure, and FRC.

The deadline for submission to FRC is Monday of week five of the fall semester. The Department Chair should electronically submit the written report (the Department Chair's letter, as a pdf file) and, if they have not been submitted previously, all prior annual review letters, as email attachments to *BOTH*: facultyreview@augustana.edu

AND

facultyreviewcommitteegroup@augustana.edu.

The subject line of the email should be, “Chair’s support letter for first name last name date” with the date in mm.dd.yyyy format (this would be an appropriate name for the actual pdf file as well).