2016-17 Committee Members:
Chris Fragile, Chair (Physics & Astronomy)
William Barfield (Health & Human Performance)
Lei Jin (International & Intercultural Studies)
Elena Strauman (Communication)
Anthony Varallo (English)

The Post-Tenure Review (PTR) Committee met 11 times during the 2016-17 academic year. This report summarizes our activities and discussions.

On 8 Sep., the Committee met to elect a chair and review the schedule and process for post-tenure review. Over subsequent weeks, the Committee considered (electronically) four deferral requests; all were approved unanimously.

On 17 Nov., the Committee met to consider the following questions:
1. When can a candidate seek a Superior rating? Must they wait 6 years after their previous review? For example, if a candidate received a Satisfactory rating one year, must they wait 6 years to pursue a Superior rating?
2. What is the purpose of a deferral? Is it to avoid getting an Unsatisfactory rating? Is it to preserve eligibility to seek a Superior rating? If a candidate doesn’t have to wait 6 years to seek a Superior after a Satisfactory, then is there any reason to grant them a deferral?
3. What time period should be considered for a Superior rating? The time since the last PTR? Always 6 years? The cumulative time since the last Superior?

We were joined in that meeting by Dr. Deanna Caveny-Noecker from Academic Affairs. As a result of discussions in that meeting, the Committee has come up with a list of recommended changes for the FAM (see attached memo).

From 19 Jan. to 16 Feb., the Committee met nine times to consider 16 cases for a Superior rating. All cases had been positively recommended in previous levels of review (Chair and Dean). The Committee concurred unanimously on nine of those cases, concurred with a split vote on three cases, disagreed with previous levels of review with a split vote on three cases, and disagreed with a unanimous vote on one case. Letters summarizing the Committee’s deliberations were delivered to the Provost’s Office by 24 Feb.

Of the four cases where the Committee recommended against a Superior rating, the Provost followed the Committee’s recommendation on only one. This could potentially point to a disconnect between the Committee and the Provost on what the standards are for a Superior rating.

Some general points this year’s Committee noted with regard to reviewing PTR packets:
1. An objective review of research quality seems to be lacking in the PTR process. The committee members themselves lack the expertise to assess the quality of research since it is almost always outside their areas of expertise. Therefore, they must rely on others in this respect. However, in many cases, the only qualified expert in the line of reviewers is the
department chair, and we expect it may be difficult for the chair to be completely objective in this matter.

2. There is a great deal of variability in how departments handle peer-reviews of teaching. Some peer reviews only consider teaching material in the packet. This is of little benefit to the Committee as we can review such material ourselves. Other departments include classroom visits as part of the peer review process. This year’s committee found such reviews much more helpful.

3. Some of this year’s candidates for Superior rating did a poor job of identifying on their CV what products and activities were performed during the review period. They also provided little to no information on what their contributions were to co-authored works. These shortcomings make the Committee’s job more onerous.

The Committee does not have any specific recommendations with respect to these points; we are simply noting them for the record.

Sincerely,

P. Chris Fragile, Chair
on behalf of the Post-Tenure Review Committee

cc: Dr. Brian McGee, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
    Prof. Todd McNerney, Speaker of the Faculty Senate
Post-Tenure Review Committee  
Recommended Changes to PTR Process  
March 29, 2017

Based upon discussions by this year’s Post-Tenure Review (PTR) Committee and conversations with Dr. Deanna Caveny-Noecker of Academic Affairs, we recommend that the following clarifications and revisions be made to the PTR process as outlined in the FAM:

1. Clarification should be made that all tenured faculty must go up for either promotion or some sort of post-tenure review at least once every 6 years. With the new, streamlined process for getting a Satisfactory PTR, we see few reasons (see #4 below) for this not to be standard practice.

2. Faculty at the rank of Professor should be eligible to seek a Superior rating on PTR in any year, beginning in the 6th year after their promotion, keeping in mind that Superior ratings will not be granted more frequently than once every 6 years. All of this is irrespective of when the last Satisfactory PTR occurred. This is to clarify that the “clock” for Superior is not tied to the “clock” for Satisfactory. To us, this seems fair given that, under current practice, someone who goes up for Superior one year, but only gets a Satisfactory, is considered eligible to go up for Superior again the following year. That same option, of going up for a Superior the year after receiving a Satisfactory (or any other year), should be available to all faculty.

3. The period of review for either type of PTR should be the period since promotion or the last rating of that or a higher type. When coupled with item #1 above, this means that a Satisfactory review period should never exceed 6 years, though for a Superior, the period could be much longer.

4. With these clarifications and revisions, we do not feel there is any need to retain the deferral option, except possibly in the case of faculty approaching retirement. In most cases (other than faculty nearing retirement), if a faculty member is not ready to seek a Superior rating, they should still be reviewed for Satisfactory if it has been 6 years since their last promotion or PTR. With the streamlined process for Satisfactory rating, we feel there is too little burden on the faculty member to justify a deferral.

FAM language to reflect these changes is currently being drafted. For now, we present these ideas as a set of guiding principles.

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