



Memorandum

TO: Deans, Chairs, Heads, and Directors

FROM: Donde Plowman, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer
Michael Boehm, Vice Chancellor, Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources

RE: Promotion and/or Tenure in 2019-20

DATE: April 25, 2019

Tenure and promotion reviews are among the most important activities in the academy. The colleagues we tenure and invite to join the senior faculty this year will shape the University's academic reputation for years to come. It is crucial that your reviews be conducted in accordance with University procedures and bylaws, that they be characterized (and be perceived to be characterized) by fairness, and that you apply appropriate and rigorous standards in forming your evaluations and recommendations.

Every tenure or promotion decision we make should be judged against the same standard: a proven record that suggests a sustained career typified by true excellence. The promotion and tenure process across our campus is governed by the Faculty Senate document *Guidelines for the Evaluation of Faculty: Annual Evaluations, Promotion, and Tenure*. As is stated in that document, "IANR, colleges, departments, and other administrative subunits shall supplement these guidelines with more detailed descriptions and interpretations of the criteria and standards that, when approved, will apply to faculty members in the particular unit." Like the *Guidelines*, this memo and its attachments apply campus-wide; your own units may have additional policies and procedures in place that supplement (but do not supersede) these.

The attached Documentation Formats outline the materials to be included in every promotion and tenure file. *Please note that these Formats have been updated!* Every file must be organized with clearly labeled sections in "Documentation Format" order and submitted to the appropriate Vice Chancellor's office. Referring to the Documentation Format, only the Administrative Section and the Candidate Section should be submitted to the Vice Chancellor's office; the Appendices should not be included.

Files are to be submitted as a single, combined PDF document. Original electronic documents must be used whenever possible and scans of hard copy documents should be used only when necessary. The file must include "bookmarks", with each bookmark representing the appropriate page, rather than a section cover sheet. For files submitted to the Office of the IANR Vice Chancellor, the PDF file should be named with the following naming convention: Last Name, First

Name (Tenure File or Promotion File or, Recommendation Form) and appropriate year, i.e. Smith, Joe Promotion File 2019, and uploaded to the appropriate P & T unit folder in SharePoint. For files submitted to the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor, more specific guidelines and a template for a tracking spreadsheet will be distributed this summer.

Attached to this memorandum are the following forms and documents that apply to all candidates:

- Waiver of Right to See Information Form
- Course Listing and Evaluation Form
- Documentation Request (*Please note that this has been updated!*)
- Deadlines for reappointment, tenure, and promotion

Also attached are the following transmittal forms:

- Office of the EVC Transmittal Form for Promotion, Professor of Practice Faculty
- Office of the EVC Transmittal Form for Promotion, Research Faculty
- Office of the EVC Transmittal Form for Promotion and/or Tenure, Tenured or Tenure-Track Faculty

The online transmittal form for IANR will be made available separately to those in the Institute.

As you prepare your promotion and tenure reviews, we ask that you attend to the following:

- *Candidates have the right to request reconsideration of a negative vote or decision at each stage of the process.* It is important that you build time for reconsideration into your process so that you can meet the deadlines in the attached schedule. We recommend that you schedule promotion and tenure meetings in advance to handle reconsideration requests rather than waiting to do so until reconsideration is requested, as this will likely result in fuller attendance at the meetings and a better reconsideration process.
- *All discussions, reviews, and evaluations must be based on the material submitted in the file.* While a candidate's colleagues may have other knowledge of the candidate based on interactions within the unit, or other activities not cited in this file, it is important that the review be based only on material in the file. Part of the task of constructing an appropriate file is making sure that all relevant information is contained in it.
- *Each group or individual making a recommendation on the file must submit a letter that provides reasons for the recommendation.* In particular, the letter documenting the vote of the faculty committee is to be written by a member of that committee, addressed to the next administrator to review the file, and copied to the candidate and the candidate's file. It is not sufficient for documentation of the faculty vote and reasons for that vote to appear only in the administrator's letter.
- *Each internal evaluation letter must address all aspects of a faculty member's responsibility.* This means that each area (teaching, research, service, extension, administration) in which the faculty member has non-zero apportionment must be assessed in each internal evaluation letter, and clear reasons for the recommendations must be given.

Recommendations should take the relative weights of the different categories of apportionment into account.

- *Every tenure and/or promotion file must include at least three external (to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln) and independent letters of review¹. It is the responsibility of the department chair/head, the chair of the departmental promotion and tenure committee, or the dean – not the candidate – to solicit these letters. Generally, external reviewers should have full professorial rank at peer or aspirational peer (typically, R1) institutions. In any case they must occupy a rank equal to or above that being considered for the candidate. Reviewers must be chosen who are qualified to judge the quality of the candidate’s work because of their own knowledge of the field. These letters are to be “independent” in the sense that they will be from individuals who have had at most limited professional or personal relationships with the candidate and who have been chosen by the department chair/head (or chair of the promotion and tenure committee, or dean, as appropriate) for their ability to provide an objective assessment. As such, external reviewers should not include dissertation advisors, current or former collaborators, former colleagues, personal friends, or others who have any special relationship to the candidate. In cases where the extreme prominence of a candidate makes independent letters impracticable, special care should be taken to solicit letters from exceptionally prominent reviewers. Colleges may provide additional direction about how external reviewers are selected.*

Thank you for attending to these considerations and requirements. If you have any questions about the process, we encourage you to contact Judy Walker, Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor, or Rich Bischoff, Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty and Academic Leader Success in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, as appropriate.

¹ Promotion materials for Extension Educators do not require external letters of review.