

# PREPARING THE PROMOTION/TENURE FILE

When applying for promotion and/or tenure, a candidate is faced with the difficult task of assembling a promotion/tenure file that clearly documents the quality of activity in the four categories of evaluation for Faculty. The Promotion and Tenure Committee hopes this brief guide will reduce the uncertainty about what kinds of materials should be included. It also provides some advice on how to format files for the P&T process. Please read the instructions on uploading your digital file in Blackboard.

This guide reflects the judgment of the current P&T Committee as to what makes a file clear and understandable. Although it mentions some of the requirements mandated by the Senate document on promotion and tenure and by the AAUP/BOT's *Collective Bargaining Agreement*, this pamphlet is written primarily as advice. Therefore, if candidates decide to follow some other format, they can rest assured it will not prejudice the committee. In other words, there is no intention to contravene or contradict the CBA or the "Faculty Senate Promotion and Tenure Procedures for Faculty" document. In fact, at times we emphasize certain requirements that are detailed in those documents. The P&T Committee hopes that these guidelines will provide support for our colleagues who are applying for promotion and tenure.

## FILE FORMAT

When deciding how to assemble their files, candidates might keep in mind that the members of the P&T Committee read 50 to 60 files. To assist candidates in compiling an effective file, the P&T Committee makes the following recommendations.

1. Only one file is required when applying for both tenure and promotion.
2. Consonant with the requirement in the Senate P&T document the Senate has designed a **Candidate Information Form (CIF)** to set forth the file's basic information in a standardized format. The CIFs for all Faculty are posted under Faculty Evaluation/Candidate Information Forms on the Faculty Senate website. There is also a link to "Instructions on how to produce a Candidate Information Form (CIF) using either digital measures or Microsoft Word (beta)."  
Reading the information is easiest if candidates use a 10-point or 12-point font. Writing "See Vitae" in place of a completed entry or a completed form is not advised.

Please Note: If you have already completed a CIF using an earlier version, you may continue to use that version.

3. **MANDATORY:** *The file must include a copy of the original letter of appointment from the University President. The current evaluation letters from the D.E.C.,*

*Chairperson, and Dean* should be placed in their designated folder. (Please obtain a copy of your original appointment letter from the Human Resources Office.

4. Documents should be organized in the designated digital folders: ***Load Credit or the Equivalent, Creative Activity, Productive Service to the Department and University, Professional Attendance and Participation, and Any Record of Disciplinary Action***. If disciplinary action has occurred, the record of this should be uploaded in the appropriate digital folder. If there has been no disciplinary action, nothing need be done and the folder will be invisible to the reviewers. No documentation need be provided for the fifth category, *Years in Rank*, unless there is some situation that needs to be communicated to the P&T Committee.

**IMPORTANT:** Candidates applying for promotion with prior full-time experience in the same rank at another institution can automatically add this experience to their "Years in Rank" calculation and do not need to submit an application for eligibility on the basis of comparable experience. This prior experience would be clearly documented in the Candidate Information Form (CIF) and is usually referenced in the letters of recommendation. However, candidates who do *not* have the required number of years in rank to apply for promotion, and who decide to apply for promotion on the basis of "substantially comparable experience" (see III. C. d.), are *encouraged* to include their "supporting evidence" (submitted with their application to the DEC). The P&T process is evidence-based in the sense that candidates for Promotion typically include documentation of the quality of activity in the four evaluative categories, year-by-year, for each of the required years of eligibility. The lack of any documentation for a year, or for years of eligibility, could disadvantage a candidate in a process that is so dependent on the documentation provided by the candidates. Further, the P&T committee *encourages* candidates who apply for eligibility for promotion on the basis of "substantially comparable experience" to articulate their experience--to the greatest extent possible--in terms of our four contractual categories of evaluation (credit load; creative activity; service; professional attendance and participation) in order to clearly explain the ways in which the experience was comparable to activity in the required years in rank. Similarly, the P&T would encourage the DEC to use this four-category evaluative framework in its written decision with supporting reasons. Once again, these are the suggestions we would like to offer our colleagues in this area of the process.

5. **MANDATORY:** *Dates of all activities and/or publications must be included.* The P&T Committee requests **complete information** for all entries, whether in the CIF, a CV, or separate reports. That is, dates should be provided for each publication, reassigned-time award, committee membership, conference presentation, sabbatical leave, etc.; locations should be provided for all events, such as meetings, exhibitions, conferences, etc. The items within each grouping should

appear in chronological order, starting with most recent entry.

In other words, entries should appear as they would in a curriculum vitae (regarding a publication), or in a published reference, and according to the style appropriate to the field.

6. If your department uses the standard **student opinion surveys**, it is **recommended that you include the university-tabulated summaries and the bubble sheets for a period of two years (four semesters) prior to your application**. If you deem it advisable you may choose to include additional semesters. If your department has approved its own written evaluation instrument you may provide that in lieu of the University-issued student opinion surveys.

Please note that the current University-issued student opinion survey is not required by our AAUP contract. Departments may develop their own written evaluation instruments, but these must be approved by the department. In addition to the approved instruments, “it is understood that members may use evaluation forms in addition to the approved instrument” (CBA 4.11.9). A department-specific assessment instrument may better represent the pedagogy appropriate to your discipline or field. Further, you may add your own individual evaluation instruments. These instruments may represent your own class culture more effectively.

You are encouraged to include additional evidence of teaching, such as reports from classroom (peer) observations conducted by the DEC.

7. Phrases or terminology particular to a field should be explained in a sentence or two; acronyms should be spelled out at their first mention. Abbreviations commonplace in a discipline may not be understood by outsiders, or may be confused with some other interpretation.
8. Instead of an entire newsletter or magazine, a photocopy of just the essential material pertaining to the candidate should be provided. One document indicating the candidate’s claim is sufficient – other documents should be included only if they provide new information.
9. If the file includes materials in a foreign language, a translation of the important elements, such as the abstract of a journal article, is helpful.

As candidates work on their files, they should emphasize significant accomplishments over those of lesser importance. In promotion files, candidates should give special emphasis to accomplishments since the last promotion. Most importantly, the P&T

Committee will consider all files as honest and ethical statements of what the candidates have accomplished and how they have contributed to SCSU and to the profession.

**NOTE:** The Senate document on promotion and tenure includes the dates for sealing the files (in the calendar). A written email memo will be sent to candidates later in the semester reminding them of the closing of promotion and tenure files. It is to the candidate's advantage to have all relevant and necessary materials in the file by that date. Candidates are able to add documentation to the file at the "Closing" and at the Interview, but after the beginning of the deliberations it is difficult to ensure that P&T members will see any information that would be added. By that time, the files have already been reviewed. Therefore, the P&T does not recommend adding documentation following the beginning of the deliberations. All candidates should ask any external references to submit letters of recommendation early in the process, which should be sent to the candidates themselves for uploading in the file.

## DOCUMENTING THE CRITERIA

The P&T file should contain information that reflects the criteria required for promotion and/or tenure, according to both the AAUP/BOT's *Collective Bargaining Agreement* and the Senate document on promotion and tenure. The P&T Committee's decisions are based on its evaluation of how well the candidate fulfilled the criteria in the first four of the six categories (the fifth category is automatic and the sixth is only if there is a record of discipline in the candidate's file). This evaluation procedure is explained in detail in the Senate document on promotion and tenure.

The following section of the pamphlet is divided into the six categories the P&T Committee must consider. (The weight given each category in the initial mathematical evaluation appears in parenthesis.) It also contains general suggestions about the kinds of materials to submit in the designated folders as documentation of effective performance. These suggestions are in no way all-inclusive. Depending on the candidate's primary job responsibility and/or academic discipline, materials and exhibits other than those listed as examples here may more effectively document their work.

### **1. Load Credit or the Equivalent** (weight = x10)

The performance of primary load credit assignment, or of its equivalent, receives the most weight in P&T decisions. Candidates should provide evidence to demonstrate how well they carry out their job responsibilities.

**Candidates engaged in teaching activity are encouraged to include at least two years (four semesters) of student opinion surveys in their file.** Because the P&T

Committee recognizes that no one way of teaching is paramount, it is very helpful to begin this section of the file with a brief explanation of the candidate's approach(es) to pedagogy/teaching philosophy.

For those candidates who have any non-teaching assignments as all or part of their credit load, an explanation of responsibilities and how they are met is particularly vital in this category. **A performance evaluation of non-teaching assignments should be included in the file.**

Some examples of materials to document teaching effectiveness are:

*Selected course syllabi*  
*Peer evaluations based on classroom observations or comparable experiences*  
*Statements from colleagues who have reviewed the candidate's teaching materials*  
*Evidence of awareness of current development in the field*  
*A brief self-evaluation*  
*Student/alumni letters, preferably non-solicited*  
*Syllabi and rationale for any new courses created*  
*Assignments given to students*  
*Assignments finished by students (including a range of quality)*  
*Copies or explanations of attempted teaching innovations*  
*Handouts or worksheets developed by the candidate*  
*Statement of teaching goals for next five years*  
*Explanation of efforts taken to improve teaching*  
*University-tabulated Student Opinion Surveys; in addition, or alternatively, a department-approved written course evaluation instrument*

**MANDATORY:** *Candidates are required to provide the P&T Committee with credit load data at least for the years in rank required for eligibility for promotion to the desired rank. The Candidate Information Form (CIF) provides the desired format for this information. Please list the course number, title and credit hours for each course taught.* If you received reassigned time for research or other administrative activity please provide sufficient explanatory detail in the CIF concerning the activities supported, as well as supporting documentation in the file. This is significant information for the P&T since load credit is the highest weighted category in the evaluation process. Also list each non-teaching activity that received load credit (administrative, research, curriculum development, field work, library services, counseling, coaching, etc.), semester by semester.

It is in the Candidate's interest to list any activities for which load credit was received in category 1, with a weighted value of x10. However, it may be appropriate to list activities in more than one category. The P&T Committee realizes that these are complicated and imperfect distinctions, so the candidate's explanations will be helpful.

Similarly, both student advising and teaching-related committee work/activities are usually considered as part of category 1, but candidates may want to list them elsewhere.

**Remember: candidates who receive credit for administrative activities (such as chairing a department or coordinating a program) should also include performance information on these responsibilities.**

**Note: In recent years candidates have received their Fall semester Student Opinion Surveys or equivalent prior to the interview. The surveys may be discussed at the interview and uploaded to the file at that time.**

## **2. Creative Activity** (weight = x5)

The P&T Committee interprets this category quite broadly because it recognizes that excellence in "creative activity" is to some extent defined by the candidate's own discipline and/or professional interests. Because the P&T Committee is by definition representative of different schools and departments, it helps if all creative activity is explained so that people outside the field can understand and appreciate it.

Evidence of creative activity appropriate to one's field could include such activities as:

*Publications*

*Papers presented at professional conferences*

*Exhibition or performance of artistic works*

*Authorship of funded and unfunded grant proposals (whether SCSU, System-wide, or outside)*

*Design or implementation of professional workshops*

*Creation of computer programs*

*Development of classroom materials*

*Presentation of creative activity to the department or university*

*Participation on panels*

*Case writing*

*Software development*

Copies of many kinds of creative activity may be uploaded to your file. Please indicate in the file and on the required CIF any creative activity that went through a refereed process. It would be helpful if you would provide information about a journal or other venue in which you have published an article, since the P&T committee will, in most cases, not be familiar with specific journals in specific fields. Any current work in progress should be clearly identified as such. If any reassigned time was awarded for creative activity it should be uploaded in category one and if it appears again in this category a rationale should be provided. If you are a co-author or contributor to an

activity or publication please describe your contribution in detail.

For a **book**, for example, it is recommended that you create a document containing a copy of 1. the title page, 2. the table of contents, and 3. one chapter. When your evaluation process begins, you may also place a copy on reserve in Buley Library. A scanned PDF copy of an **article** may be uploaded in your Digital Evaluation file. In place of a scanned copy of an article, you may also use a weblink. N.B., be sure to use the entire URL (i.e., http....) when creating the link. The safest method is to open the URL and then copy the URL from the browser address bar into the Create Web Link box

**External Letters of Recommendation:** Given the "recusal rule," candidates may want to consider obtaining external letters of recommendation that would clarify the context and significance of the candidate's creative activity. (Please note the following passage in the Faculty Senate P&T document pertaining to the recusal rule: P&T "Committee members from a candidate's department are allowed to vote on that candidate, but must recuse themselves from any discussion or comment on the candidate or the candidate's file in any context for the entirety of the candidacy year, including that candidate's interview, deliberations by the Committee (including reconsiderations and meeting with the Provost) and appeals to the President" (III. F. 6. g.).

### **3. Productive Service to the Department and University** (weight = x4)

The Senate document on Promotion and Tenure weighs this category almost as much as category 2. The P&T Committee finds evidence about the quality and extent of the candidate's service, including a brief personal statement, especially helpful in evaluating this category. Service includes, but is not limited to, the following:

*Departmental committees and activities*  
*School-wide and University-wide committees and activities*  
*Programmatic self-study and evaluation*

Letters from others involved in the Service activity are one way to help document the constructive participation of the candidate. If any service is compensated with reassigned time, it should be so noted and, unless explained otherwise, entered into category 1.

### **4. Professional Attendance and Participation** (weight = x2)

Professional activities in the candidate's field fall under this category. A few examples of the types of activities that may be included are:

*Attendance at lectures and/or workshops*  
*Consultations*

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*Conference attendance*  
*Professional memberships*  
*Professional offices held*  
*Referee/evaluation of scholarly work for a publisher or conference*  
*Community service of a professional nature*

**5. Years in Rank** (weight = x1)

Candidates will automatically have the number of years in rank at SCSU past the eligibility point (for Promotion) added to their total scores. **Because awards of promotion and tenure take effect at the beginning of the following academic year, candidates should include the current year in accounting for years in rank on the Candidate Information Form.**

**6. Record of Disciplinary Action** (weight = -1)

A copy of any record of disciplinary action currently in the candidate's personnel file that is not scheduled to be removed prior to the end of the review process, shall be placed into the P&T file by the candidate. The candidates may choose to provide information about the circumstances of the disciplinary action that they would like the evaluators to consider.

## “THE CLOSING” (Sealing the File)

Sealing the file is scheduled for the last two (2) days of Finals Week. It is strongly recommended that candidates examine their files at this time. Besides ensuring that the content is still in the desired order, candidates are allowed to add additional documentation to their files and to sign up for an interview with the P&T Committee.

**IMPORTANT: During the Closing, candidates will be able to sign up for an interview with the P&T Committee**

P&T members at the Closing will help verify that all the required materials are submitted. **Candidates should consider it part of their responsibility to ensure that the DEC, Chair, and Dean have adhered to the requirements for their letters, including recommendation language, described in the Senate document.** This should be done prior to the sealing of the file. However, if the evaluators fail to follow the correct format even after the candidate so requests, the P&T Committee will still accept the file for consideration.

## THE INTERVIEW

Candidates may sign up for an interview during the two days set aside for closing files. After those dates, candidates desiring an interview should contact the Chairperson of the P&T Committee. Efforts are made to accommodate everyone who wants an interview. Those signing up late will obviously have less choice of dates and times.

The interviews are scheduled in 20-minute blocks during the first week of the Spring Semester. To use their time wisely, candidates should think beforehand about the aspects in their file, *in the four evaluative categories*, they would like to highlight or clarify. In addition, candidates should apprise the P&T Committee of recent events or developments. At this time, candidates may upload documentation of recent or new activities to their files. Committee members may ask questions of clarification. Candidates may also discuss and upload their Fall semester Student Opinion Surveys or equivalent.

Each interview will be conducted by a few members of the P&T Committee, who will report back to the whole committee during deliberation on the file.

## RECOMMENDATION LETTER FROM THE P&T

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Recommendation letters are usually sent out on March 4<sup>th</sup>.

## FINAL WORDS

Aspects of the promotion and tenure process are described in detail in the AAUP-BOT's *Collective Bargaining Agreement*, the Senate document on promotion and tenure sent each September, and the P&T Procedures document. The Committee strives to follow these documents to the letter while still adhering to the spirit of them. Candidates can be assured each and every file is given full consideration. Once again, these present guidelines are not intended to contravene or contradict the CBA or the Senate document on promotion and tenure but rather to provide helpful advice to candidates about preparing their files.