

## Promotion and Tenure Tenure-Eligible/Tenured Faculty Task Force

During Fall of 2023, two task forces were identified and convened to “examine and update VCU’s promotion and tenure policies and practices.” The review of the Promotion and Tenure Policies was described as “critical to the pursuit of VCU’s strategic plan, Quest 2028, especially the plan’s first theme, Diversity Driving Excellence and its intention to, “nurture an institutional culture and climate that is diverse, inclusive, equitable and engaged.””

The two groups focused and convened separately to address P&T issues for Tenure-eligible/ Tenured Faculty and for Term Faculty.

The task force members addressing issues for Tenure-eligible/Tenured Faculty included:

<b>Name</b>	<b>VCU unit</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Subcommittee</b>
RaJade Berry-James	Wilder School	Professor	Criteria
Dave Chelmow	School of Medicine	Professor	External Reviews
Gary Cuddeback	School of Social Work	Professor	Criteria
Preetam Ghosh	College of Engineering	Professor	Criteria
Hope Ginsburg	School of the Arts	Professor	Dossier
Mignonne Guy	College of Humanities and Sciences	Associate Professor	Review Process
Nancy Jallo	School of Nursing	Associate Professor	External Reviews
Christiana Lafazani	School of the Arts	Associate Professor	Review Process
Maghboeba Mosavel	School of Medicine	Professor	Dossier
Doug Pugh	School of Business	Professor	Dossier
Karen Rader	College of Humanities and Sciences	Professor	External Reviews
Chris Reid	College of Health Professions	Professor	Review Process
Maria Rivera	College of Humanities and Sciences	Associate Professor	External Reviews
Kamden Strunk	School of Education	Associate Professor	Review Process
Niraj Verma	Wilder School	Professor	Review Process
<b>Cochairs</b>			
Benjamin Van Tassell	School of Pharmacy	Professor	Criteria
Kevin Allison	College of Humanities and Sciences	Professor	Dossier

## Charge to the P&T Task Force: Tenure-eligible/Tenured Faculty

The following charge (verbatim) was provided to the Task Force from the Office of the Provost

(<https://faculty.provost.vcu.edu/faculty-resources/task-forces-and-committees/promotion-and-tenure-task-force/2023-tt-faculty-promotion-and-tenure-task-force/2023-tt-faculty-pt-task-force-charge/>)

<p><b>Q1</b></p>	<p><b>Process at each level – department, college/school/university. If needed, distinguish between tenure track/tenured versus term faculty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Size and composition of committee at each level being attentive to tenure track/tenured versus term faculty</li> <li>● Do you need a committee at each level – department, school/college, university? Department chair serves as the dept committee chair – need to make additional provisions if the department chair is not a full professor. Alternatively, to be more inclusive, do we want faculty “as a whole” voting on dossiers? “As a whole” means all tenured associates and fulls vote on the tenure and promotion of all tenure eligible assistant professors; and all tenured fulls will vote on promotion of tenured associates to full at the department level. A minimum of five faculty members must be eligible to serve on each of these committees? If that is not possible, the dean should appoint one or more faculty members from related disciplines.</li> <li>● At the School or College level, the dean chairs the committee – and this committee will comprise all department chairs and at least three to five additional full professors from the College appointed by the Dean. The Dean of the College/School will send names to the Provost.</li> <li>● Also, have a committee at the university level to incorporate more voices? At the university level, the committee will comprise the deans of the Colleges/Schools and six to eight full professors at large from across Colleges/Schools. No school/college will have more than one representative on the university committee.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q2</b></p>	<p><b>Rubric for evaluation of dossier at each level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use a scale (like the current) or simply vote as yes/no.</li> <li>● If scale is recommended: each non-excellent vote must be explained or the vote will be invalid. If a vote of yes/no, each ‘no’ vote must be explained or the vote will be invalid.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q3</b></p>	<p><b>Decision to move candidate forward if negative vote</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At Department level: Chair of department</li> <li>● At College/School level: Dean</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q4</b></p>	<p><b>Appeal Process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Appeal process at university level, include basis for appeal. Do we need an appeal process at College/School level.</li> <li>● Appeals Committee</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Including an extension of a year to go up for tenure?</li> </ul>
Q5	<p><b>Credentials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For tenure track faculty – specify terminal degree?</li> </ul>
Q6	<p><b>Criteria for promotion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus on ‘scholarship of...’ research, teaching &amp; learning; community engagement and how this should align with workload responsibilities (and effort) for tenure track/tenured faculty versus term faculty. Innovation in teaching is also an item for tenure and/or promotion. All faculty members should contribute to service and be rated satisfactory as is in the current policy. But service is not a criterion for tenure and/or promotion.</li> <li>● Professional Service at national level for promotion to Full professor Innovation in Research and Teaching</li> <li>● Entrepreneurship</li> <li>● Candidate should also have demonstrated excellence and scholarly productivity in at least one of these two areas – research, teaching &amp; learning with the understanding that, ordinarily, strength would be apparent in more than one.</li> <li>● Commitment to active and responsive mentorship, as well as an active role in mentoring, advising and supporting the academic success of students and postdoctoral scientists, will also be documented as part of the process that defines tenure and promotion.</li> <li>● What should each dept and school/college incorporate in their tenure and promotion guidelines? Develop guidelines on key aspects which the school/college can use to revise/modify. Define a process by which (a) a department and (b) a school will revise/modify P&amp;T guidelines to align with the university guidelines.</li> </ul>
Q7	<p><b>Candidate’s dossier</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cover sheet (see Provost <b>Appendix A</b>).</li> <li>● Candidate’s sample dossier (see Provost <b>Appendix B</b>)</li> <li>● Content? Develop a form with three key parts: (1) Scholarship: Scholarship on Research, Scholarship on Teaching; Scholarship on Community Engagement (2) Teaching &amp; Learning, (3) Service – department, college/school, university, professional, community. What are the items to be included in each part?</li> <li>● Should annual evaluations be included? What are the pitfalls of doing this? Candidate dossiers should be evaluated as whether they are ‘ready’ at the given point in time and not what they did each year. Scholars discourage use of annual review/evaluation letters in P&amp;T dossiers as they are most likely to introduce bias into discussions.</li> <li>● Should the dossier be updated by the candidate each year?</li> </ul>
Q8	<p><b>Making additions through the process</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Candidate shall have the opportunity to attach an addendum one week before the committee meets at each level – department, college, university. That is the candidate may submit an addendum note to indicate an article has been accepted (attached editor’s note of acceptance), or an in-press article is out; or a grant has come through, or approval has been obtained for a new patent and so on.</li> </ul>
Q9	<p><b>External Letters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How many letters?</li> <li>● How will the slate of letter writers be decided – at least two from the candidate’s list and three from department faculty. But do NOT note this in the dossier? Should this vary by rank – assistant to associate, associate to full?</li> <li>● Conflict of interest</li> <li>● Provision for external letters from scholars in non-R-1s. Seek approval of the dean.</li> <li>● Who solicits letters?</li> <li>● Need template letters to be created within each College/School for soliciting external letters.</li> <li>● What materials need to be shared with external letter writers? A 2-page statement that summarizes research contributions, teaching contributions, and a paragraph on service, the candidate’s CV, five published (or accepted) articles and/or teaching portfolio and/or a book manuscript (publisher contract should be attached if book is still not out). May use unpublished articles or articles under review. Should be consistent within a unit</li> <li>● Template letter to be used for soliciting external letters, materials shared with external letter writers, and the external letters must be part of the candidate’s P&amp;T dossier. Any change in template letter must be justified in the candidate’s dossier. Focus on the value of the work (research and teaching) and how do they compare to other faculty members you know in the same stage of the career. Do not seek recommendation of letter write</li> <li>● Tracking the number of solicited external referees who decline or fail to provide letters and/or recording their stated reasons for not writing does not provide relevant, useful information about the quality of the candidate’s case. Thus, this practice should be strongly discouraged.</li> </ul>

The co-chairs and task force grouped these questions together for draft recommendations to form specific subcommittees focused on the following ‘clusters’ of issues raised in the charge:

- **Standardizing the Review Process:** Q1-Q4
- **Clarifying the Criteria for Promotion:** Q5-Q6
- **What Should Be Included in the Dossier?:**Q7-Q8
- **Standardizing the Process for External Reviewers:** Q9

The task force was also invited to raise other issues it saw fit during its review and the group had access to the Final Report of a previous review of VCU P and T conducted in 2020-2021.

The following report contains the Task Force review and recommendations associated with each cluster of questions, as well as discussion of additional P and T issues raised by the Task Force and presented for consideration in the next stages of the review of these recommendations. Each section begins with the 'clusters' of issues and items from the charge [in shaded boxes], followed by the Task Force subcommittee/workgroup considerations, key issues and recommendations relative to that cluster of issues.

An initial draft of the report was reviewed by the Provost's Office and the current document provides clarifications on several issues and questions retained in that review.

The Task Force notes the importance and appreciates the intended opportunity for a robust review and discussion of these recommendations by VCU faculty and appropriate institutional representative and administrative bodies and leaders in the consideration of these recommendations.

**SECTION 1: STANDARDIZING THE REVIEW PROCESS:**

The following set of preliminary questions and considerations were provided to the Task Force in the charge from the Office of the Provost to address the process of the review. These issues and questions included:

<p><b>Q1</b></p>	<p><b>Process at each level – department, college/school/university. If needed, distinguish between tenure track/tenured versus term faculty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Size and composition of committee at each level being attentive to tenure track/tenured versus term faculty</li> <li>● Do you need a committee at each level – department, school/college, university? Department chair serves as the dept committee chair – need to make additional provisions if the department chair is not a full professor. Alternatively, to be more inclusive, do we want faculty “as a whole” voting on dossiers? “As a whole” means all tenured associates and fulls vote on the tenure and promotion of all tenure eligible assistant professors; and all tenured fulls will vote on promotion of tenured associates to full at the department level. A minimum of five faculty members must be eligible to serve on each of these committees? If that is not possible, the dean should appoint one or more faculty members from related disciplines.</li> <li>● At the School or College level, the dean chairs the committee – and this committee will comprise all department chairs and at least three to five additional full professors from the College appointed by the Dean. The Dean of the College/School will send names to the Provost.</li> <li>● Also, have a committee at the university level to incorporate more voices? At the university level, the committee will comprise the deans of the Colleges/Schools and six to eight full professors at large from across Colleges/Schools. No school/college will have more than one representative on the university committee.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q2</b></p>	<p><b>Rubric for evaluation of dossier at each level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use a scale (like the current) or simply vote as yes/no.</li> <li>● If scale is recommended: each non-excellent vote must be explained or the vote will be invalid. If a vote of yes/no, each ‘no’ vote must be explained or the vote will be invalid.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q3</b></p>	<p><b>Decision to move candidate forward if negative vote</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At Department level: Chair of department</li> <li>● At College/School level: Dean</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q4</b></p>	<p><b>Appeal Process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Appeal process at university level, include basis for appeal. Do we need an appeal process at College/School level.</li> <li>● Appeals Committee</li> <li>● Including an extension of a year to go up for tenure?</li> </ul>

The Task Force and subcommittee deliberations identified the following foundational considerations that influence our responses.

- **Voting:** No one involved in the review should vote at multiple levels. For example, those voting at the department level must recuse themselves at the School/College level even if they are members of the relevant standing committee. Any other reviewers with a conflict of interest must appropriately recuse themselves.
- **Associate Professor Promotion and/or tenure:** Tenured Associates or tenured Full Professors must comprise the membership of committees that vote on promotion to Associate Professor and/or tenure.
- **Full Professor Promotion and/or tenure:** For Full Professor promotions, the peer committee must be Chaired by a tenured Full Professor, and other members must consist of tenured Full (preferably) or tenured Associate Professors. (Although we agree that those voting should be at the rank desired by a candidate, the reality at VCU today is that many Schools and departments do not have sufficient numbers of Full professors for their committees).
- **Role of Administrators:** Administrators have distinct roles in the P&T process as Chairs and Deans and should not be part of peer, school/college, or other faculty committees.
- **Timing of Review:** Schools/College should start the review process with adequate consideration where relevant, of the service obligations of 9-month faculty.

Below we review recommendations relative to each set of questions.

<b>Recommendations Linked to Q1: Process at each level (department, college/school/university. If needed, distinguish between tenure track/tenured versus term faculty)</b>
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1. **Peer committee:** The peer committee brings substantive knowledge of the candidate's field and prepares and then reviews the case on behalf of the faculty of the program or department. We recommend a peer committee comprising an odd number of 3 or 5 voting members to prevent ties (each voting member must vote – abstentions are not allowed). The peer committee solicits external letters and prepares the case (similar to current practice). When included, a student member<sup>1</sup>, resident (e.g., in health sciences), and/or other learner, if included in any School/College, is a non-voting member. The committee composition is shared with the candidate who can challenge any committee member for cause (final decision made by Associate Dean in consultation with the Chair and challenge and grounds noted). The chair of the peer committee must be at the rank being pursued by the candidate or above.

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<sup>1</sup> Some Schools include a graduate (or terminal degree) student on peer committees who collects feedback from other students on a faculty member's teaching and/or mentoring. Additionally, membership in a promotion committee can be valuable for students who are aspiring academics. However, student members shouldn't vote, since they do not have the background and/or qualifications to make judgments on candidates' files. In addition, when student members are included, the committee chair should exclude students from deliberative discussions and students should complete confidentiality statements to ensure that information discussed in any review sessions is held confidentially.

2. **Who votes:** Only relevant committees vote. All other department faculty should NOT vote since faculty members who are not serving on peer and school committees are unlikely to review the candidate's dossier in depth for an informed vote.
3. **Department Chair:** The Department Chair brings a broader perspective on behalf of the faculty of the department. They will provide commentary and recommendations on the criteria for promotion (i.e. teaching, service, scholarship) to accompany the peer-review report. More specifically, the department chair should offer an evaluation based on the same criteria the peer committees are evaluating (i.e., typically teaching, research, and service) and an overall recommendation for promotion/tenure. If the Department Chair is not qualified (because of rank), the Associate Dean or another faculty member (appointed by the Dean), in consultation with the Chair, takes over this responsibility.
4. **School/College Committee:** The School/College committee represents the faculty of the entire school or college, typically comprises different disciplines, fields, and professions. It brings uniformity across all departments and programs. While some practices vary between schools/colleges, the sub-group recommends the following:
  - This a standing committee of tenured faculty
  - The faculty must elect a majority (at least more than half) of the committee with a mix of Associate and Full Professors.
  - The term is three years and must be staggered to ensure continuity.
  - The Dean appoints a minority (less than half) of members for one-year terms, whether selected from a roster of eligible faculty (e.g., CHS) or determined by faculty availability, rank, etc.
5. **A new University-wide committee:** This committee has been proposed in questions provided to the sub-group. Our responses follow:
  - The task force did not see enough value added in the extra layer of oversight to justify the personnel resources and time delays that would be needed for a University-wide review of all P&T applications. The task force was particularly concerned that this level of review would likely involve committee members with less discipline-specific expertise than the Peer Review Committee and School committees. Moreover, Schools with fewer Full Professors may be unable to release sufficient faculty to serve on this committee.
  - However, the task force did recognize the potential value added of a University-wide committee to be reserved for cases of appeals and/or disagreement between Peer Review Committees, School Committees, and the Dean . This arrangement would minimize the administrative burden to the smaller percentage of cases most likely to benefit from an extra layer of review.
  - Regardless of the scope of a University-wide committee, the task force recommends this committee should be composed of faculty members—and not composed of administrators.



**Recommendations Linked to Q2: Rubric for evaluation of dossier at each level**

**Recommendation 1:**

- The use of checklists is recommended (to ensure complete submissions) rather than standardized rubrics. However, it would be premature to specify the contents of such a checklist until the rest of the process can be decided.
- We have collected examples of checklists used in various schools/colleges. These checklists vary across units, and we have not tried to develop a standard checklist across all schools/colleges.
- Process (checklist) should build in some exceptions for expedited review, e.g., for new appointments.

**Recommendation 2: Regarding Using a Rubric scale**

Use a scale (like the current) or simply vote as yes/no?

The committee considered that psychometric knowledge points to the problem of converting sliding scale measurements into binaries and further discussed that Yes/No rating can be especially problematic for cases that are borderline. The desire is to retain as much background and nuance as possible as the report moves up the chain.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Retain a clear “Yes/No” vote at each level of review for the final vote/recommendation to award tenure or promotion.

Develop language that Yes/No vote for tenure must explicitly comply with requirements of an excellent in Teaching or Scholarship and a satisfactory in Service. Those requirements must be upheld.

Unit guidelines must include a statement that yes/no votes must align with University Promotion & Tenure policy at each level of the review, including department, school and college. Any dossier moved forward that does not align with this guidance is sent back for clarification.

Maintain the sliding scale for Scholarship, Teaching, and Service categories.

SEE CoverSheet [Appendix A that captures this information.]

**Providing Rubric explanations**

If scale is recommended: each non-excellent vote must be explained or the vote will be invalid. If a vote of yes/no, each ‘no’ vote must be explained or the vote will be invalid.

The workgroup noted that providing justification on only less than excellent or yes votes may make a barrier for voting below excellent. Some units/cases struggle with people not taking a

stand and school policies already call for a rationale for the Yes/No recommendation given for tenure.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- a. Reinforce the inclusion of adequate rationale given on the final Y/N tenure vote
  - a. The rationale is included in the Peer Review Committee (PRC) Report
  - b. Next level of review can request further explanation of rationale
- b. Rationale of committee voting for Teaching, Scholarship, and Service votes must be present no matter the rating.
  - a. The place for this to be illuminated is the Peer Review Committee report
  - b. The prompt for the PRC should encourage articulation of reasons for voting.
  - c. Voting should be substantiated by the committee's report
  - d. Though voting is anonymous, the report should contain clear and sufficient justification/rationale to explain the consensus determination of the committee (including dissenting views that may be expressed by committee members).
  - e. Next level of review can request further explanation of rationale
- c. Standardize and include language reinforcing need for adequate rationale in the Peer Review Committee report (e.g., See example<sup>2</sup> from School of Business calling for "discussion of reasons").

Recommend clarification: Do school level committees review dossier through lens of expertise (as PRC) or evaluate the fairness of PRC's report/vote?

**Voting Procedures**

As stated in the current Promotion & Tenure policies, for promotion to Associate Professor, candidates must receive a rating of "excellent" in scholarship or teaching, along with a minimum rating or "very good" in the remaining category of scholarship or teaching, and a minimum rating of "satisfactory" in service. For promotion to Professor, candidates must receive a rating of "excellent" in scholarship or teaching, along with a minimum rating or "very good" in the remaining category of scholarship or teaching, and a minimum rating of "very good" in service.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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<sup>2</sup> The departmental committee report must discuss fully all criteria, putting them into perspective in the candidate's particular field following the principle of complete thoroughness. It must state the evaluation give a full discussion of the reasons, and report the vote on the committee's assessment in terms of "excellent," "very good," "satisfactory," or "unsatisfactory" on teaching, scholarship, and service. Credentials and experience shall be rated as "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory." The report must include a count of the committee's vote on its recommendation and must be signed by all committee members. Votes of committee members shall be by secret ballot. All views should be stated in the report, so that ordinarily there would be no need for a minority report. If there is a minority report, it should be circulated to all members of the committee before submission. The committee should make a definite recommendation if possible; however, any genuine divergence in viewpoint should be reported as such.

The rating in each category should be established by formal vote of the PRC/school committee in which each committee member submits their rating. The final rating will use a “threshold” approach based upon the highest rating (i.e. “excellent”, “very good”, “satisfactory”, “unsatisfactory”) indicated by a majority of committee members (see Figure).



In this example, the final rating would be “very good” as this is the highest rating threshold indicated by a majority of voters (i.e. Member #1, Member #2, Member #4). In other words, the majority of voters indicated that the candidate had achieved this threshold.

After the committee votes on ratings in the areas of scholarship, teaching, and service, there is no need for a subsequent vote to promote. The decision to promote will be driven entirely by achievement of the requisite ratings for promotion. This approach reduces the potential impact of interpersonal biases and favors a performance-based evaluation.

**Recommendations Linked to Q3: Decision to move candidate forward if negative vote**

- Candidates should be informed (and receive appropriate documentation of decisions) at any time there is a negative decision on their application by a committee or an administrator. Candidates will have the opportunity to include a response (i.e., add an addendum to their dossier) to a negative review at any level before it proceeds to the next review. Candidates also retain the right to appeal any decision at any review level to the Provost.
- For non-mandatory review, after two negative decisions (peer, Chair, school committee), the application is tabled and sent to the Dean. The Dean may, however, still decide to forward the file to the next level of review. If the Dean declines to forward the application to the next level, the application is considered tabled unless the applicant appeals the decision to the Provost. Given the significant negative consequences of negative mandatory reviews, the process of such a review should not be halted unless by request of the applicant to allow full due process.
- A non-mandatory review that is tabled (after resolution of all potential appeals) will not be reconsidered for at least two years or until the tenure-clock mandates the review.

<b>Recommendations Linked to Q4: Appeal Process</b>
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### 1. The Appeal Process

- If applicable, the appeal begins after the college or school's Dean meets with the candidate for promotion and/or tenure and shares the official recommendation with the candidate of the Dean's recommendation based on the input from the peer committee, chair and the college/school committee.
- If the Dean makes a favorable recommendation, any factual correction of record and/or disputed interpretation will be handled in the meeting or, failing this, in a memo from the candidate to accompany the file.
- Candidates will have five business days from the meeting with the Dean to appeal the Dean's recommendation in writing to the Appeals Committee with a copy to the Dean. The written Appeal will become part of a candidate's file.
- On receiving a copy of the Appeal, the Dean will forward the candidate's file to the Appeals committee.
- Candidates will have a maximum of 2 weeks from filing their Appeal to providing evidence and a list of witnesses to support the Appeal. Witnesses may be included for validation of factual information, e.g., type of advice given to a candidate, specific context or particular conditions within a department or program.
- Candidates may choose to withdraw their applications at any time.

### 2. The Appeals Committee:

- The Appeals Committee is a standing committee at the University level. It comprises five full tenured professors and two tenured associate professors (not holding a current administrative appointment, including a role as a department chair) named by the Provost and the Vice President of Health Sciences, with each

representing a different VCU school/college. In addition, the committee includes a non-voting representative from the VCU Legal services department.

- Once membership is announced, the committee will elect a Chair from among the faculty members on the committee. All members of the committee are required to participate in voting. No abstentions are permitted. In cases where another member of a school, department or unit committee is a member of the appeals committee and has already weighed in on the promotion and/or tenure of the candidate in question, this committee member is recused from discussions and may not vote on the appeal. In such cases, the Provost and the Vice President of Health Sciences will appoint an additional member to serve on the appeals committee for this specific review. In addition, the individual appointed to chair a specific appeals review should be from a school other than that where the case has arisen.
- A positive vote from a majority of the committee is required for the appeal to move forward.(see Evaluating the Appeal below).
- The committee will review the Appeal, and if the majority of the committee finds that it doesn't meet the standards for an appeal<sup>3</sup>, it will forward the candidate's file to the Provost/Vice President of Health Sciences with a letter from the Committee Chair. This letter is copied to the candidate and the Dean of the candidate's school.
- If the committee decides to hear the Appeal, it will inform the candidate, the relevant Dean, and the Provost/Vice President of Health Sciences. The committee may request an extension of the review period from the Provost/Vice President of Health Sciences as needed to complete the review.

### **3. Evaluating the Appeal**

- The committee will invite the candidate and the relevant Dean to meet with the committee to elaborate on the case.
- Witnesses will be allowed to present evidence to the committee.
- All deliberations of the committee will be confidential.
- A majority vote of the committee will make decisions. In case of an equal number of votes, the committee chair will serve as a tie-breaker.
- The committee may:
  - Forward the file to the Provost/Vice President of Health Sciences denying the Appeal. The Appeal Committee Chair will document the committee's rationale and vote in a letter to the President, which will be copied to the Provost/Vice President of Health Sciences, the Dean, and the candidate.
  - Return the file to the relevant Dean with a recommendation on process violations that need addressing, including if the file needs reconsideration at a prior level of review. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will

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<sup>3</sup> These can include process violations, incorrect information, inadequate consideration of department/school criteria, or other criteria as the only allowable reasons for an appeal. One proposal mimics these guidelines, while another allows the appeals committee flexibility to consider an appeal based on the candidate's appeal letter.

communicate the committee's rationale and vote in a letter to the President and copy it to the Provost/Vice President of Health Sciences, the Dean, and the candidate. (When the remedy of the process violation involves the establishment of a new peer committee or when the addition and deletion of material has significantly altered the file, the file shall go through a re-review, including new internal letters from all review bodies. New material may be added to the file only in this way).

- Recommend to the Provost/Vice President of Health Sciences an extra year for the candidate for tenure/promotion review.
- Request a meeting with the Provost/Vice President of Health Sciences to share its concerns in cases where it finds the process and/or other violations particularly challenging or egregious.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> There are two positions on whether or not the appeals committee should be able to "overturn" the Dean's negative recommendation. While one position empowers the committee to recommend promotion and/or tenure overruling the Dean, the rival position sees most appeals corrected by remanding the file and favors meeting with the Provost/Vice President of Health Science when a remand of the case is insufficient to correct violations. Input from the broader university community will continue to the final path to be taken.

**SECTION 2: CLARIFYING THE CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION**

The following set of questions and considerations presented by the Provost to address the criteria for promotion included:

Q5	<p><b>Credentials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For tenure track faculty – specify terminal degree?</li> </ul>
Q6	<p><b>Criteria for promotion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus on ‘scholarship of...’ research, teaching &amp; learning; community engagement and how this should align with workload responsibilities (and effort) for tenure track/tenured faculty versus term faculty. Innovation in teaching is also an item for tenure and/or promotion. All faculty members should contribute to service and be rated satisfactory as is in the current policy. But service is not a criterion for tenure and/or promotion.</li> <li>● Professional Service at national level for promotion to Full professor Innovation in Research and Teaching</li> <li>● Entrepreneurship</li> <li>● Candidate should also have demonstrated excellence and scholarly productivity in at least one of these two areas – research, teaching &amp; learning with the understanding that, ordinarily, strength would be apparent in more than one.</li> <li>● Commitment to active and responsive mentorship, as well as an active role in mentoring, advising and supporting the academic success of students and postdoctoral scientists, will also be documented as part of the process that defines tenure and promotion.</li> <li>● What should each dept and school/college incorporate in their tenure and promotion guidelines? Develop guidelines on key aspects which the school/college can use to revise/modify. Define a process by which (a) a department and (b) a school will revise/modify P&amp;T guidelines to align with the university guidelines.</li> </ul>

**Recommendations Linked to Q5: Credentials**

The task force recommends requesting each school to specify within their promotion and tenure guidelines the relevant terminal degree requirements to be considered for promotion and/or tenure in that unit.

**Recommendations Linked to Q6: Criteria**

This sub-committee recommends that VCU criteria for promotion and tenure should encourage and recognize within the review process any *Diversity and Inclusion* as well as *International*

*activities* in faculty evaluations and tenure reviews that align with the strategic priorities of the institutional plan.

Diversity and Inclusion Activities include teaching (strategies, workshops, inclusive service learning), research (articles, grants, reports or partnerships related to diversity and inclusion), or service activities (community partnerships/programs and engagement).

International Activities include teaching, research, or service activities that align with the strategic priorities of VCU and support the mission of the program, school, college and university.

Each candidate for promotion and/or tenure should show evidence and demonstrate quality in teaching, continuous scholarship, performance of service responsibilities to the program, school, university, profession and broader community.

1. **Documenting Effort Distribution**: This sub-committee advocates the need for proper documentation of the effort percentage of the candidate over the review period. The unit-level promotion criteria for tenure-earning faculty should be based on the assigned workload effort in teaching, scholarship, and service. The sub-committee recommends verbiage that encourages the candidate to work with their supervisor(s) (i.e., Chair, Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs, Dean and/or mentoring committee) if their assigned effort distribution, goals for career advancement, and the requirements for the unit-level promotion and tenure are not aligned.

Each Unit and College must provide explicit criteria based on effort distribution for promotion and tenure, which should include Expectations and Standards of Excellence. Only the Criteria for the Candidate which were in place when the candidate was hired should be used (unless updated ones are chosen by the candidate). Such explicit criteria for the proposed faculty rank should be included in the dossier.

2. **Community Engagement and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) related activities**: This sub-committee considers both community engagement and DEI related activities to be important constituents of the candidate's dossier. Contributions on both topics can be included in the scholarship, teaching and learning and service sections based on the nature of activities pursued. Suggested text can be in the following format:

*Evaluation for tenure involves three components appropriate to the unit:*

- *Teaching or comparable activity designed to promote student learning (including advising, mentoring, community engaged and DEI related instruction)*
- *Research/creative/scholarly work (including community-engaged and DEI-related scholarship)*
- *Service to the University, the profession, and the community with considerations for diversity, equity and inclusion.*



3. **Criteria for research, teaching & learning and service:** The sub-committee recommends general policies for assessing teaching, scholarship and service contributions based on the following template. This sub-committee recommends adding more clarity on each of the three categories. Examples are provided below.

Promotion and tenure standards that demonstrate achievement in three areas:

1. Teaching & Learning
2. Research, Scholarship, and Creative works
3. Service

Scholarship (including research and creative works) include "refereed" and "non-refereed" activities which are measured by the number and quality of activities in each category. The quality of scholarship and creative activity is assessed and affirmed by the external stakeholders and peer review processes. Each unit/discipline may provide further definitions of these activities.

"Refereed Activity" may include (but are not limited to) discipline appropriate scholarly and creative activities that are reviewed by appropriately qualified peers or independent reviewers:

- Book
- Book Chapters
- Conference Papers
- Exhibitions and performances
- External Grants and Contracts, noting the level (e.g., local, state, national, international) relevant to the award
- Intramural Grants
- Journal Articles

"Non-Refereed Activity" may include (but are not limited to) the number and quality of activities in:

- Technical Reports
- Self-Published Books
- Book Reviews
- Conference Papers/Proceedings (Invited/Non-Refereed)
- Presentations (Invited)
- Book Chapters (Invited/Non-Refereed)

**General recommendations for documenting scholarly effort:** Scholarly activities include any endeavor that increases the body of knowledge or creative works relative to a discipline or promotes effective dissemination of such knowledge. While research is the most common scholarly activity, other forms of scholarly activity exist and should be specified in the unit-level guidelines. While both quantity and quality are important to the overall evaluation of

productivity, quality and overall impact of contributions is prioritized over quantity (i.e. quantity of scholarship does not replace the need for quality of scholarship). National and international recognition is important and the criteria, assessment and indices used to evaluate disciplinary-relevant standards of excellence, will be explicitly provided by the department, unit or school within their guidelines.

**Teaching & Mentoring OR Teaching & Advising:** Candidates should demonstrate effective teaching and sustained contributions to teaching in the classroom and by evidence of their commitment to improved educational practices (i.e., pedagogy, student learning, faculty growth and continuous course improvement).

The individual units should specify detailed criteria for assessing quality in teaching by examining the teaching process, mastery of course content, preparation for and development of courses, student advising, role as liaison in the field, and service on masters and dissertation committees. Assessments of teaching quality may include (but are not limited to) student evaluations<sup>5</sup>, polling of former and current students, polling of faculty familiar with the work of the candidate, observations and evaluation of course materials used.

Additional teaching indicators may include:

1. Involvement in teaching
2. Appropriate teaching practices
3. In-Class/On-Line Performance
4. Student Mentoring
5. Peer Evaluations
6. Curriculum Development Activities including the creation of new courses
7. Self-Development
8. Service contributions in Teaching
9. Specialized Teaching (public teaching, community engage teaching, workshops for colleagues and advanced students, guest lecturers and interdisciplinary teaching, grants)
10. Awards and honors (program, school and university; state, national and international awards for teaching excellence)
11. Publications dealing with teaching in higher education
12. General Contributions (practices and activities that improve the quality of education)

**General recommendations for documenting teaching effort:** Faculty Dossier should be used to document teaching effort by enrollment and evaluation; supplemental information courses

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<sup>5</sup> When being used by a unit to inform the quality of teaching quality and performance, units and evaluators should clearly articulate the ways in which they use student evaluations and explicitly address how they use this input in light of concerns relative to potential bias in these assessments. See: [VCU Faculty Senate White Paper](#). Student evaluations of teaching should only be considered as one aspect of evidence which should also include peer evaluations and other evidence of teaching effectiveness. Patterns of similar comments in student evaluations can still be meaningful (e.g., if students across terms comment on slow feedback or lack of preparedness or a lack of diverse readings) but there should not be any kind of use of the scores as a criterion-referenced rubric.

taught (e.g., capstone course, service learning course, writing-intensive course, Honors course, new course preparation, new course offerings, etc.); other non-classroom course(s) such as directed or independent study projects supervised; other teaching-related activities (e.g., curriculum development, self-development to improve teaching skills, public teaching, guest lectures, mentoring of junior faculty, etc.); student advising and mentoring; and other teaching activities typically captured on the annual review form and assessed by the faculty evaluation. The dossier should also document evidence of improvements in teaching and incorporation of critical feedback wherever possible to show how teaching excellence of the candidate is improving over time.

4. **Service activities:** The sub-committee agrees that service activities alone are not a criterion for promotion and/or tenure. All faculty members should contribute to service and be rated satisfactory as is in the current policy.

Service Activities can include professional service on campus and off-campus. On-campus service activities include faculty participation and/or leadership in departmental, college, and university activities. Off-campus activities may include service to professional societies and community outreach activities. Faculty leadership in professional societies, editorial service (including manuscript reviews of scholarly work and editorial board service) and extension and engagement with constituencies external to the university are included in the service activity. Each unit may document different expectations for assistant to associate vs. associate to full professor ranks.

University administrative leadership may also be considered explicitly as service and leadership contributions and should be noted and documented relative to the areas in which they have explicit impact (e.g., instruction/pedagogy, research) and assessed relative to the ways in which the specific type of leadership contribution has an impact on university mission and priorities. It is especially important for the university to be intentional and explicit relative to taking into account and supporting the professional development of faculty who take on substantive administrative roles before they are tenured and before they are promoted to full professor. When faculty agree to take on these responsibilities, there should be explicit documentation and commitment in annual work plans the ways in which the units and the university will explicitly support and address expected contributions in research, teaching and service. Such supports may include the provision of course releases or scheduled leave, other research supports (e.g., assistantships or funding), the modification of the review timeline or other appropriate, relevant and mutually agreed-upon supports.

In addition, considering the ways in which ongoing research is noting the differential participation in and potential burden of service roles across groups defined by gender (e.g., see: [O'Meara et al. 2017](#)), and the important role of 'invisible service' (See: [Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017](#)) it is important for university leadership (and in the current circumstance, colleges and schools) to either ensure the equitable and fair distribution of service roles and demands within and across academic

units or to explicitly articulate the relevant value of these service roles in promotion and tenure reviews. Rewards and recognition of such service contributions may take the form of: (a) ensuring that such invisible labor is made visible; and, (b) as noted above, explicitly document and commit to ways in which the units and the university will explicitly support and address expected contributions in research, teaching and service through the work plan development and professional development support process.

**Professional Service at national or international level for promotion to Full professor  
Innovation in Research and Teaching**

Clarifying expectations for national recognition: This sub-committee agrees that there is a need to clearly document the expectations for “national (or international) recognition” for rank appointment or promotion. National/international recognition is expected for promotion to full and there should be evidence of progress toward gaining prominence and recognition in evaluation for promotion from assistant to associate. National/International recognition is relevant in the assessment of scholarship/creative productivity and teaching as well as service. Guidance for evidence of recognition among and by the discipline should be included in the unit-level guidelines in service. Examples of such recognition might include: leadership in national and/or international meetings, conferences, conference programming committees, organizations, service on national-level study sections, editorial boards on journals or serving as external reviewer for P&T (NOTE: Such designations of recognition may vary by discipline and should not individually be articulated at the institutional level as requirements. We explicitly underline that examples of recognition should not be set as individual expectations for different individuals. Candidate narratives should address the impact of their work at the national or international level. )

**Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

Incorporating “Innovation and Entrepreneurship” activities in P&T dossier: This sub-committee agrees that “Innovation” may be included in the evaluation procedure for promotion and/or tenure for each of the three categories (i.e. teaching, scholarship, and service). Explicit criteria may be specified in the unit-level guidelines. The sub-committee considers “Innovation” to be a broader term in this context while entrepreneurship can be considered a specific component of Innovation related activities.

**Candidate should also have demonstrated excellence and scholarly/creative productivity in at least one of these two areas – research, teaching & learning with the understanding that, ordinarily, strength would be apparent in more than one.**

The subcommittee agrees that excellence must be demonstrated in scholarship and/or teaching. Please see the other sections for how teaching and scholarship will be evaluated.

**Commitment to active and responsive mentorship, as well as an active role in mentoring, advising and supporting the academic success of students and postdoctoral scientists, will also be documented as part of the process that defines tenure and promotion.**

This sub-committee agrees that responsive mentorship and an active role in mentoring, advising and supporting students and postdoctoral scholars are important criteria for promotion and/or tenure.

Such activities may involve serving/chairing undergraduate and/or graduate and/or doctoral theses and dissertations, engagement of students in research, publishing and grant writing with students, supporting students with funded research. For senior associate professors or higher ranks, activities related to mentoring of junior faculty can be included for consideration.

Depending on the nature of the mentoring, these activities may be included in teaching or service sections of the dossier. In general, mentoring and/or advising students would typically be included in the teaching section, whereas faculty mentoring is more consistent with service activities. Faculty dossiers may also indicate scholarly activities that involve student mentoring, such as co-authorship on publications or external grant-related activities.

**What should each dept and school/college incorporate in their tenure and promotion guidelines? Develop guidelines on key aspects which the school/college can use to revise/modify. Define a process by which (a) a department and (b) a school will revise/modify P&T guidelines to align with the university guidelines.**

This sub-committee recommends that the P&T guidelines should be reviewed at the school/college level to ensure that the policies align with university policy and guidelines, particularly before candidates are reviewed. In the case that university and unit guidelines differ, a revision is required to ensure unit P&T guidelines meet university expectations. All P&T guidelines at the unit level should be reviewed annually by the School/College P&T committee.

- 1) What if the university and unit guidelines differ? If in conflict, the VCU Faculty Handbook and Policies will take precedence over school/college handbooks and these take precedence over departmental handbooks.
- 2) Review of P&T criteria: This sub-committee recommends including explicit verbiage to outline the process of periodically reviewing P&T criteria at the unit levels to ensure alignment with the university levels. Review should also occur when changes are made to the university-level criteria or a critical incident occurs necessitating the need to revisit P&T policies.

**SECTION 3: WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED AS CONTENTS OF THE DOSSIER?**

The following set of questions and considerations provided by the Provost to address the contents of the dossier included:

<p><b>Q7</b></p>	<p><b>Candidate’s dossier</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cover sheet (see <a href="#">Appendix from the original charge</a>).</li> <li>● Candidate’s sample dossier (see <a href="#">Appendix from the original charge</a>)</li> <li>● Content? Develop a form with three key parts: (1) Scholarship: Scholarship on Research, Scholarship on Teaching; Scholarship on Community Engagement (2) Teaching &amp; Learning, (3) Service – department, college/school, university, professional, community. What are the items to be included in each part?</li> <li>● Should annual evaluations be included? What are the pitfalls of doing this? Candidate dossiers should be evaluated as whether they are ‘ready’ at the given point in time and not what they did each year. Scholars discourage use of annual review/evaluation letters in P&amp;T dossiers as they are most likely to introduce bias into discussions.</li> <li>● Should the dossier be updated by the candidate each year?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q8</b></p>	<p><b>Making additions through the process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Candidate shall have the opportunity to attach an addendum one week before the committee meets at each level – department, college, university. That is the candidate may submit an addendum note to indicate an article has been accepted (attached editor’s note of acceptance), or an in-press article is out; or a grant has come through, or approval has been obtained for a new patent and so on.</li> </ul>

**Recommendations Linked to Q7: Candidate’s Dossier**

**1. Cover sheet**

The workgroup noted the potential benefit of the addition and use of a standard cover sheet to add clarity to reviews as they move up different and subsequent levels of evaluation where many packets are in play as well as the potential for cover sheet to build orienting narrative about the candidate.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The draft of a proposed cover sheet template is attached (See Appendix A).

NOTE: The Coversheet captures a summary of the candidate’s review at each level, including an explicit summary ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ vote by each unit of review (e.g.,

peer committee, chair, dean school/college committee) for each aspect of the review (i.e., promotion and/or tenure).

2. In implementing this recommendation, the use of an 'Electronic'/web-based cover sheet is suggested for streamlining the process

## 2. Dossier

The workgroup raised questions about developing university-level requirements if units are not the same and reached consensus that this is a unit-level task. There are challenges of imposing "one-size-fits-all" structure on units assessing different modes of scholarship and this should be a school-by-school issue, especially as the full dossier is not seen beyond the school level (unless there is an appeal in the current recommendations). There is the need for some level of standardization in how information is put together, and although the contents may vary, a single form should be standard. There is the need for university-level, faculty-driven "North Star" statements of expectation for faculty excellence in Teaching, Scholarship, and Service.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a. Add language, generated with faculty input, that offers university-level/institutional guiding principles of excellence in Teaching, Scholarship, and Service appropriate to all colleges and schools (See Preliminary draft Appendix B).
- b. Implement the use of a 'standard' dossier that is organized to support consistency in the types of materials submitted for review, but that also emphasizes, recognizes and supports the necessary variability across disciplines of the products of scholarship and creativity as well as the variability across disciplines in the indices, metrics and indicators of excellence (See draft in Appendix C). NOTE: The proposed dossier would replace the separate submission of a Curriculum Vita and integrates statements on research, teaching and service which would no longer be separate documents. Using a standard template would allow faculty to have a clear set of consistent expectations from their initial appointment on the types of materials on which they will be reviewed and increase the ease and reduce the burden on them for the collection and documentation of these materials as they could use the template in an ongoing fashion to capture their productivity and accomplishments.
- c. Add language about subcategories within "Scholarship" "Teaching & Learning" and "Service" being specific to each school, requiring each school to develop a template reflecting the needs and expectations of their discipline
- d. Add language indicating that a candidate's scholarship may include focus on one or more of the following areas—"Scholarship on Research" "Scholarship on Teaching" and "Scholarship on Community Engagement"—and that the candidate may address the subcategories as they pertain to their individual scholarship. Recommendation that each school drafts appropriate, clear language around Scholarship subcategories.
- e. Recommendation of centralized repository of dossier "forms" from each school for cross-pollination of best practices and a resource for consulting extant models

- f. The implementation of a Digital workflow system/e-dossier such as Interfolio or Watermark with centralized uploading is recommended

### **3. Annual evaluations**

Should annual evaluations be included? What are the pitfalls of doing this? Candidate dossiers should be evaluated as to whether they are 'ready' at the given point in time and not what they did each year. Scholars discourage use of annual review/evaluation letters in P&T dossiers as they are most likely to introduce bias into discussions.

The workgroup considered and deliberated extensively as to whether there is benefit in the peer committee having access to annual reports with P&T dossier to better understand the departmental context and understanding what support/advice/mentorship was in place for faculty members. At present, there is not a clear university-wide standard for faculty across departments and schools to receive effective mentoring and support in preparation for P and T. Faculty may have different department chairs across their preparatory years, with different priorities, and at times these priorities may interfere with faculty's productivity (e.g., faculty being told that they cannot accept or pursue supports for scholarship because of teaching demands and requirements). Ultimately the committee notes that the cumulative portfolio reflecting excellence and quality of teaching, research/creativity and service is the fundamental basis of receiving tenure and being promoted based on a holistic assessment that supersedes any one or the cumulative addition of annual ratings. Consequently the committee recommended that annual evaluation not be included in dossiers, but that they may be included as information within an appeals process.

The committee strongly recommends there must be attention to improving and standardizing chair training and candidate preparation processes relative to annual evaluations.<sup>6</sup>

The work group's discussion also considered the merits of including narratives in faculty annual reports and standardizing this requirement across schools and underlined the equity role that narrative plays in annual reports (i.e., including more faculty voice, chair having the chance to add narrative, and transparency across time). We note that currently, narrative is optional in some departments.

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<sup>6</sup> There may be benefit in university examination and review of annual review processes to better understand the considerable variability across units and the ways in which such processes may undermine a candidate's pursuit of promotion and tenure. Should, for example, in the formation of annual work plans or the faculty annual report, they be able to submit a note (perhaps confidentially so as to avoid punitive action on the behalf of chairs), to indicate if they have been explicitly denied opportunities around pursuing research/scholarship creativity, teaching or service opportunities? Should deans and the provost's office more intentionally include mentoring relative to promotion and tenure as both training and annual review components for chairs?



**CORE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- a. Do not include annual evaluations in dossier
- b. Move to articulating best practices for chairs that support them in writing annual reviews that align with the unit’s expectations for promotion and tenure
- c. Include clear guidance as to how the annual reviews may be considered in an appeals process.

**RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES**

Make the inclusion of Teaching, Scholarship, and Service narratives in faculty annual reports a standard recommended best practice

**Annual Updates**

Should the dossier be updated by the candidate each year?

The workgroup considered the importance of having materials together heading into 3rd-year and P&T reviews, and as a ‘recommended’ practice, the updated dossier can be a more robust representation submitted at time of 3rd-year and P&T reviews. If the dossier is not going forward to a peer committee for a 3rd year or tenure/promotion review, it should not be required to be updated annually, although the annual updates are recommended as a ‘best practice (see below).

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Faculty should be required to update their CV annually. This should be included in University/Unit/School annual faculty review processes.

**RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES**

Make annual dossier updates a standard recommended best practice to support preparation of the 3rd year and required tenure/promotion review. Annual updates of the dossier following review for promotion to full may have limited merit.

**Recommendations Linked to Q8: Additions During the Review Process**

Between the time the candidate submits the initial dossier and the time all documents are submitted to the departmental committee (according to the promotion and tenure calendar for each unit), additional documentation may become available that the candidate wishes to have considered during the departmental review process. These materials must be submitted to the department chair for inclusion in the candidate's dossier prior to the date that the candidate's dossier is to be forwarded to the departmental peer committee and noted as an addendum to the dossier with the date of submission. These materials shall not be forwarded to the external reviewers.

#### SECTION 4: STANDARDIZING THE PROCESS FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

The following set of questions and considerations raised by the Provost to address external reviews included:

Q9	<p><b>External Letters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● How many letters?</li><li>● How will the slate of letter writers be decided – at least two from the candidate’s list and three from department faculty. But do NOT note this in the dossier? Should this vary by rank – assistant to associate, associate to full?</li><li>● Conflict of interest</li><li>● Provision for external letters from scholars in non-R-1s. Seek approval of the dean.</li><li>● Who solicits letters?</li><li>● Need template letters to be created within each College/School for soliciting external letters.</li><li>● What materials need to be shared with external letter writers? A 2-page statement that summarizes research contributions, teaching contributions, and a paragraph on service, the candidate’s CV, five published (or accepted) articles and/or teaching portfolio and/or a book manuscript (publisher contract should be attached if book is still not out). May use unpublished articles or articles under review. Should be consistent within a unit</li><li>● Template letter to be used for soliciting external letters, materials shared with external letter writers, and the external letters must be part of the candidate’s P&amp;T dossier. Any change in template letter must be justified in the candidate’s dossier. Focus on the value of the work (research and teaching) and how do they compare to other faculty members you know in the same stage of the career. Do not seek recommendation of letter write</li><li>● Tracking the number of solicited external referees who decline or fail to provide letters and/or recording their stated reasons for not writing does not provide relevant, useful information about the quality of the candidate’s case. Thus, this practice should be strongly discouraged.</li></ul>
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The recommendation development process by this subgroup included review of:

- P&T guidelines of a cross section of current VCU schools and colleges
- P&T guidelines from peer and aspirational schools
- Current VCU PT guidelines
- Posted questions by the VCU Provost
- Feedback from other members of the VCU Tenure Eligible/Tenured Faculty Task Force.

## Recommendations Linked to Q9: External Reviewers

### Identification of External Reviewers

- Criteria for external reviewers
  - Must have expertise in the candidate's field or a related scholarly field,
  - Can provide independent review of candidate's work
  - Must be from outside of VCU
    - Never working at VCU preferred. If has previously worked at VCU, must have been 10 or more years ago and not at the same time as a candidate.
    - Letters from reviewers at peer or aspirant institutions are preferred. If a reviewer is a leading scholar in a relevant field as determined by the promotion committee chair, that individual can be used as an outside reviewer even if their institution is not peer, aspirant, or R1.
  - Must be at or above the proposed rank of promotion. Tenured reviewers are required for candidates being reviewed for tenure. Exceptions must be proposed by the peer committee/chair with a clearly articulated rationale (e.g., "Hold or have held tenure and rank which is being sought' or equivalent (e.g., international) and such exceptions must be approved by the dean. Must be asked to disclose any current or past relationship or interaction with the applicant. Disclosures are to be reviewed by the promotion committee chair and proposed reviewers with significant potential conflicts are to be excluded and replaced by alternate qualified reviewers. Disclosures will be shared with the promotion committee and other faculty and officials reviewing the material as part of the promotion process.
    - Examples of relationships that should exclude reviewers: Co-authors of publications, research collaborators, prior colleagues or advisor of the applicant. Chair may grant exceptions in unusual circumstances which may include review of scholarship so specialized that few expert reviewers exist; large team science; multi-institutional clinical trials; co-authors in publications from large research consortia.

### Process for Soliciting External Review Letters

- **At least 3 and no more than 7 letters are required for review. Additional letters may be requested if thought necessary to ensure three are completed.<sup>7</sup>**
- The candidate will provide names of potential external reviewers to the peer review committee (PRC)
- The PRC will identify additional potential external reviewers

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<sup>7</sup> For some disciplines it is difficult to obtain more than 3 due to the limited number of experts in the particular area of scholarship or creativity. In addition, the PT procedures in some schools provide limited time to request and actually receive 3 recommendations from an appropriate level school with no history of collaboration with the candidate. The recommended range (3-7) allows the units to make thoughtful decisions appropriate for their unit and demonstrate due diligence of the PT duties.

- The PRC Chair in collaboration with the candidate, department chair, and peer review committee members will finalize the list of external reviewers
- Potential reviewers will be sent an initial letter based on a school specific template (see suggested template letter). Template should include:
  - The definition of an independent external reviewer.
  - Potential reviewer will be provided with the specific criteria we are asking them to assess
  - Potential reviewer will be provided with an expected review submission date
  - Reviewers will be asked to confirm that they meet the definition of independent external reviewer, understand the scope of the review, and are able to complete the review by the requested date.
- Upon receipt of confirmation, the external reviewers will be provided with the following:
  - Cover letter with detailed instructions
  - Candidate's curriculum vitae
  - Candidate's personal statement
  - Representative body of the candidate's work including any work(s) in press (if appropriate URLs for an electronic archive or online journal may be provided)
  - Scope of reviewer's work
  - Copy of the unit P&T guidelines

***Content and Format of External Reviewers' Evaluation***

- **The workgroup recommends developing and adopting a form to assist the reviewer in providing the necessary specific information and reducing unnecessary reviewer work.**
- The form should request confirmation that the reviewer qualifies "as an independent external reviewer."
- Reviewers should state their rank and tenure status
- Reviewers should confirm they assess themselves as 'qualified to make an assessment'
- The nature of any relationship with the candidate should be disclosed in the review letter.
- Letter should document rationale for meeting promotion criteria for:
  - Quality and significance of research, scholarship and/or teaching
  - Reputation as an independent scholar or investigator
  - Promise of growth and continued productivity
  - Other professionally noteworthy achievements
  - Comparison with other scholars in the field of who are at approximately the same stage in their careers
- Templated form should include language similar to: "Please note that we do not ask you to make a recommendation regarding promotion or tenure itself nor are we asking for a summary of the curriculum vitae. What we seek is a substantive

- assessment of whether the promotion criteria related to their scholarly component is met and the significance of their scholarly record to the field.”
- The content of all solicited forms that are received from external reviewers should be retained in the candidate's file.

### **Recommendations for Templated Form Development**

- Form to Document Process of Soliciting External Reviewers
  - Information of persons solicited (e.g., persons solicited, how identified, relationship of external reviewer, date of request, potential reviewer’s response, next steps). For example, “Persons who have co-authored publications, collaborated on research, or been institutional colleagues or academic mentors/advisors of the applicant normally should be excluded from consideration as outside evaluators.” [Source: [LINK](#)]
  - Remains in the candidate’s file
- Template letter for P&T committee’s communication with potential reviewers to request being an external reviewer for tenure/tenure promotion
- Template letter to those who agree to be an external reviewer stating content and format of evaluation
- Templated Form for external reviewer’s evaluation (see Appendix D.)

**APPENDIX A: DRAFT COVER SHEET**

**VCU Promotion and Tenure Cover Sheet (Revised)  
(DRAFT)**

1.	<b>Full Name:</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Middle Initial</b>	V Number:
2.	<b>Rank and Title Under Consideration</b>				
	Present Rank and Title				
	Previous VCU Rank and Title(s)				
	Prior Academic Position(s) Rank, Titles, Institutions and Years				
	Year Hired and Required Review Year				
<b>Academic Background and Preparation</b>					
	Degree	Year Awarded	Institution		Years Attended
	Degree	Year Awarded	Institution		Years Attended
	Degree	Year Awarded	Institution		Years Attended
<b>Department Committee</b>					
<b>Department Committee: PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION</b>  <p style="text-align: center;">YES                  NO</p> <b>RATIONALE:</b>				Votes For:	Votes Against:

<b>Department Committee: TENURE RECOMMENDATION</b>  <b>YES                  NO</b>  <b>RATIONALE:</b>		Votes For:	Votes Against:
	<b>Preparation</b>	Votes:                  Satisfactory =                  Unsatisfactory =	
	<b>Research</b>	Votes (Number) ● Excellent = ● Very Good = ● Satisfactory = ● Unsatisfactory =	
	<b>Teaching</b>	Votes (Number) ● Excellent = ● Very Good = ● Satisfactory = ● Unsatisfactory =	
	<b>Service</b>	Votes (Number) ● Excellent = ● Very Good = ● Satisfactory = ● Unsatisfactory =	
<b>Department Chair</b>			
<b>Department Chair: PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION</b>  <b>YES                  NO</b>  <b>RATIONALE:</b>			
<b>Department Chair: TENURE RECOMMENDATION</b>  <b>YES                  NO</b>  <b>RATIONALE:</b>			
	<b>Preparation</b>	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
	<b>Research</b>	Excellent: Very Good: Satisfactory: Unsatisfactory:	
	<b>Teaching</b>	Excellent:	



		Very Good: Satisfactory: Unsatisfactory:	
	<b>Service</b>	Excellent: Very Good: Satisfactory: Unsatisfactory:	
<b>College/School Committee</b>			
College/School Committee: <b>PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION</b>		Votes For:	Votes Against:
<p style="text-align: center;">YES                  NO</p> <p><b>RATIONALE:</b></p>			
College/School Committee: <b>TENURE RECOMMENDATION</b>		Votes For:	Votes Against:
<p style="text-align: center;">YES                  NO</p> <p><b>RATIONALE:</b></p>			
	<b>Research</b>	Votes (Number) ● Excellent = ● Very Good = ● Satisfactory = ● Unsatisfactory =	
	<b>Teaching</b>	Votes (Number) ● Excellent = ● Very Good = ● Satisfactory = ● Unsatisfactory =	
	<b>Service</b>	Votes (Number) ● Excellent = ● Very Good = ● Satisfactory = ● Unsatisfactory =	
<b>College/School Dean</b>			
Dean: <b>PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION</b>			
<p style="text-align: center;">YES                  NO</p> <p><b>RATIONALE:</b></p>			
Dean: <b>TENURE RECOMMENDATION</b>			

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>				
	<b>RATIONALE:</b>					
	<b>Preparation</b>	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory			
	<b>Research</b>	Excellent: Very Good: Satisfactory: Unsatisfactory:				
	<b>Teaching</b>	Excellent: Very Good: Satisfactory: Unsatisfactory:				
	<b>Service</b>	Excellent: Very Good: Satisfactory: Unsatisfactory:				

## **APPENDIX B: DRAFT FOUNDATIONS/GUIDING STATEMENT**

Promotion at VCU reflects the acknowledgement of excellence and significant achievement and an offer of tenure is an invitation to membership in a community of scholars, artists and practitioners committed to the ongoing pursuit of excellence and achievement.

Tenure and promotion evaluations of research, discovery and innovation, are based on the expectation and evidence of excellent and substantive contributions through scholarship, creative production and innovation, grounded in an appreciation of the diversity of disciplines and the varied rigorous means of knowledge and creative production.

Evaluations of teaching and training are based on assessments that consider the appreciation and application of best practices in teaching, instructions and professional training with the commitment to learning, exploration of knowledge and development of skills that prepare our students for career and civic engagement and the implementation of evidence-based practice grounded in the highest of ethical and social standards.

Service to our global, local, professional and university community is designed to leverage and support progress in knowledge generation, creativity and innovation to the betterment of society and the social conditions. When engaged in collaboration with community as co creators and coproducers, we expect the highest standards and commitment to equity and mutual benefit.

Our promotion and tenure review processes are grounded in a commitment to the application of appropriate review and assessment of the individual's productivity and their promise of continued contributions.

**APPENDIX C.: Candidate Dossier (Draft)**

[LINK](#)

**APPENDIX D.**

**EXTERNAL EVALUATOR TEMPLATE**

[LINK](#)