Bucknell University
University Review
Committee Spring 1998;
revised April 2013

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES FOR RETENTION AND TENURE

The following suggestions for the preparation of review files, and description of University Review Committee (URC) operations, are provided at the request of the University Faculty. We hope that this information will clarify and simplify the process of preparing for and undergoing retention and tenure reviews.

A. Suggestions For The Preparation Of Files

The comments in this section should be interpreted with the clear understanding that there can be no single model or template for a "strong" URC file. It is highly desirable that the materials submitted, particularly the candidate's self-evaluation statement, reflect as fully as possible the personal perspectives, commitments, concerns and even idiosyncrasies of the candidate. DRC reports have tpeir own style and "personality"; it is to be expected that this will be even more true of candidate's comments on their own work. For the URC, it is important that the candidate see the preparation of review materials as a significant and useful opportunity for reflection on the process of developing as a teacher and scholar at Bucknell.

Materials to be submitted

Each academic department or program has prepared its own document concerning the process of collegial evaluation. These documents vary somewhat in emphasis and your primary concern, of course, will be to address the particulars of your department's statement. The URC's check list calls for submission, by the candidate, of the following materials (see URC Reviews for Retention and Tenure, 3/3/87; Revised: April 1998; April 2004; March 2011 document):

1. Current curriculum vitae;
2. List of all courses taught during the review period, with syllabi;
3. Self-evaluation statement on teaching, scholarship, and service;
4. All student course evaluations; (originals should be maintained);
5. All written scholarship and (where relevant) documentation of artistic work.

The URC offers the following suggestions concerning these five types of material, with our most extended comments being on the third, namely the candidate's statement of self-evaluation.

1. Curriculum vitae

The curriculum vitae submitted with your rentention/promotion dossier serves a different purposes than one submitted as part of a job application. Its role in the review process is to convey, in compact form, the scope and trajectory of your efforts and accomplishments. In this role, items you might omit from a job application may be acceptable and beneficial as part of your dossier We are interested in such basic information as your education, employment history, primary areas of teaching competence, linguistic abilities, and publications or other forms of scholarly work .. The number of pages is left up to the candidate, but a length of three or four pages is normally sufficient. A sample c.v. template is available [here].

A few words about the listing of publications or other scholarly work in your c.v. may be helpful. It is often necessary for the URC to be able to distinguish quite clearly between a) work that has actually been published, b) completed work that has been accepted and is in final form for publication but not yet appeared, c) work that has been accepted for publication but is not yet in final form, d) work submitted for publication and currently under review, and e) work in progress. Please be as clear as possible in your c.v. (supplemented, as necessary,, by comments in your self-evaluation statement) as to the status of the publications you list. For example, the terms "forthcoming" or "in press" are quite ppropriate for works in category b), but not for those in c) and d). Also, it is helpful to distinguish between peer-reviewed journal publications, conference proceedings papers, proposals, papers presented orally, non-refereed articles, etc. Please double-check titles and status of works listed on the curriculum vitae to ensure that their listing is consistent with other information in the file. Finally, please put any new publications since your last review in boldface type, so that they are easily identifiable by the URC and DRC.

2. List of all courses taught. with syllabi

A list or table of the courses taught during each semester of the period under review, including the number of students enrolled in each, can be included in the folder of syllabi materials, and/or het section on teaching in the candidate's self-evaluation statement (below). In order to provide a fuller picture of classroom activities, the URC encourages, along with course syllabi, the inclusion of other sample course materials, which might include assignments, handouts, examinations, student papers with instructor's comments, etc.

3. Self-evaluation statement

As you would expect, these vary a great deal in style, length, and content. We have no desire to reduce this variety of styles, for such documents properly reflect the personality and current preoccupations of the writer. However, we can make some useful comments about desirable

length and content, insofar as these do not contradict specifications in your department or program's review document.

Personal statements need not exceed 12 single-spaced pages. We suggest that a personal statement of five to ten pages will be quite adequate in most cases. There is no need whatsoever to "puff up" these statements, or have them contain excessively minute details (which have the effect of obscuring the central points of the assessment). On the contrary, the inherent importance of the other materials in the file, the need for clarity, and consideration for the valuable time of your colleagues on the URC, suggest that these statements should be carefully revised and edited to provide a well-focused self-assessment. We ask that candidates include in their self-statements a brief timeline of their current and past reviews at Bucknell, including the dates of sabbaticals and any "dead years" taken (e.g., for untenured faculty leaves). In addition, we encourage candidates to review the advice given to them by their DRC and URC at previous reviews, and the measures they have undertaken to respond to it.

The personal statement should deal with all three of the standard areas of evaluation, namely teaching, scholarship, and service.

> a.   Teaching Candidates typically list the courses they have taught and then briefly discuss these in turn, as seems appropriate. It is helpful if the candidate is reflective and (self-)evaluative, in a candid and open way, about course goals and how they were addressed, problems encountered, lessons learned, successes achieved, and challenges to be confronted in the future. Of course reference to syllabi and other included course materials (see item 2) can be made as appropriate. Candidates are also encouraged to reflect on their views of undergraduate teaching or "philosophy of education," insofar as they find it comfortable and appropriate to do so. It is especially helpful for the candidate to reflect on strengths and/or weaknesses in teaching as they relate to numerical ratings and comments on student course evaluations. It is part of the URC's charge to discuss these evaluations, and our discussion is better informed when the candidate (and, subsequently, the DRC) provides careful and explicit interpretation of the data we will be examining.

In addition to addressing the basic topics already mentioned, candidates writing statements in recent years have also addressed topics such as the following. This list is culled from *many* different statements; no one person should or even could address all these topics. They are included here simply to suggest the wide range of issues that may be addressed, at the discretion of the candidate.

- Special aspects of one's job description, teaching load, contract;
- Special features of one's teaching career to date;
- Nature of one's teaching experience prior to Bucknell;
- Relation of the teacher's work to the overall departmental program;
- Development of new courses, for the department and/or the common learning curriculum;
- Efforts involved in setting up a new department laboratory or other classroom facility, related to one's courses;

- Development of new procedures or policies for facility use;
- Instructional grants applied for, whether funded or not;
- Courses one hopes to develop in the future;
- Participation in faculty development workshops, on campus or off;
- Important influences on one's teaching style; books on teaching which have been influential;
- Views concerning "liberal learning" today;
- Instructional implications of the "Agenda College Core Curriculum" and/or "The Bucknell Plan for Engineering Education";
- Concerns about teaching and students: e.g., grade inflation, problems of meeting students "where they are," and motivating them, etc.;
- Concerns about establishing rapport, learning students names, etc.;
- Alternative pedagogical approaches: e.g., use of handouts, study questions, balancing lecture and discussion, etc.;
- One's view of examinations, comments on papers, the rapid return on written work to students, etc.;
- One's views of the usefulness of new technologies in the classroom, e.g. computer aided instruction;
- Approach to the organization of courses and preparation of syllabi;

- Evaluation of one's own teaching strengths and weaknesses;
- Use of mid-semester evaluations, to "check in" with students;
- Changes made during the semester, mid-course corrections;
- Preparation of additional questions for course evaluation forms, to fit ones needs;
- Concerns expressed in student comments on course evaluations;
- Consultation with colleagues and mentors at Bucknell, or elsewhere, about responding to teaching challenges and concerns;
- Problems recognized; areas which need improvement;
- Strong points recognized accomplishments to be celebrated;
- The special challenge of large lecture classes;
- Independent studies and undergraduate research;
- The sort of classroom environment one seeks to create;
- Ways of being approachable and available outside of class;
- Reflections about the personal challenges of teaching.

b. Scholarship Here, it is highly desirable that the candidate discuss not only the "what" of his or her work, but the "why," "how," and "where" as well. That is, why have you undertaken the various projects in which you are involved? How do they relate to one another? Where, as you project into the future, are they leading? In short, we are interested not simply in your specific projects, past and present, but also in what one might call your overall "scholarly agenda" or "research program." In short, what is your trajectory?

In discussing particular scholarly works, it is important, as noted earlier, that the candidate distinguish clearly between works actually published (whether in print, or some other medium), works in final form and in the queue for publication, works explicitly accepted for publication, works under review, and works in progress., and to indicate which have been peer-reviewed. In cases where more than one author is listed for a given publication, it is helpful if your self-statement makes clear what specific role you have played in the research, data collection, data analysis, and/or writing of such co-authored papers., and also to explain the convention for how authors are listed on published work in your discipline. A potential template for such scholarly details is located here.

Simply for purposes of illustration, here again are a variety of topics --in addition to the basic ones already mentioned--which have been addressed in "scholarship" discussions of recent candidates' statements.

- Completion of one's dissertation and graduate degree;
- Development of new scholarship beyond the dissertation;
- Grant proposals submitted, whether funded or not;
- Conferences and workshops attended;
- The challenge of balancing teaching responsibilities and research;
- Ways in which your scholarship is integrated with your teaching;
- Scholarly collaboration with colleagues at Bucknell or elsewhere;
- Consulting activities;
- Patents;
- Scholarly editing and reviewing of manuscripts;
- Response of professional colleagues to one's published work or work in progress;
- Long range research and publication plans;
- Inclusion of students in one's research and publications;
- Interpretation of creative art as scholarship.

In some cases, candidates have made significant changes in their "evolving personal plan for professional development" without explanation. The URC attempts to evaluate how the period under review relates to plans stated by the candidate at an earlier review and it returns to see what recommendations were made by the D/P/SRC and URC at those reviews. There can be sound reasons for changes in plans and direction, but it is important that the candidate make clear what those reasons are and how they relate to advice from the D/P/SRC or URC in an earlier review.

> c. Service The personal statement should also address the area of service, whether to the department, the college and/or university, or the wider community. This may consist simply of a list of activities, committees, presentations, programs, and organizations in which you have been and are involved. Beyond such a list, candidates may choose to provide some reflection, however brief, on which areas of service s/he finds most satisfying, and how (if this is appropriate) s/he sees service to be related to teaching and/or scholarship.

 Some special topics on service discussed in recent statements are:

- Proposals to host a professional conference at Bucknell;
- Serving as a professional role model, e.g. a woman teacher who serves as advisor to a women's student organization;
- Future plans and expectations for department, university and/or community service;
- Description of professional service in one's discipline.

4.Student course evaluations   In addition to the student evaluation summary forms which you will submit for transmission to the URC, it is your department's (or program's) responsibility to prepare summaries of quantitative ratings (utilizing Summaries A and B of the IDEA forms) and a typed transcription of all student written comments (see checklist in the March 1987 document, 1998 revision; April 2004 revision; March 2011 revision). As a candidate, you are advised to work with your department or program to provide access to your evaluation materials so that the summaries can be prepared in a timely manner for the review, and so that

you may refer to them in your self-statement.

5. Written scholarship and (where relevant) documentation of artistic work
Include a copy of all written scholarship listed on your curriculum vitae, and/or appropriate documentation of artistic and other scholarly work. You may wish to provide comments with the scholarship that will help URC readers to put your work (whether in print or some other medium) in proper perspective. For example, with respect to a chapter prepared at the invitation of an editor, you might indicate the instructions or suggestions given to you as an author. You may also point out the relation of various works to each other, particularly if one publication includes material or data from a work published earlier. Also, if you wish, it is appropriate to include formal reviewer feedback on papers submitted to journals or conferences for publication. It is most helpful that the order of the works as discussed in the cv mirror the order in which the scholarly works are presented in the dossier.

   Additional Comments on Candidate Files
Most candidates' files serve quite well to provide the information needed by the URC, but it may be helpful to mention here inadequacies that weaken some files and make the URC's work more difficult.

• Some files are unsystematic and poorly organized; basic information is difficult to locate or is missing. Inconsistencies exist between information in one part of the file and another.

- The curriculum vitae of some candidates have been out-of-date, disorganized, or misleading. We have seen lists of publications that have different titles, dates of publication, journal names, etc. from listings in other parts of the file. The current status of professional contributions sometimes is not clear (see item 1 concerning the c.v.). See the sample cv template for a possible format for a *cv* for the purpose of review.

B. Description of Committee Operations

This description is a replication of that found in the Faculty Handbook, and the March 1987 URC document (1998 revision; April 2004 revision; March 2011 revision).

Schedule and Meetings

During October, the college deans present to the URC their lists of candidates for retention and tenure. They apprise the Committee of all special contractual provisions or other formal agreements between the administration and individual candidates. All conflicts of interst shall be disclosed and resolved at the beginning of this process. A link to the Conflicts of Interest Statements is available here.

At all three levels of review (second/third-, fourth/fifth-, and sixth-year), each candidate's materials will be reviewed by a subcommittee of three URC members. Each such subcommittee will consist of two faculty members of the URC and one administrator (either a dean or the provost). The entire URC will read the short files for every review candidate. Each subcommittee will present its findings to the entire URC for discussion, deliberation, and decision. All non-recused URC members will read and review the full review file for all cases that a subcommittee or any URC member deems problematic (e.g., cases that might have a negative decision).

Typically the URC deliberates from October through January, considering separetely each of several groups of candidates; early-career (typically second year), pretenure (typically fourth year) and tenure (typically sixth year). Committee members complete their discussion of all candidates in a given group, then considering each candidate in turn, formally voice individual yes or no votes; the Committee may elect to postpone its vote pending more information from a candidate or a D/P/SRC. Seven of the eight Committee members vote; the officially designated alternate votes only to replace a member who belongs to the candidate's DRC, department/school/program, has a conflict of interest, or is incapacitated. The chair (and all others who wish) records the vote (which is confidential, as are all parts of the Committee's deliberation) and the chair coordinates advice on the content of the official letter of notification.

The entire Committee, upon completing its work, meets with the president to transmit the results of its deliberations, in compliance with the Faculty Handbook, II.C.5 ("In individual instances, the President may request the Committee to extend its review and/or reconsider its

judgment").

For each candidate under review, a URC member composes the body of a letter of notification. The URC reviews and revises each letter and the college deans format and sign the letters. The letters to second and fourth year candidates highlight important elements of the Committee's reaction to each set of review materials, and may offer specific suggestions for improvement. Prior to sending out the letters, the college deans apprise each individual, department/school/program chairperson, and the DRC chairperson involved of any forthcoming negative decision. On or before December 15 college deans, on behalf of the URC, send out the letters of notification in second through fifth year review cases. Candidates under review for tenure will be notified no later than February 1.

Appeals to the URC

For a description of URC procedures, please see the 1987 statement (1998 revision; April 2004 revision; March 2011 revision).

A candidate who has been informed of the URC's decision to terminate his or her contract may appeal that decision following procedures outlined in the 1987 statement (1998 revision) and the Faculty Handbook. That appeal must be based on substantive grounds, such as "uncorrected erroneous, misleading, or missing information not attributable to omission on the part of the candidate". After such appeals are received by January 15, the URC meets to decide whether to grant the request for appeal. If it does, the URC informs the candidate and conducts a complete new review and revote on the case. The URC has conducted several such new reviews in the past, and has been known to reverse its initial decision. Note that appeals based on procedural grounds are normally made to CAFT-see Faculty Handbook.

C.   Conclusion

It is intended that these descriptions and suggestions be thought of only as general information to help candidates organize their files and specific materials included for review and to understand better the URC's review process. The URC wants to emphasize that one's individuality of presentation is a critical part of establishing the teaching, scholarly and community identity of the candidate. Please feel free to address questions about anything above to your dean or the URC chair.