

UNIVERSITY REVIEW COMMITTEE REVIEWS FOR RETENTION, TENURE, AND
PROMOTION
Bucknell University

Revision history:

- *Accepted by the Faculty on March 3, 1987.*
- *Revised March 1998 to incorporate accepted recommendations of the Task Force on Retention, Tenure and Promotion.*
- *Revised April 2004 to incorporate accepted recommendations of the University Review Committee.*
- *Revised March 2011 to incorporate accepted recommendations of the Committee for the Review of the Evaluation of Teaching, to update timeline and procedure practices, and to make other procedural improvements.*
- *Revised April 2013 to incorporate Handbook language changes related to the criteria for Promotion to Professor and to make other editorial improvements.*
- *Revised April 2017 to include a statement about the University Review Committee procedure in the event of a tied vote, and to make other editorial improvements.*
- *Revised April 2018 to incorporate statement regarding inclusion of candidate appointment information as part of the DRC report, and to make other editorial improvements.*
- *Revised April 2019 to remove “Appeals” section, please refer to Faculty Handbook Appeals instead.*

The members of the University Review Committee (URC) offer this description of the faculty review process to assist candidates and departments or programs preparing for reviews. The statement reflects the URC's expectations on how best to accomplish its task as prescribed in the Faculty Handbook. We refer candidates to “Information for Candidates for Retention and Tenure” (revised April 2013) for additional information.

Early in the academic year, the Provost and the college deans include discussion of the evaluation process in their orientation of new faculty. On or before May 15 of each year, the URC and college deans schedule a meeting with the upcoming year's group of candidates for retention, tenure and promotion and their respective department chairs or program directors. The meeting serves to clarify and emphasize points contained in this document; it also provides an opportunity for candidates to ask questions and to talk informally with each other and the members of the URC. Faculty members who have further questions regarding the review process are urged to contact their department chair or program director, the appropriate college dean or a chair of the URC.

The following pages refer to the typical case of a faculty member who begins employment at Bucknell on the first year of a tenure-track appointment. While faculty who come to Bucknell under other circumstances are reviewed according to the same procedures, the schedule of reviews is a matter normally negotiated at the time of appointment, or soon thereafter, in

accordance with the provisions of the Faculty Handbook. Other exceptions to the usual schedule are sometimes arranged through the college deans, in consultation with the URC.

DRC STRUCTURE AND CRITERIA

Department, Program, or College Review Committees (DRCs) consist of at least four tenured members of the full-time instructional faculty. Departments or programs that lack a sufficient number of tenured members shall consult with the college dean to constitute a DRC from tenured faculty within the University. Departments or programs are strongly encouraged to consult URC guidelines on Conflict of Interest when constituting a DRC. Untenured members of the faculty are not eligible to participate in or observe the deliberations of a DRC.

Departmental/Program/College expectations in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service must be clearly stated in the DRC documents outlining procedures and criteria. DRC documents must specify the expected content, length, and format of the candidate's self-evaluation statement, as well as the supportive materials to be provided (*the URC strongly recommends that personal statements not exceed 12 pages in length*). DRC documents must also include a schedule for any intermediate or internal dates for reviews including all submittal dates and differences between requirements or dates for different levels of review, and must clearly indicate the criteria and procedures to be used for the selection of external reviewers for tenure and promotion reviews. The external reviewers will be informed of the details regarding their selection and the use of their letters. No prospective external reviewer shall be contacted prior to consultation with the appropriate college dean.

DRC documents outlining procedures and criteria must be reviewed every five years by the department or program, the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure (CAFT), and the Provost in that order. The Office of the Provost will notify departments and programs by September 1 of a given academic year in which their documents are scheduled for review. Once reviewed, department or program documents showing planned changes will be forwarded to CAFT no later than September 1 of the following academic year. Reviews by CAFT and the Provost, and responses by the department/program, if necessary, normally will be concluded prior to May 1 so that updated documents may be distributed on that date to faculty anticipating reviews for reappointment, tenure, or promotion during the subsequent academic year. A cover sheet will provide signatures and dates to document the actions of each of the three parties. Should either CAFT or the Provost ask the department or program for changes, the new text will next be forwarded to CAFT for approval before it is forwarded to the Provost. The above procedures will also apply when review of DRC statements is initiated by or motivated by purposes other than the five-year review cycle. DRC statements should display prominently the date on which they received final approval. The department chair or program director will provide each member of the department or program faculty, upon their appointment, with a copy of the current, approved DRC statement. Candidates shall adopt the URC and DRC documents outlining procedures and criteria defined at their time of appointment, unless they choose to

adopt the current guidelines by notifying the DRC chair in writing prior to the URC's candidate meeting in May.

THE URC CRITERIA

The URC seeks to confirm that each candidate under review is progressing suitably in an evolving personal plan of professional development; that this plan is appropriate to the individual, legitimate to the discipline, and of value to the department or program in question; and that the candidate demonstrates a record of achievement and a promise of future accomplishment commensurate with the University's expectations of fine teaching, estimable scholarly or artistic accomplishment, and active commitment to the well-being of the University and broader academic community.

The URC respects and supports diversity in the professional aims and accomplishments of faculty members. The URC ensures that department and program standards are of a consistent quality throughout the University. When reviewing DRC evaluations, the URC attempts to recognize teacher-scholars of various descriptions whose excellence is affirmed by students, by colleagues, and by members of a larger academic community.

The following are guidelines for each stage in the progression toward tenure.

- *Second-year: retention.* A candidate retained beyond the second year has successfully completed all requirements for the Ph.D. or other appropriate terminal degree, and has otherwise inspired department/program confidence in the likelihood of future satisfactory progress toward tenure. The candidate has proved a capable and effective teacher. Efforts to ameliorate any early-career teaching problems are so encouraging as to justify further commitment on the part of the University. The candidate has initiated projects beyond the dissertation that give promise of a long-term program of scholarship.
- *Fourth-year: retention.* A successful candidate at this stage has consistently demonstrated highly competent and committed teaching indicative of further development toward excellence, has produced publications or other appropriate scholarly work of high quality, and has begun to assume a share of responsibility for the affairs of the University.
- *Sixth-year: tenure and/or promotion.* A candidate recommended for tenure has sustained a record of fine teaching which appears to assure long-term excellence. The candidate's scholarly or artistic work has matured, earning the esteem of department/school/program colleagues and experts outside the University. Finally, the candidate has contributed significantly to department, inter-department, and University affairs.
- *Promotion to Professor:* Promotion to Professor requires a record of high-quality teaching, continued scholarly productivity indicative of intellectual growth, and significant

service, including contributions to the University or a combination of contributions to the University and the academic profession. An expectation of future achievement in these categories must be assured.

Review criteria for third-year and fifth-year candidates will be interpolated between those defined for the other groups.

Review Materials:

The URC bases its deliberations exclusively on materials submitted by DRCs, on previous official communications involving retention decisions, and on any additional materials solicited in consultation with DRCs and candidates. Furthermore, the DRC must base its deliberations exclusively on materials submitted by the candidate, feedback on teaching solicited from students and peers, and reports from external reviewers. The candidate will have the right to review and respond to all materials considered by the DRC in its deliberations, appropriately redacted.

Whether solicited by the DRC or the candidate, all persons contributing solicited material to an evaluation—candidates, students, members of a candidate's department, program or DRC, other members of the University, or outside reviewers—must do so by reporting or submitting their information directly to the DRC for its consideration. With the exception of student evaluations of teaching, all statements must be signed by the contributor. The identities of those not on the DRC who provide statements are kept confidential in order to assure independent and candid judgments. The candidate receives a copy of the DRC Report and any minority reports that may accompany it.

Once a DRC has submitted its documented recommendation, no additions of either fact or opinion may be made without the URC's prior approval. Should members of a DRC determine that unavoidably late material is of sufficient importance – a letter from a dilatory outside reviewer, for example, or acceptance of a manuscript for publication, or a major misunderstanding which somehow has survived the review process – they may contact the college dean to request permission to submit the material after subjecting it to the usual provisions for evaluation, disclosure, and candidate response.

The URC may secure, after consultation with the candidate, additional evidence concerning the quality of a candidate's teaching and scholarship. Since such a request usually entails an extension of the review period beyond February 1, the URC in practice makes these requests only in those rare instances when it finds itself unable to reach a decision because of insufficient evaluative material or poor documentation. In such instances the URC specifies the additional material required and requests that the DRC evaluate it.

DRC reviews must be specific, carefully evaluative, and as well-documented as possible. Although content and organization vary somewhat according to disciplinary preference, the URC normally expects to receive all items listed on the attached checklist.

The following comments are intended to assist candidates and departments or programs in the preparation of reviews.

- *Curriculum vitae.* In addition to the usual summary of education and professional experience, the vita includes a list of scholarly or artistic accomplishments, grouped by type. For example, a list of written scholarship might be separated into books, articles published in refereed journals, book chapters, conference papers, unpublished manuscripts, and so on. See “Information for Candidates for Retention and Tenure” (revised April 2013) for additional suggestions regarding the presentation of materials at various stages of completion.
- *Candidate's statement.* Statements prepared by candidates should provide self-assessment relative to University and department or program expectations. The URC strongly recommends that personal statements not exceed 12 pages in length. For suggestions on the content and format of these statements, see individual DRC documents and “Information for Candidates for Retention and Tenure” (revised April 2013).
- *DRC evaluation of the candidate.* This statement summarizes the information that the DRC has collected, carefully evaluates this information in light of the individual's own goals and the needs and criteria of the department or program and the University, discusses possible alternative interpretations of the data available, and points out where (and why) disciplinary considerations are particularly important to the proper evaluation of materials. DRC reports must inform the URC of distinctive disciplinary contexts and how those may pertain to a candidate being reviewed. DRC reports must make a positive or negative recommendation and provide the URC with a statement that clearly presents an evaluation of the candidate in each of the review areas. *A positive recommendation can be made by a DRC only if a majority of its members find that expectations have been met in all three areas: teaching, scholarship and service.*
 - Each DRC report should begin with a short, informative statement about the nature of the candidate's appointment in the department/program, as well as a brief summary of the candidate's employment history at Bucknell.
 - Evaluation of teaching includes discussion of strengths and weaknesses, based on evidence described below. DRC reports should provide a critical evaluation of faculty teaching by considering at least three sources of information: (1) Peer input on classroom instruction; e.g., evaluation of course materials, classroom peer observations; (2) Student input, including student evaluation of teaching forms and, for tenure and promotion reviews, current and former student letters collected in a systematic fashion; and (3) Peer input on broader contributions to the educational program as a whole that go beyond classroom instruction. Each of these three areas must be given substantial emphasis in the evaluation of a

candidate's teaching. Peer input on classroom instruction should be given the most emphasis, followed by student input, followed by peer input on the candidate's broader contributions.

- Each course taught by the faculty member under review will solicit feedback from the students using the approved student evaluation of teaching forms. Forms will be administered using the approved protocols and students will be informed of the import and purposes of the student evaluations. For a tenure review, each department or program will solicit letters that evaluate teaching from current and former students. Each department or program may additionally employ a method of involving students and/or faculty in the DRC evaluation of teaching (including advising) beyond the completion of written course evaluations and student letters.
 - For substantive matters, candidates will adopt the URC and DRC statements of procedures and criteria defined at their time of appointment, unless they choose to adopt the current guidelines by notifying the DRC chair in writing prior to the URC's candidate meeting in May.
 - Evaluation of scholarship includes an assessment of the quality and significance of the candidate's published or creative work and of the reputation of the journals, presses, professional meetings, and so on, where the candidate's work has appeared.
 - Evaluation of service addresses the candidate's contributions to the department, University, and broader academic community.
- *Contributions from colleagues.* Faculty members who have special knowledge of a candidate, acquired perhaps through shared teaching or scholarly projects, may contribute individual written statements for consideration in the DRC review.
 - *Minority report.* DRC members may submit separate reports if they disagree with the majority recommendation or find their views inadequately presented in their committee's review statement. Such reports are submitted to the DRC and disclosed to the candidate. Minority reports are subject to the same limitations with regard to content as the DRC report.
 - *Department chair or program director's recommendation.* In accordance with the Faculty Handbook, III.K.1, "Should the chairperson and the department committee not concur, both the committee's and the chairperson's recommendations are conveyed." The department chair or program director's recommendations are subject to the same limitations with regard to content as the DRC report.

- *Candidate's response.* A candidate may respond in writing to a DRC's report, including accompanying materials. The candidate should present his or her response directly to the DRC for inclusion along with all other review materials in the package submitted to the URC.
- *Letters from outside evaluators.* Tenure and promotion decisions require letters from at least three outside evaluators. The DRC will solicit letters from outside reviewers selected by the DRC following the concurrence of the candidate and the appropriate college dean. DRCs should provide a two- or three- sentence biography of each outside evaluator, including the candidate's personal and/or professional relationship to the evaluator.
- *Additional documentation.* Additional documentation may include, but is not limited to, letters from colleagues, results of student interviews, and referee reports or published reviews of scholarly work. The content of such contributions is limited to the purposes of the review.

THE URC REVIEW

During October, the college deans present to the URC their lists of candidates for retention and tenure. They apprise the URC of all special contractual provisions or other formal agreements between the administration and individual candidates. All conflicts of interest shall be disclosed and resolved at the beginning of this process. Please refer to the URC "Conflict of Interest Statement."

All deliberations of the URC are confidential. For retention and tenure, each candidate's materials will be reviewed by a subcommittee of three URC members. Each subcommittee will consist of two faculty members and one administrator (either a college dean or the Provost). One member of the subcommittee will serve as the diversity advocate. Each URC member will read the short file of every candidate for which that URC member is not recused. 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 (for all candidates other than those applying for promotion to Professor), considering separately each group of candidates. URC deliberations for promotions to Professor occur between February and March. URC members complete their discussion of all candidates in a given group, then after considering each candidate in turn, formally voice individual yes or no votes; the URC may elect to postpone its vote pending more information from a candidate or a DRC.

If an initial URC vote on retention or promotion of a candidate is tied, conversation continues until a new vote breaks the tie or until the members of the URC agree that no change in the vote will occur. If the URC vote remains tied, the URC adopts the recommendation of the DRC.

The entire URC, 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 pre-tenure candidates highlight important elements of the URC'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 chair or program director, and DRC chair 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.

CHECK-LIST OF CONTENTS

Review of:

By (list of members of DRC):

Date:

Materials Provided by the Candidate:

1. Current curriculum vitae
2. List of all courses taught during review period, with syllabi
3. Candidate's statement
4. All written scholarship and (where relevant) documentation of artistic work
5. Other documents or data; please specify
6. Candidate's response (if any) to the DRC evaluation

Materials Provided by the Department/Program:

7. Copy of CAFT- and Provost-approved statement of procedures and criteria
8. DRC's recommendation to the URC
9. DRC's evaluation of the candidate
10. Summary of all teaching evaluation results using the appropriate template*.
11. A compilation of student evaluation results for each course using the appropriate template*, one copy for each course
12. A complete transcription of all student comments from the student evaluations
13. Any teaching evaluation letters solicited from current and former students
14. Additional evidence of student and/or faculty evaluation of teaching and advising, as specified by the DRC statement of procedures and criteria, and a statement explaining how this evidence was obtained
15. Three or more letters from outside evaluators (required for tenure and promotion and secured with the concurrence of the candidate and the college dean)
16. Minority report, if submitted, or other department/program statements considered
17. Other documents that were considered in accordance with faculty policy; please specify:

*Templates may be found at <http://my.bucknell.edu/x56852.html>