

Longwood University Faculty Senate  
**PROPOSAL/POLICY COVER SHEET**

This cover sheet is intended to provide information to members of the Faculty Senate about a new proposal/policy or about revisions to an existing proposal/policy. This cover sheet is being piloted during spring and fall 2011. If you are proposing a new policy, then attach the text of the policy to this form. If you are proposing a change to an existing policy, then attach the text of the current policy with any deleted language marked by a strikethrough and with new language marked by an underline. If you are deleting a policy, then attach the text of the policy to be deleted.

**COMMITTEE(S)** that authored or sponsored this proposal:

**COMMITTEE ON PROMOTION AND TENURE POLICIES & PROCEDURES (CPTPP)**

**TOPIC: Exchange of Review Letters at Department Level, see Appendix B, Time Tables for Review of Faculty in FPPM, pp. 190-198**

**BACKGROUND** (Provide a brief statement describing the origins of this proposal, the nature of the problem it addresses, and the work completed to devise the proposal):

The CPTPP has worked hard this year to review the “Time Tables for Review of Faculty” as they appear in the FPPM, Appendix B, pp. 190-198. The CPTPP first sent its changes to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee in late November 2010. The Executive Committee met with members of the CPTPP in December to review some of the proposals. Dr. Goetz, chair of the CPTPP, gave an update to Faculty Senate at its December meeting. The CPTPP worked on further revisions during the spring semester.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee has broken up the proposals for Senate’s consideration, rather than reviewing the policy as a whole. Of the changes the committee has proposed, one of the most significant is the change in how review letters are handled within a department.

Dr. Ferguson took this issue to the Academic Affairs Committee for advice at its February 2011 meeting. The majority of department chairs wanted to leave the process of review letters in the department as it currently exists. AAC did not make any formal motion on this issue, however.

**SUMMARY OF NEW POLICY OR PROPOSED CHANGES OR DELETIONS TO AN EXISTING POLICY** (Provide a brief list or statement describing the content of the policy or the proposed changes or deletions):

The CPTPP proposes changing the procedure of “exchanging” letters between the Department Chair and the Promotion and/or Tenure Committees, to make the procedure a hierarchical one, in which the Committee writes a letter and sends it to the candidate and to the Dept. Chair, and then the Dept. Chair writes a letter and sends to candidate, with copies to the Committee and to the Dean and to the VPAA.

They have proposed this procedure in all of the Time Tables (Promotion, Probationary Review, and Tenure).

Text of the current policy and of the proposed policy for p. 190 in Appendix B, Time Table for Promotion Review, and p. 196 in Appendix B, Time Table for Tenure Review are included in this proposal. This proposed change also applies to p. 192 in Appendix B, Time Table for Probationary Review of Tenure Track Faculty and Lecturers, but will be dealt with separately as there are additional changes to the Time Table for Probationary Review.

**RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY OR PROPOSED CHANGES** (Provide a brief statement as to why the new policy, the changes, or the deletion is needed):

It is the understanding of the Committee on Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures that the original intention behind the current process of exchanging letters was that a Chair's letter would be separate and not influenced by the Department P & T Committee's letter. In reality, there are departments in which the chairs have purposefully disregarded or have not been aware of the exchange process and did not realize that they were not supposed to have any prior knowledge of the P and T Committee's decisions. In other cases, there have been instances in which the department, in following the exchange process with no communication between the P & T Committee and the Department Chair, has sent conflicting letters to the Dean, leaving the Dean without a clear picture of the situation. Especially in cases where there are multiple disciplines in a department, the Department Chair may benefit by having input from the P & T Committee prior to making a decision and writing the letter. Of course, the Department Chair is free to disagree with the determination of the P & T Committee but at least has more information upon which to base a decision.

A few points to consider in support of the proposal for a hierarchical process between the P & T Committee and the Department Chair follow:

- 1) A hierarchical process currently exists between the Department Chair and Dean, and between the Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Establishing a similar process between the P & T Committee and Chair would create consistency in the entire process for the candidate and reviewers. There does not appear to be a clear reason why there should be mystery and restriction of information at this level, while at every other step in the process, the reviewer has information from the chain of review up to that point.
- 2) Department P & T Committees are made of several people, normally tenured faculty, and it is difficult for a chair to "strong-arm" a committee decision. Perhaps when departments were smaller, this could have been the case, but Longwood faculty size has grown since the time that the current process was established. The Committee feels that the need for sharing of information outweighs the risk of political heavy-handedness, and trusts in the ability of Department P & T Committees to arrive at their determinations without fear. Similarly, the Committee is confident in the ability of Department Chairs

to exercise their own authority to arrive at a determination that may conflict with the P & T Committee's determination, without fear.

3) Significant problems have occurred when letters are put forward from a department to the Dean that are strongly conflicting. With a hierarchical process, the Dean would know that at least the chair had the opportunity to review the Department P & T Committee's letter before arriving at his/her decision. This provides a more complete picture overall for the Dean to consider prior to his/her evaluation. In the past, when a P & T letter conflicted with the Chair's letter, it was very difficult to prioritize these letters. In fact, some may argue that under the current process, the P & T letter may be given more consideration than the Chair's because it reflects a group decision from faculty in various disciplines within a department.

4) Perhaps some may think that a hierarchical process gives more weight or importance to the chair's letter. The Committee sees this as a positive result. Our current process seems to give either equal weight to the letters or perhaps somewhat more weight to the P & T Committee's letter. If both letters are essentially in agreement, then the process doesn't really matter. However, a hierarchical process may contribute to producing letters that are more consistent, since the Chair would be working with more information than the current process (when followed) allows. When letters differ in spite of the sharing of information, the Chair will need to justify his/her decision in light of his/her knowledge of the Committee's letter, which will only provide more information to go on for the Dean and the VPAA.

5) It seems that Longwood is rather unusual in terms of the current exchange process. In all cases of other universities where we could find information, a hierarchical process is used throughout the promotion and tenure evaluation.

Date submitted to Senate Executive Committee for Consideration: \_\_\_\_\_

Action(s) Taken:

Date first read at Faculty Senate: \_\_\_\_\_

Action(s) Taken:

Date final action taken by Faculty Senate: \_\_\_\_\_

Final action(s) Taken:

**TEXT OF CURRENT POLICY:** From Time Table for Promotion Review, FPPM, Appendix B, p. 190

- by September 8      **Department Promotion Committee** circulates files of promotion candidates to members and notifies candidates of any missing items. All missing materials must be submitted by the candidate within one week of notification. The file is now considered complete; no new materials may be added except for a letter of exception or clarification as provided in Appendix C, 2j.
- by October 7      **Department Promotion Committee** returns file of promotion candidates to Department Chair.
- by October 14      **Department Chair** and **Department Promotion Committee** exchange letters of recommendation. Department Chair provides copies of both letters to promotion candidate. Both letters are to be addressed to the promotion candidate and copied to the College Dean and VPAA.

**TEXT OF PROPOSED POLICY:** Changes are highlighted; deletions are in strikethrough, and additions are underlined.

- by September 8      **Department Promotion Committee** circulates files of promotion candidates to members and notifies candidates of any missing items. All missing materials must be submitted by the candidate within one week of notification. The file is now considered complete; no new materials may be added except for a letter of exception or clarification as provided in Appendix C, 2j.
- by October 7      **Department Promotion Committee** writes promotion recommendations and sends letter to candidate. Letters are to be addressed to the promotion candidate and copied to the Department Chair, College Dean and VPAA. Department Promotion Committee returns file of promotion candidates to Department Chair.
- by October 14      **Department Chair** and Department Promotion Committee exchange letters of recommendation. Department Chair provides copies of both letters to promotion candidate. Both letters writes promotion recommendations and sends letter to candidate. Letters are to be addressed to the promotion candidate and copied to the Department Promotion Committee, College Dean and VPAA.

**TEXT OF CURRENT POLICY:** From Time Table for Tenure Review, FPPM, Appendix B, p. 196

- by September 8      **Department Tenure Committee** circulates files of tenure candidates to members and notifies candidates of any missing items. All missing materials must be submitted by the candidate within one week of notification. The file is now considered complete; no new materials may be added except for a letter of exception or clarification as provided in Appendix C, 2j.
- by October 7      **Department Tenure Committee** returns files of tenure candidates to **Department Chair**.
- by October 14      **Department Chair** and **Department Tenure Committee** exchange letters of recommendation. Department Chair provides copies of both letters to tenure candidate. Both letters are to be addressed to the tenure candidate and copied to the appropriate **College Dean** and **VPAA**.
- by October 21      **Department Tenure Committee** and/or **Department Chair** meets with any candidate receiving negative recommendation, if requested.

**TEXT OF PROPOSED POLICY:** Changes are highlighted; deletions are in strikethrough, and additions are underlined.

- by September 8      **Department Tenure Committee** circulates files of tenure candidates to members and notifies candidates of any missing items. All missing materials must be submitted by the candidate within one week of notification. The file is now considered complete; no new materials may be added except for a letter of exception or clarification as provided in [Appendix C, 2j](#).
- by October 7      **Department Tenure Committee** writes letter of recommendation and sends letter to candidate and Department Chair. Letters are to be addressed to the tenure candidate. Department Tenure Committee returns files of tenure candidates to **Department Chair**.
- by October 14      **Department Chair** ~~and **Department Tenure Committee**~~ exchange letters of recommendation. ~~Department Chair~~ provides copies of both letters to tenure candidate. ~~Both letters~~ writes letter of recommendation and sends letter to candidate. Letters are to be addressed to the tenure candidate and copied to the Department Tenure Committee, the appropriate **College Dean** and **VPAA**.