

October 2022

To: Faculty of Arts & Sciences

From: The Committee on Retention, Promotion, and Tenure

Re: Report from RPT on Its Activities, 2021-22

The Co-Chairs of RPT in 2021-22 were Christopher Del Negro and Lu Ann Homza. Other committee members for 2021-22 included Rex Kincaid, Robin Looft-Wilson, Christopher MacGowan (Fall 2021), Vassiliki Panoussi, and Kim Wheatley (Spring 2022).

The RPT committee serves as an advisor to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences. The committee consists of six members, two members from each of the three disciplinary Areas, all of whom are elected by the Faculty of Arts & Sciences. RPT assesses tenure and promotion dossiers assembled by personnel committees of constituent Arts & Sciences departments, where in some cases the personnel committees and dossiers span departments and interdepartmental programs. RPT reviews the completed dossiers submitted for each candidate, discusses the dossier as a committee, and evaluates and votes on whether the candidate's scholarship, teaching, and service meet (or do not meet) the university's standards for tenure or promotion. The committee writes a report on each candidate for tenure and promotion to the Dean. Those reports summarize RPT's evaluation and vote.

RPT reviewed 13 tenure cases in Fall 2021. All 13 candidates were internal. The committee voted unanimously, 6-0, to recommend tenure in 11 cases. There was a split vote of 3-3 in 2 cases. Ultimately, 12 of the 13 cases received the endorsement of the Board of Visitors and those candidates were awarded tenure and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor.

RPT reviewed 14 promotion cases in Fall 2021 and early Spring 2022. All 14 candidates were internal. The committee voted unanimously, 6-0, to recommend promotion in 13 cases. There was a split vote of 5-1 split vote in 1 case. Ultimately, all 14 cases received the endorsement of the Board of Visitors and those candidates were promoted to the rank of Professor.

In 2021-22, the dossiers of the tenure and promotion cases were generally complete and of high quality. However, some problems hindered RPT from expeditiously reviewing and evaluating tenure and promotion dossiers. Below, we identify the problems and recommend solutions.

(1) External letter writer who was not at "arm's length."

There were several instances in which it was not entirely clear whether an external letter of evaluation was at "arm's length." For example, the candidate and the letter writer attended the same graduate program at the same time, or the letter writer was a faculty member at the institution where the candidate obtained their Ph.D. Such occurrences may demonstrate conflicts of interest; in these cases, RPT consulted the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences to rule on the admissibility of the external letters. RPT's recommendation is to avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest. In no circumstances should a letter writer be a faculty member at the Ph.D.-granting institution of the candidate for tenure or promotion: in such instances, the success

of the tenure or promotion case affects the reputation of the Ph.D.-granting institution. If a letter-writer and a tenure/promotion candidate attended the same graduate program and overlapped in time, then the external letter must clarify the extent and nature of any interactions between the letter writer and the candidate to ensure that there is no conflict or apparent conflict due to friendship or professional ties.

(2) Original documents of peer evaluation of teaching were missing.

In several cases, the personnel committee's report referred to teaching evaluations performed by faculty in the candidate's department or program, but the original reports were not included in the dossier. RPT must read and evaluate those firsthand reports; a personnel committee's secondhand assessment of the reports is insufficient. RPT's recommendation is to include all first-hand peer reports of teaching in the tenure/promotion dossier, as well as the personnel committee's conclusions based on those reports.

(3) Inconsistent nomenclature of classes: The classes taught by the candidate were often referred to either by the name of the class or by the four letter department moniker and three-digit number, but seldom by both. This inconsistency pervaded candidates' personal narrative statements, Chairs' and Directors' letters, and personnel committees reports. Inconsistency in nomenclature makes it difficult for RPT to track and count classes across documents in the dossier. RPT strongly recommends that each reference to a class contain all the information: course name, four-letter department or program moniker, as well as three-digit course number.

(4) Copies and provenance of peer-reviewed publications.

In some instances, candidates' dossiers referred to "accepted" or "in press" publications, but the dossiers contained incomplete information about the stage of publication. Occasionally, there were also MS Word files included in the dossier rather than PDF copies of published works in some stage of publication, i.e., galley prints or copy-edited preprints. RPT recommends that candidates include the most updated version of accepted or in-press works that demonstrate the work is indeed accepted for publication and on its way to widespread dissemination. If there is some valid reason that a galley print is not yet available, RPT recommends that a letter from the personnel committee, department chair, or program director explain why such a version is not available. Whenever possible, documentation should be included that verifies the stage of publication if the final-form published work is not yet available.

The three guiding documents for dossier preparation include *i)* the Dean's memo on Retention, Promotion, and Tenure, *ii)* the Faculty Handbook, and *iii)* the approved personnel policies for the department and/or program in which the candidate serves. The RPT committee urges department chairs and program directors to review these documents carefully for candidates in 2022-2023 and to consider the recommendations above.