

Post-Tenure Review Process Clarifications and Revision

Summary. These changes aim to clarify several issues in the post-tenure review process. These include clarifying the requirement that faculty be notified of the ‘trigger mechanism’, the materials to be reviewed, and the process of writing the review letter. These changes also clarify what happens in the event of an unsuccessful outcome for a development plan, and the process for appealing the outcome of a post-tenure review.

These changes were unanimously approved by the Faculty Handbook Review Committee on 06/15/2021, and have been reviewed by University Counsel prior to that vote.

3.7.3 Post-Tenure Review

A. Purpose

Post-tenure review (PTR) is intended to support faculty development and productivity. It considers the professional quality with which faculty members discharge the academic duties associated with their positions. It does not consider whether the previously tenured faculty member would meet current standards for the awarding of tenure. The policy on post-tenure review is not a dismissal policy and should not be viewed as such; the University’s dismissal policy appears in Chapter 3, Section 9.2 of this handbook.

The purpose of post-tenure review at Auburn University is to enhance public trust in the University by ensuring that the faculty holds itself accountable to high professional standards. As chief academic officer of Auburn University, it is the responsibility of the provost ~~with advice from faculty leadership to formulate, to~~ implement and, enforce, ~~and review and revise as needed~~ the University’s policy and procedures for post-tenure review. Post-tenure review is a natural extension of Auburn University’s process of annual faculty evaluation as specified in this handbook. PTR requires tenured faculty whose annual overall performance is found unacceptable *twice within any six-year period* to undergo more extensive review, prepare a written plan for performance improvement, implement this plan, and show progress in restoring performance to at least a satisfactory ~~(or even exemplary)~~ level.

B. Faculty Annual Review (see 3.7.1 above)

C. The Trigger Mechanism

An overall “unacceptable” annual evaluation is determined by the composite of the weighted evaluations of the faculty member’s workload assignments ~~will put, in accordance with Section 3.7.1. The department head/chair shall~~ must notify the ~~tenured~~ faculty member ~~on warning that and Provost in writing after~~ the PTR process may be triggered by a ~~second~~ first overall “unacceptable” annual ~~evaluation received during the next five years. (In other words, two overall review that a second~~ “unacceptable ~~annual evaluations in a~~” review within any six-year period will trigger PTR. ~~It shall be the department head/chair’s responsibility, in consultation with the dean, to notify in writing, by May 15~~ It shall be the department head/chair’s responsibility, in consultation with the dean, to notify in writing, by May ~~15~~ of each year, the faculty member and the Office of the Provost whenever PTR is triggered by a second overall “unacceptable” evaluation during

any six-year period. ~~Failure to provide this notification does not negate the requirement for PTR.~~

D. Review of Tenured Faculty Holding Full-Time Administrative Posts

Faculty members holding full-time administrative assignments are to be evaluated by their administrative supervisors. They serve in their administrative posts at the pleasure of the University. They are exempt from PTR as faculty while serving as full-time administrators. However, any tenured faculty member whose administrative term expires becomes subject to the PTR triggering mechanism described in Section 3C above.

E. Review Criteria

The post-tenure review assesses the quantity and quality of the faculty member's work over the preceding six years with respect to their assigned duties in terms of teaching, research, ~~Auburn University Faculty Handbook Chapter 3-65~~ outreach/extension, and professional and university service. These criteria are stated in general terms as the basis of an overall policy applicable to a wide range of academic disciplines. The criteria are flexible to accommodate differing expectations in different disciplines and changing assignments at different stages of faculty careers. The criteria for appraisal should reflect the overall mission of the unit or department and be sufficiently flexible to accommodate faculty with differing responsibilities who contribute to the mission of Auburn University in varied ways. The criteria shall be applied in a manner that respects and safeguards First Amendment rights and academic freedom and that produces a fair result. The application of the criteria shall not be biased by consideration of the faculty member's race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, age, ~~physical handicap~~disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.

F. Materials to Be Reviewed

Once a faculty member has been identified for post-tenure review as described in Section 3C above, and the Office of the Provost and the faculty member have been notified by the faculty member's dean and department head/chair, the Office of the Provost will send instructions to the faculty member, department head/chair, and dean regarding how to prepare the faculty member's PTR packet for review by the University Post-Tenure Review committee. The faculty member and department head/chair are to prepare materials for review following these instructions, then submit them to the Office of the Provost through the Office of the Dean. The dean has the right and responsibility to review the packet before it is submitted to the Office of the Provost and to comment on the packet as desired. The materials for review must include:

1. Annual reviews by the department head/chair (or dean if the school has no departments) for the previous six years. These six years of annual reviews will be automatically included in the materials provided to the university Post-Tenure committee. ~~(Note: For confidentiality purposes, these reviews will be retained in the Office of the Provost and will not be shared with anyone who is not in a direct line of administrative authority over the faculty member.)~~
2. A current, comprehensive curriculum vita.

3. A summary of accomplishments and plans during the faculty member's past six years at Auburn University, prepared by the faculty member, not to exceed two pages in length.
4. ~~The~~ departmental faculty letter ~~and rebuttal letter~~ as described in Section G below.
5. The faculty member's rebuttal to the departmental faculty letter as described in Section G below, if the candidate wishes to submit one.
- 4-6. A letter of evaluation, not to exceed two pages, to the provost from the department head/chair through the dean (or from the dean if a school has no departments) that describes the duties assigned to the faculty member during the review period and assesses the satisfactoriness of the faculty member's overall performance of the assigned work. The department head/chair is expected to consider the viewpoints of all tenured faculty in the department while preparing this letter. ~~The procedure for doing so is described below in Section 7. Auburn University Faculty Handbook Chapter 3-66 (see Section G below). The department head/chair will provide his/her letter to the faculty member. After reviewing the letter, the faculty member has five working days to submit a rebuttal if desired.~~
5. ~~If the faculty member wishes to waive their rights of confidentiality, copies of the faculty member's annual reviews for the previous six years may also be included in the materials submitted for review.~~
7. The faculty member's rebuttal to the department head/chair's letter as described in item Section 56 above, if the candidate wishes to submit one.

G. Advice from Tenured Faculty

Prior to preparation of the department head/chair's letter (described in Section ~~6F~~, item ~~46~~), the department head/chair is to make available to all tenured faculty within the department for their review (a) the curriculum vitae ~~and~~, (b) the summary of accomplishments and plans prepared by the faculty member, ~~and (c) the six preceding years' annual reviews (if the faculty member wishes to include them in the materials reviewed by the department faculty. The six preceding years' annual reviews are always included in the materials reviewed by the Post-Tenure Review Committee.~~ The tenured faculty are to inspect these documents. After the faculty has had time to review the dossier and supporting materials, the department head/chair, as a nonvoting participant, shall convene a meeting of all tenured faculty to discuss the PTR packet and vote (by secret ballot: yes, no, abstain, not voting) whether or not the faculty member under review is ~~discharging~~ satisfactorily discharging the academic duties associated with their position. ~~The~~ The department head/chair shall announce the outcome of the vote at the meeting.

The tenured department faculty who voted on PTR will then write a summary letter that reflects the vote and represents all aspects of the discussion leading to that vote. The department head/chair shall communicate the department's vote to the faculty member ~~under review is to be informed of the results of the vote. The results~~ and also provide the faculty member a copy of the ~~vote~~ — including the actual numerical vote — shall be included in the

~~department head/chair's letter.~~ letter submitted by the unit/department faculty. After reviewing the letter, the candidate has five working days to write a rebuttal if desired.

H. University Post-Tenure Review Committee

The University Post-Tenure Review Committee shall consist of at least six tenured faculty members from different representative academic schools and colleges plus the provost, who shall serve as chair. The president will appoint the members of the Post-Tenure Review Committee following the same process and with all the restrictions that currently apply to the selection of candidates for the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. All deliberations of the University Post-Tenure Review Committee are to remain confidential.

I. Outcomes

1. The University Post-Tenure Review Committee, chaired by the provost, shall provide the faculty member with a concise written summary of its review and a conclusion as to whether the faculty member's performance is deemed satisfactory. This summary is also to be provided to the dean and department head/chair. The faculty member shall have the opportunity to appeal this decision using the appeals process described in Section 10/Section J.
2. A faculty member whose performance the ~~review committee~~ University Post-Tenure Review Committee assesses to be unsatisfactory will undertake a development plan to be prepared jointly by the faculty member and ~~academic unit administrator~~ department head/chair and approved by the dean and provost. The development plan will outline what is needed to move the faculty member to a higher level of performance. It must have specific, measurable goals that can reasonably be attained during a 12-month period. Progress on all plans will be reviewed and assessed after 12 months using the procedure described in item 3 below. The nature and source of any resources needed to accomplish the plan must be spelled out in writing. Auburn University Faculty Handbook Chapter 3-67
3. At the conclusion of the 12-month development period, the faculty member will prepare a report summarizing their progress on achieving the goals specified in the development plan. This report shall be forwarded to the provost through the department head/chair and dean, who will jointly review the faculty member's progress and prepare a report that is also submitted to the provost.

~~Faculty members who are judged not to have demonstrated progress after completing a development plan will be notified and given an opportunity to respond to the provost before the imposition of further sanctions. The provost's decision can be appealed using the process described in Section 10/Section J.~~ If the provost (or president through the appeal process) decides that sufficient progress has been made, the faculty member shall be deemed to have completed the post-tenure review process. The faculty member ~~would~~ will return to being reviewed annually (along with other faculty) using the process described in Section ~~H~~ B above. Further PTR shall not be required unless

triggered by two subsequent overall “unacceptable” evaluations on annual reviews during another six-year period.

Faculty members who are judged not to have demonstrated progress after completing a development plan will be notified and given an opportunity to respond to the provost before deliberation on possible sanctions. The provost’s decision can be appealed using the process described in Section J.

If the provost (or president through the appeal processor president through the appeals process described in Section J) decides that sufficient progress has not been made, the faculty member will be subject to sanctions as described in Section 4. The provost will forward both a written explanation of the determination that the 12-month development plan was not met to the PTRPost-Tenure Review committee. As described in Section 4, the PTRPTR committee will decide which sanctions might be applied to the faculty member as described in item 4 below. develop a new 12-month development plan.

4. Sanctions will be determined by the PTRPTR committee. Sanctions for failure to meet the goals specified in the development plan may include, but are not limited to, a letter of notice to the faculty member; withholding of merit-based salary increases; reassignment of duties; and loss of eligibility for such privileges as travel funds, summer appointments, internal grants, and professional improvement leave.

Along with any sanctions, the PTRPTR committee will make recommendations for a new 12-month development plan, prepared jointly by the faculty member and department head/chair and approved by the dean and provost, as described under item 2 above. which This will continue to recur annually until the faculty member meets the terms of a 12-month development plan as determined by the provost (or president on appeal through the appeals process as described in Section J).

J. Appeals Procedure

There are two points in this process where decisions made by the provost can be appealed to the president: (1) ~~The the~~ PTR committee’s decision regarding unsatisfactory performance (step 1 in Section 9 above) and (2) the provost’s decision that the faculty member has not satisfactorily completed the development plan (step 3 in Section 9). In both cases the faculty member may appeal the decision in writing within ten working days of receipt of the ~~provost’s~~ decision. The appeal process will parallel the process used in cases of promotion and tenure appeals. The appeal will be made in writing to the PTR-Post-Tenure Review Appeals Committee, which consists of ~~the two faculty members serving on the PTRPTR Committee, selected by that committee,~~ plus two additional faculty members ~~as~~ selected by the Rules Committee. The PTR Appeals committee shall elect its own chair. The PTR-Post-Tenure Review Appeals Committee shall have ten working days to respond to the faculty member’s appeal and has the right to request and consider additional information beyond that listed in Section 7E if the committee believes such information is valuable for evaluating the appeal. The PTR-Post-Tenure Review Appeals Committee will make a recommendation regarding the appeal to the president for

consideration. The president will render a decision within ten working days and that decision shall be final.