

March 1, 2004

MEMO TO: Academic Deans

FROM: John M. Dunn
Provost and Vice Chancellor

SUBJECT: Promotion and Tenure Dossiers

I have now completed two years of dossier reviews. In general, I am pleased with the effort expended by faculty and administrators in assembling dossiers so that each candidate's materials are presented in a format that allows reviewers to readily evaluate the candidate's record and accomplishments. However, I also believe that improvements can be made. Outlined below are my suggestions for strengthening dossiers and the review process. My intent is to adhere to policies found in the *Employees Handbook* and the *Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University and the SIUC Faculty Association, IEA/NEA*, while at the same time recognizing that many nuances are found within various department and college operating papers. With this memorandum, I am attempting to offer some general observations and suggestions that I hope will improve the dossiers and, as a result, strengthen the fairness and objectivity of the evaluation process.

1. Size/Length of Dossier:

Many dossiers are simply too large. When a dossier is overly large, the candidate's central message and record of accomplishments tend to become obscured by less-relevant material. I would like to offer as a general guideline that a three-ring binder, with one to no more than two inches of content, should be adequate. Below are some suggestions that should help to keep dossiers at an appropriate size.

- a) Letters of support from students should be kept to a reasonable number, e.g., five. If the student evaluators are chosen carefully, this number should suffice to demonstrate the candidate's instructional effectiveness both in and outside the classroom. Importantly, to avoid a possible conflict of interest, these letters should be from former students.
- b) Handwritten notes extolling the virtues of the candidate add little to the overall merit of the dossier.

- c) There is no need to include all teaching evaluation forms or Instructor Course Evaluation (ICE) printouts, i.e., the raw data. The Chair and the faculty member should work together to prepare a summary sheet that identifies the course being evaluated, the semester the course was taught, the number of students enrolled in the class, and the number that actually completed the evaluation form, accompanied by a table of means summarizing performance each time the course was taught. If this information is presented in tabular format, most reviewers can quickly discern the relative scores for each course, make comparisons across courses and note any improvement in scores over time. The Chair should also provide some indication of departmental norms.
- d) Copies of course syllabi and sample exams are not necessary and they should be included only in those rare cases where they are needed to make a point.
- e) It is not necessary to include the full CV of each external reviewer who provided a letter of evaluation. All that is needed is a one-paragraph statement introducing the reviewer and his/her home institution as well as a short summary of academic credentials.

2. Dossier Format – Front Matter:

- a) Each dossier should include a signed statement from the candidate that she/he is aware of the contents of the dossier (with the exception of confidential letters, if any) and that he/she concurs that the dossier is ready to be reviewed. The statement should be signed and dated prior to formal initiation of the review process.
- b) The standard front matter as found in the *Employees Handbook* and a table of contents should be included. Tabs should be used to delineate the various sections of the dossier.
- c) An up-to-date copy of the candidate's curriculum vitae should be included using the new standard university format (<http://www.siu.edu/~facsenat/cvform.html>).
- d) The Dean's letter of evaluation and recommendation should be carefully written so that the reasons underlying the Dean's decision are clear. The Dean must also include in the dossier a statement outlining the procedures followed in the college for evaluating the candidate.
- e) It would be very helpful if each dossier includes a written summary or analysis of the College Committee's deliberations along with their vote.

Academic Deans

March 1, 2004

Page Three

- f) The Chair's letter should also provide an evaluation, a recommendation, and a rationale for the recommendation. The Chair must also include a summary of the procedures followed in the school or department that were used to evaluate the candidate.
- g) Again, it would be helpful if a summary and analysis of the Department's deliberations are included along with the vote.
- h) A copy of each annual pre-tenure review that was transmitted to the candidate by the Chair and Dean must be included.

3. Dossier Format – Teaching Section:

- a) The candidate may wish to include a reflective statement on teaching, i.e., the approach used in teaching, and a summary of what the candidate is striving to do to obtain positive learning outcomes (maximum of two pages).
- b) As noted above, there should be a summary of ICE scores or other evaluation instrument for each course. This summary should be presented in tabular form to include the semester that the class was taught, the number of students in class, number completing the evaluation, mean values and some indication of departmental norms. Such a tabular presentation permits the reader to view changes in teaching performance over several years.
- c) The dossier should include a list of undergraduate and graduate students advised and roles played by the candidate in their education, e.g., dissertation or thesis advisor, committee member, undergraduate research sponsor.
- d) Letters from students are not necessary, but if included, they should be limited to approximately five letters. To reduce any appearance of conflict of interest, these letters should be from former students, not current students.
- e) Written analyses offered by departmental peers (at least two) addressing the effectiveness of the candidate's teaching should be provided. These peer letters should focus on how materials are organized for the course (syllabi, nature of required readings/assignments, examination procedures, faculty availability) as well as comments about the candidate's ability to teach, i.e., direct observations of actual classroom teaching performance.
- f) Awards and honors for teaching excellence, if any, should be listed.

4. Dossier Format – Scholarship/Research/Creative Activity Section:

- a) The candidate may wish to prepare a reflective statement that summarizes the nature or focus of her/his scholarship/research/creative activity. The statement should be succinct and no longer than two or three pages.
- b) A complete list of books, scientific/scholarly papers, abstracts, and presentations should already be included in the curriculum vitae and such listings should not be repeated in this section. Only books and papers (already published or accepted with appropriate documentation) will be the focus of the review. Papers submitted, but not yet accepted for publication, can be listed and so labeled, but with the understanding that their status is not clear because they are in the process of being reviewed. Patents and other distinctions should be listed along with the appropriate reference numbers or other designations.
- c) As is customary at SIUC, the chart, “Evidence and Evaluation of Research,” identifying and rating the various forms of scholarship should be included. The intent of this chart is to help reviewers assess the quality of the journal, venue, or other outlet for the work. Chairs should be thoughtful and consistent in their assessments. Only publications or activities that have occurred since the last promotion should be listed.
- d) Awards and honors for research/scholarship/creative activity, if any, should be listed.

5. Dossier Format – Service/Engagement:

- a) A brief reflective essay that highlights the candidate’s commitment to departmental, college, university, community, and professional service may be included at the beginning of this section. Again, two pages should suffice.
- b) The dossier should include a list of service activities organized by: Service to the University (e.g., department, college, and university committees); Service to the Profession (e.g., offices held, service on grant review panels and editorial boards, etc.); and Service to the Community (e.g., service organizations, volunteer activities, and the like). It is understood that expectations regarding the level of service and the focus of commitment will vary depending on the academic rank of the candidate and the requirements of the department and college.

- c) Evidence of outcomes associated with service can include a list of recognition and awards received, as well as a small number of letters of acknowledgement and appreciation for contributions.

6. External Letters:

Many acknowledge that one of the most substantive components contained in the dossier are the letters of evaluation from acclaimed and acknowledged national authorities familiar with the candidate's area of work--individuals who are very knowledgeable about the subject matter and able to offer an informed and objective appraisal. At major research universities, careful thought and attention is typically given to the selection of these reviewers, their credentials, and the research nature of the reviewer's academic institution. While no firm rules can be established that will fit all disciplines and professions, every effort should be made to exclude reviewers whose objective analysis of the candidate's work might be viewed as having a potential conflict of interest. For example, co-authors, personal friends, and former dissertation advisers or teachers should not be asked to provide letters of evaluation. The goal is to identify external reviewers who can assess the candidate's work using an appropriate arm's-length approach. If the candidate's area of research is highly specialized, letters from co-authors or other associates can be included, but the relationship to the candidate must be clearly specified.

- a) In selecting the external reviewers, the Chair should work closely with the candidate to identify those reviewers whose assessment will add substantively to the merit of the case. This requires the identification of talented individuals with excellent credentials, from research universities or comparable institutions, whose input will be highly valued. The actual mechanics of the selection process will vary according to the disciplinary standards and operating papers of each department and college.
- b) As noted above, once the letters from the external reviewers have been received, a short paragraph introducing each reviewer should be developed to be included in the dossier. There is no need to include the reviewer's complete curriculum vitae.
- c) Each candidate should be given the opportunity to waive or not waive his/her right to see the external letters before the letters of reference are requested. A statement should be contained in the dossier, with the candidate's signature, affirming the individual's decision to waive or not waive the right to confidentiality.

Academic Deans

March 1, 2004

Page Six

- d) The candidate's CV, along with selected works (publications/slides, etc.), should be included with the letter sent to the external reviewer, along with some explanation of what is expected of the reviewer. In addition, the letter should include a statement informing the reviewer of the candidate's right to waive or not waive confidentiality and the decision reached by the candidate. A copy of the letter sent to the external reviewers and a list of materials included should be part of the dossier.
- e) Although no precise number of letters from external reviewers is required, normally five to six thoughtful letters of assessment will suffice in most cases. All letters that are received must be included in the dossier. Neither the candidate nor the Chair is permitted to exclude any letters.
- f) Regardless of whether the candidate chooses to waive confidentiality or not, each external reviewer should be coded and referred to by a letter (e.g., "External Reviewer A," etc.) so that reviewer names are excluded from the letters of evaluation submitted by the Chair and Dean. This practice should help to clarify our respect for external reviewers and their input.

As noted at the beginning, the intent of this memorandum is to offer some guidance and direction with respect to the preparation of dossiers. I acknowledge that our guidelines allow candidates to add any material they think will add substance and background to an understanding and assessment of their case. We, of course, will honor such requests. Nevertheless, I think there is much we can do to strengthen the preparation of dossiers so that the merit of each individual's case can be given undivided attention, free of the distractions caused by extraneous materials, and evaluated fairly and respectfully.

Thank you.

c: Walter V. Wendler