PROMOTION AND TENURE

Orientation for New Chairs
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GUIDING PRINCIPLE: NATURAL JUSTICE

Apply Natural Justice principles to all your decision making around promotion and tenure and routine performance evaluations.

“Plain English” unofficial guide: uwaterloo.ca/fauw/natural-justice
POLICIES

**Policy 77**: Tenure & promotion of faculty members

- Everything is there somewhere.
- FAUW’s guide to Policy 77: [uwaterloo.ca/fauw/policies-agreements](uwaterloo.ca/fauw/policies-agreements)
- Includes search functions.
- Also guides to policies 3 (sabbaticals/leaves) and 76 (appointments)
POLICIES

Policy 76: Faculty appointments

- Currently under review
- Discussion document in about 6 months
- Reasonably straightforward for probationary faculty
- Less clear and helpful for other appointments
TENURE: TIMING CHOICE

Two times to apply:

- The end of the second year of the second probationary period
- The end of the third year of the second probationary period
- Genuine alternatives

Applying the first time is not early. Applying the second time is not late!

The timing decision must be the candidate’s.
TENURE: TIMING CHOICE

Your role:

- Provide clear advice through annual performance evaluations
- Ensure candidates know where they are vis-à-vis what is expected of them. Misleading a candidate can be grounds for an appeal.
- Consider yourself bound by what was said by you or your predecessor to the candidate. Remember to apply natural justice.
- Direct candidates to FAUW’s Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee (AF&T).
Most candidates rely on the ‘strong performance in both scholarship and teaching’ standard.

The alternate standard is just as legitimate: “very strong performance in scholarship or teaching with at least satisfactory performance in the other two areas.”

Your role: Ensure candidates and DTPC members understand that these are legitimate alternatives. A candidate will get tenure when they meet one or other of these standards.
TENURE: CLOCK EXTENSIONS

Leaves may extend the tenure clock. You will be advised of this by your dean and/or the provost.

Be mindful of illness impacting performance and ensure candidates seek appropriate resources.

Double check dates where extensions apply: mistakes have occurred!
PRE-TENURE SABBATICAL

Designed in recognition of our relatively short tenure clock. It is essential your probationary faculty take them. Timing is not fixed. They are usually taken in second term. **Your role:** Do nothing to discourage either taking the leave or the timing. Your role is to help candidates succeed.
For tenure: early means prior to the second year of the second term.

Generally for candidates hired with considerable experience.

Basic advice: Do not go up for tenure or promotion until it is clear it will be smooth sailing.
TENURE: BASIC PRINCIPLES

As with students: candidates succeed or fail on their own merits.

Your role:
- Ensure candidates see applications from recent successful candidates.
- Encourage candidates to seek out responsible mentors (not in the DTPC).
- Remind candidates that poorly presented/written applications can confuse and irritate committees.
Your role: Ensure the process is fair and neutral.

You must ensure that the DTPC forms its opinion based only on the tenure or promotion package, including documentation from external referees.

Conflicts of interest and inappropriate bias: Watch for the less obvious examples that might raise questions about decision making based on factors outside of the tenure or promotion package; e.g. very close friendships or strongly expressed dislike for the candidate for whatever reason.
WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF BIAS

1. Stop discussion immediately and advise the committee that what was said was inappropriate and explain why.

2. Seek advice from the Secretariat immediately. If the person was a key player in your department, if what they said was particularly damning, probably the committee cannot continue and a new one must be struck.

It’s better to stop now and to ensure a fair process than to have your process legitimately challenged later.
INTERNAL REFEREES

The university relies “primarily” on the external referees and DTPC for assessing the scholarly record (Policy 77).

Choose independent, credible candidates from credible and comparable institutions/departments.

Be fair to the candidate:

- Choose people who understand UW standards and will fairly assess.
- Be cognizant of what you are as a department (e.g. internationally recognized, solid average Canadian department).
- Get your DTPC to do its homework: Weed out known jerks.
**CANDIDATE’S RIGHT TO CHALLENGE**

The candidate may challenge members of the DTPC and proposed names of external referees for bias, apprehension of bias or conflict of interest.

If the challenge of the DTPC member is accepted, that person must have *nothing* more to do with the particular case before the DTPC.

In practice: It is unwise to go ahead with a referee or a DTPC member that is challenged. If you have concerns: seek advice.
TEACHING

Focus on:

▪ Actual information
▪ Standards are those for tenure (strong performance or very strong performance), not for a distinguished teaching award
▪ The trajectory

Don’t rely on:

▪ Student letters
▪ Oral comments from students
▪ Use evaluations by colleagues with care
If you do your performance evaluations correctly, the candidate should know where they stand.

For promotion to full professor:
- It is legitimate to question service that primarily advances the candidate’s own career and does little for the department, faculty and university.

If there are unique expectations within your department, these must be made clear to the candidate and explained in the DTPC letter for subsequent committees.
COLLEGIALITY

It matters.

Again, candidates must be well forewarned of issues if relevant and given adequate time to correct.
CONDUCT OF THE DTPC

Ensure discussion remains focused on the package.
Remind members of confidentiality.
If more information is required, stop and seek advice from the dean or Secretariat if relevant.
No straw polls.
Votes should be secret.
PROMOTION

Watch out for DTPC members imposing values and using information from outside the package.

Treat the decision as being as serious to a person’s career as tenure.

Refer people to FAUW; encourage them to discuss their case with mentors and people familiar with the standards in their discipline and your department.
PROMOTION

What about people you think are going up too early?

- Be very careful giving advice. Do not offer it unless you are very certain you are correct.
- Again, encourage candidates to seek advice from others who are trustworthy.
SIGNIFICANT RESERVATIONS

Always follow the process.

“If members of the DTPC express significant reservations that could result in a negative recommendation….” (Policy 77) you must:

▪ Stop the process
▪ Gather clearly expressed concerns
▪ Provide the information to the candidate clearly and allow for their response in accordance with policy
▪ Ensure the candidate is advised of their right to seek an academic colleague to assist them, usually through AF&T
YOUR LETTERS

Clearly explain and defend the decision of the DTPC.
Allow for a minority report if members want to provide that.
Above all else, your letter must be accurate.
FAUW’S ROLE

Encourage a candidate to talk to AF&T if you are:

- Worried about the strength of their case
- Unsure if they are listening to and understanding you

We are there to advise, to mentor, and to ensure process is followed. These are all roles that are consistent with what you want and need. Ensure you use us.

It is normally inappropriate for FAUW to offer you managerial advice, but you are represented by FAUW and can access our resources.

uwaterloo.ca/fauw