September 6, 2017

TO: Deans
    Chairs & Directors

FROM: Labor-Management Committee
      Bill Balzer & Phil Stinson, Co-Chairs

Copy: Rodney Rogers, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
      David Jackson, President, BGSU-FA

RE: External Reviews for Promotion and Tenure

Pursuant to Article 14, Section 8.1 of the second Collective Bargaining Agreement (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2019), the Labor-Management Committee was charged to review current practices for gathering external letters of review and provide recommendations to the Provost and President of the BGSU-FA for improving consistency in these practices. Using current BGSU practices as a starting point, the Labor-Management Committee also examined best practices at other institutions. After receiving feedback from the Council of Deans, the Labor-Management Committee submitted final recommendations to Drs. Rogers and Jackson for their approval. The Committee’s recommendations were approved July 27, 2017.

Attached are the approved “University-Wide Process for Soliciting External Letters of Review for Promotion and Tenure,” which also include new University practices for communications with external reviewers. This process replaces current college and academic unit practices for external reviews for promotion and tenure starting in the 2018-19 academic year.

Please share this information with your faculty and committees involved in promotion and tenure processes. This document will be posted on the Office of Provost web page.

Attachment

R:\DeanBalzer\VPFA\Successor Contract\Implementation of CBA 2\CBA Committees\Labor-Management\FINAL Guidelines for Soliciting External Review Letters with examples - cover letter to academic administrators september 6, 2017.docx
University-Wide Process for
Soliciting External Letters of Review for Promotion and Tenure

1. The chair/director requests suggestions of reviewers from all tenured faculty members in the academic unit. Depending on policies of the academic unit, the candidate may also be asked to contribute names of potential reviewers. If candidates contribute names, the chair/director will prepare a composite list. To do so, the chair/director will compare the candidate suggestions with the tenured faculty suggestions, identify the names in common, place those at the top of the composite list, then select alternately from the faculty list and the candidate list to complete the composite list.

2. The academic unit should nominate reviewers who have recognized reputations in the field and who hold appropriate ranks at peer or aspirant institutions. The unit should avoid reviewers from less prestigious institutions, unless warranted by the expertise and reputation of the reviewers in the research area of the candidate.

3. The academic unit should identify active and influential scholars in the field. Emeritus professors who are no longer active or scholars whose own research and reputation has moved outside the field of the candidate should be avoided. Reviewers must be tenured at their home institutions. Reviewers for full-professor cases must hold the rank of professor. The candidate and the chair/director have a shared responsibility to avoid conflicts of interest and appearances of conflicts of interest. For example, reviewers should not be from the same graduate program (as peer or instructor), should not be a co-author, should not be more than a casual professional acquaintance, and should not have another relationship with the candidate that might undermine the credibility of the review.

4. The academic unit should compile a large list of suggested reviewers (e.g., 10 or more) to provide a list that is sufficient in number to allow for the removal of names due to identified conflicts and the candidate’s vetoes and assure that no fewer than three external reviews are completed in time to include in the promotion and/or tenure credential file.

5. The candidate should identify suggested reviewers with whom he/she has a conflict of interest; these names should be removed from the list. The candidate also should identify suggested reviewers with whom he/she has the appearance of a conflict of interest; at the chair’s/director’s discretion, these names should be removed from the list. The candidate should be given the option of removing the names of no more than two suggested reviewers from the list with no reasons or explanations required. Candidates should be reminded not to communicate with external reviewers while the review process is underway.

6. The chair/director or designee should contact a minimum of five identified reviewers from the remaining list by phone or e-mail to request participation in the assessment of the candidate’s credentials. The email/conversation should follow a standardized script to model neutrality.

7. Affirmative responses should be confirmed in writing, clarifying the intent of the assessment and timeline [see attached practices and examples; individual colleges may require a common template]. Phone calls are not substitutes for reviews, which must be submitted to the academic unit in writing.

8. The chair/director or designee forwards the names and contact information for external reviewers to the Dean. The Dean or designee will complete and send cover letters with
instructions for the external reviewers to a minimum of five external reviewers [see attached university practices and examples].

9. The chair/director should consult with the candidate and the faculty who will be reviewing the candidate’s portfolio regarding the materials sent to reviewers. These should include the candidate’s vitae and generally a sample of preferably peer-reviewed artifacts of scholarly or creative activity from the submitted dossier and a narrative statement discussing the scholarly or creative activity. The submitted review package should be manageable for the external reviewers while adequately representing the quality and impact of the candidate’s body of work. Advice from the chair/director and academic unit colleagues should be strongly considered; however, the final decision on what materials are included in the package rests with the candidate.

10. The Office of the Dean or designee should monitor the return of external reviews, sending reminders of deadlines to reviewers as appropriate to encourage the timely return of written external letters for the academic unit’s assessment of the candidate’s credentials and prior to the unit vote. While reviews do NOT have to be received by the academic unit’s deadline for the candidate’s submission of credentials, a minimum of three reviews must be received in time for consideration before the academic unit’s recommendation deadline. All reviews that are received are to be included in the candidate’s portfolio.
University Practices for Communications with External Reviewers

1. Email Confirmation of Service as External Reviewer (initiated by chair/director or designee)
   a. Statement of process for identifying external reviewers
   b. Confirm task and responsibilities
      i. Written evaluation of candidate’s scholarship
      ii. No personal relationship with candidate
      iii. Deadline for returning review
   c. Statement of Ohio’s Public Records Act
   d. Request confirmation of acceptance
   e. Contact person at BGSU

2. Cover Letter and Instructions for External Reviewers (initiated by Office of Dean or designee)
   a. Description of the purpose of review (P&T, P, T)
   b. Overview of materials included
      i. Candidate portfolio (CV, sample of scholarly artifacts, narrative statement on scholarship)
      ii. Scholarship criteria and standards for P&T
   c. Expectations for Reviewer’s written assessment
      i. Statement of relationship with candidate
      ii. Objective, professional assessment of quantity, quality, impact, strengths and weaknesses of research agenda taking into account stage of career development, allocation of effort to scholarship (including teaching load)
      iii. Considered opinion on non-refereed and “submitted and accepted” materials
      iv. NO recommendation of tenure/promotion
      v. Signed written assessment
      vi. Copy of Reviewer’s CV
   d. Statement of Ohio’s Public Records Act
   e. Deadline for returning review
   f. Contact person at BGSU
Example 1: Email Confirmation of Service as External reviewer

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a reviewer of Dr. XXX’s credentials for tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. The candidate, department faculty, and I agreed your professional success and reputation in the field would provide us with an objective professional assessment of Dr. XXX’s scholarly record.

Within the next week I will send you a packet of materials and guidelines for completing your review. As we discussed, we would need you to return your review by MONTH DAY, 2017 so that it can be included in Dr. XXX’s promotion and tenure dossier.

At this time I would ask that you please confirm (1) your willingness to serve as an external reviewer and (2) that you have no personal relationship with the candidate. Finally, I want to let you know that under the Ohio Public Records Act, all external evaluations are public records and may be viewed by anyone, including the candidate.

Thank you again for agreeing to serve as an external reviewer. Please contact XXX (xxx@bgsu.edu or 419.372.####) if you have any questions.

Example 2: Email Confirmation of Service as External reviewer

I am writing to confirm our recent phone conversation where you agreed to serve as an external reviewer for Dr. XXX’s application for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at Bowling Green State University. You were identified as an active and influential scholar by both the faculty and candidate who could provide an independent assessment of Dr. XXX’s scholarly record for our promotion and tenure review process.

Would you please confirm in writing your willingness to serve as an external reviewer, and confirm that you do not have a personal relationship with Dr. XXX to avoid any perceived appearance of conflict of interest? Upon receiving your reply, I will send you a set of materials to review, along with general instructions for preparing your review letter. This will provide ample opportunity for you to review Dr. XXX’s materials and submit your letter no later than MONTH DAY, 20XX.

Finally, you should be aware that in accordance with the Ohio Public Records Act, all “Letters of evaluation are not confidential and may be disclosed under the Ohio Public Records Act.”

Thanks in advance for your assessment of the candidate’s credentials, which is a key component of our tenure and promotions process. I look forward to hearing back from you very soon. If you have any questions, feel reach out to me using the contact information below.
Example 1: Cover Letter and Instructions for External Reviewers

Thank you very much for agreeing to serve as a reviewer for Dr. _________’s case for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. We appreciate the time and effort you are contributing to this evaluation.

We ask that you evaluate Dr. _________’s research/creative publications in terms of quality, quantity, and impact. We are interested in how Dr. _________’s accomplishments compare to those of his peers, whether she is pursuing important questions, the level of scholarship embodied in her work, the skills she brings to her research/creative endeavors, and the significance of her work in the context of the discipline as a whole.

I am providing a set of materials that includes (1) Dr. _________’s curriculum vita, (2) her research/creative work narrative from her promotion and tenure dossier, in which she describes her scholarly trajectory and major accomplishments, (3) copies of Dr. _________’s publications from the review period, and (4) copies of her department’s tenure and promotion policy. The research narrative accompanies the dossier at all stages of review, so it is written for a non-specialist audience.

We ask that you focus your review on the publications that Dr. _________ has identified as her major accomplishments:
• (Pub)
• (Pub)
• (Pub)
• (Pub)
• (Pub)

Other included publications may be assessed as you deem appropriate.

Promotion and tenure at Bowling Green State University depend on one’s comprehensive record of teaching, scholarship, and service. Teaching and service are evaluated internally, and the balance of duties will vary from one institutional context to another. We are therefore not asking you to make a recommendation whether you would tenure and/or promote Dr. _________.

In your letter, would you please explain briefly if and how you know Dr. _________? Also, to inform reviewers on our campus about your academic expertise and background, please include a copy of your curriculum vitae with your evaluation.

Finally, allow me to point out that the Ohio Public Records Act does not permit confidentiality in the review process. By law, evaluations are public records and may be viewed by anyone, including the candidate.

We would greatly appreciate receiving your signed review by MONTH DAY, 20XX, in order to conform to our university’s timeline. Electronic submission of your signed review is welcome (XXX@bgsu.edu). Thank you again for lending your expertise to this most important process. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the email or number below.
Example 2: Cover Letter and Instructions for External Reviewers

On behalf of the School of XXX at Bowling Green State University, I wish to thank you for your willingness to serve as a reviewer of Dr. XXX’s credentials for tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. The candidate, school faculty, and I have identified you as an individual who could provide a valuable assessment of Dr. XXX’s scholarly record. We ask that you limit your comments to matters of scholarly productivity.

Bowling Green State University has defined scholarship in various ways. Individuals many choose to demonstrate expertise in a given area or engage in a broader range of scholarship. Domains used in the evaluation of scholarship include: publications/presentations/performances; sponsored program extramural support; and/or scholarship of engagement. Enclosed is a copy of the School’s reappointment, tenure and promotion policy that describes the criteria and standards used for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor.

I am enclosing a copy of Dr. XXX’s curriculum vita, a brief summary of her scholarship prepared by Dr. XXX, and artifacts of her scholarly work. Based upon your review of these materials, your written assessment should focus on the following:

- an explanation of how you (the reviewer) know the candidate, if applicable, without making personal assessments, either positive or negative;
- the quality and quantity of the scholarly work and relative importance of each in the reviewer’s assessment;
- a comparison of accomplishments in relation to those of other scholars in the discipline;
- the impact of the work on the discipline; and
- a candid, objective evaluation of the candidate’s scholarly strengths and weaknesses

Although you are asked to compare Dr. XXX’s accomplishments to other researchers in this field at the same stage of career development, please do not provide a recommendation regarding tenure and promotion. The final decision about whether to grant tenure and promotion is conducted within the university and is based upon the candidate’s total record that includes teaching and service in addition to scholarship. You should also be aware that in accordance with the Ohio Public Records Act, all “Letters of evaluation are not confidential and may be disclosed under the Ohio Public Records Act.”

If you have any questions regarding this process, feel free to contact me by email (xxxxx@bgsu.edu or phone (419-372-####). Please submit your signed, written review of Dr. XXX’s dossier along with a copy of your curriculum vita by MONTH DAY, 20XX. Again, I appreciate your assistance with this important process.