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| COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  Office of the Dean |

**Policy on External Reviews**

College of Arts and Sciences

Updated July 2016

This memo outlines the College of Arts and Sciences policies for soliciting external reviewers for faculty members’ promotion and/or tenure files.

* External reviews are required for promotion of all tenured and tenure-track candidates to Associate and full Professor
* External reviews are required for promotion of candidates to full Professor of Practice. At least half of the reviews must be from external reviewers for promotion to Associate Professor of Practice.
* External reviews are required for promotion of all Research Professors to Associate and full Research Professor.

The UNL *Guidelines* note that the University has confidence in the professionalism of those whose judgments are sought. The *Guidelines* add that faculty and administrators must assess and weigh the content of reviews in the context in which they are provided, a context "that includes the extent to which those reviews are confidential." However, reviews may not "be routinely or automatically discounted simply because a candidate chooses not to waive the right to access...reviews or the right to know the identity of the reviewers." (V.D.4. & VI.D.5) Anonymous contributions should not be solicited and unsolicited anonymous contributions should not be included in any file for review with two exceptions: student evaluations collected as part of a unit's regular student evaluation process and evaluations of administrative performance (e.g., as a department chair). (*Handbook*, p. 32)

Every tenure and/or promotion file must include *at least* three external (to UNL) and independent letters of review. Departments may choose to include more than three if they wish. (We suggest six letters as a goal.) Independent means letters will be from individuals who have had no (or only limited) professional or personal relationships with the candidate and who have been chosen for their ability to provide an objective and disinterested assessment. The following are *not* considered independent reviewers:

* Dissertation advisors
* Postdoctoral advisors
* Current or former collaborators
* Former colleagues
* Personal friends

Exceptions to the above criteria may be made in unusual circumstances but must be approved beforehand.

In the file the authors of external review letters should be clearly identified in terms of whether they were suggested by the department (chair or committee) or the candidate, the qualifications of each reviewer, and the relationship (if any) of the reviewer to the candidate. A copy of the letter soliciting the review should also be included. External review letters that are *not* independent or that are not solicited by the administrative officer must be identified as such in the fileand will not count toward the three required letters. If such letters are included, they should be placed after the independent letters in the file.

External Reviewers’ Qualifications

According to the SVCAA’s memo from 2008, “Generally external reviewers should have the full professorial rank, but they must at least occupy a rank equal to or above that being considered for the candidate. Reviewers must be chosen who are qualified to judge the quality of the candidate’s work because of their own knowledge of the field. Generally we would expect reviewers to hold positions at institutions comparable to or more highly ranked than UNL.”

The College of Arts and Sciences *strongly* *prefers* that external reviewers be full professors at Carnegie Classified Doctoral Universities: Highest Research Activity (DU:HRA) institutions or have similar qualifications. You can find the Carnegie Classification of an institution at <http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/>.

The College recognizes that sometimes it is best to use a reviewer who is not a full professor at a DU:HRA institution. For example, you might want to solicit the review of someone at a foreign institution, at a government lab, who is well qualified but works at a lesser ranked institution, or who is an associate professor at a DU:HRA institution (only in cases of promotion to associate professor). The College will likely approve a very limited number of these cases, but our goal is to ensure that the strongest file possible comes up to the College and this means getting a strong set of external reviewers.

Chairs must submit for approval the names, rank, and affiliations of *all* proposed reviewers. For proposed reviewers who are not full professors at DU:HRA institutions, the chair must also provide a justification for why the individual’s qualifications are appropriate for conducting the review. Please submit this information to the College of A&S Dean’s Office *prior* to the external reviewer being solicited.

Below are examples of appropriate justifications:

Not a faculty member at a DU:HRA Institution

Dr. Jones is a potential reviewer for Professor Wolf’s promotion case for full professor. Dr. Jones is a well known evolutionary biologist who has made important contributions to understanding the evolution of sexual reproduction. She was on the faculty of X University for 25 years and is now a senior scientist at the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Research Institute in California. More about her current research can be seen at “website.”

Faculty member at an institution outside the United States

Sir Richard Smith is the Holmes Professor of Natural Philosophy at the Mathematics Institute at the University of Oxford. He has held a visiting position at Berkeley and is the past president of the International Mathematical Union.

Faculty member who is an associate professor

Dr. Joby is associate professor at The Ohio State University specializing in American Indian and New Zealand Maori literatures and cultures. He is one of the founding members of the MLA environmental/eco-criticism group and his scholarship was recognized with the best book award for eco-criticism in 2012. His work directly speaks to Dr. Wolf’s promotion case with regard to indigenous and ecocritical methodologies and perspectives.

These A&S policies are designed to ensure that the external reviewers chosen can make fair and rigorous assessments of the faculty member’s work in terms of quality and impact. If you have questions about the suitability of an external reviewer, please contact the Dean’s Office beforehand.