

# **UB Department Chair Leadership Program**

September 21, 2017

**The Role of the Chair in Tenure, Promotion, and  
Awards**

# Roles of Chair

- Ensure that the candidate has a copy of administrative procedures.
- Ensure that the candidate is made aware of the departmental expectations for promotion and tenure with respect to research, teaching and service.
- Ensure that the file includes all required elements, and that these are included and presented in an organized and clear fashion in the order outlined in the faculty handbook.
- Prepare the Chair's letter, discussed in detail below.
- Ensure that the Chair's letter consists of an independent review of the evidence in the dossier; it should not serve as the major source of evidence in a dossier.
- Ensure that each candidate is treated fairly and consistently during dossier reviews.
- Ensure that the candidate is given an opportunity to review the contents of the file, with the exception of the confidential solicited letters, and add a response if desired, before the subsequent level of review.
- Ensure that your letter is transmitted to the candidate at the time the dossier is advanced to the next level.

# Managing Pre-tenure careers

- During hiring – inform new faculty of expectations, timing, and process
  - Hiring at associate/full – three years for tenure
- Create conditions for success – start-ups, course load, reduced service, mentoring
- Provide clear and honest feedback on an annual basis
- Did I say mentoring!
- Help manage the tenure clock when needed

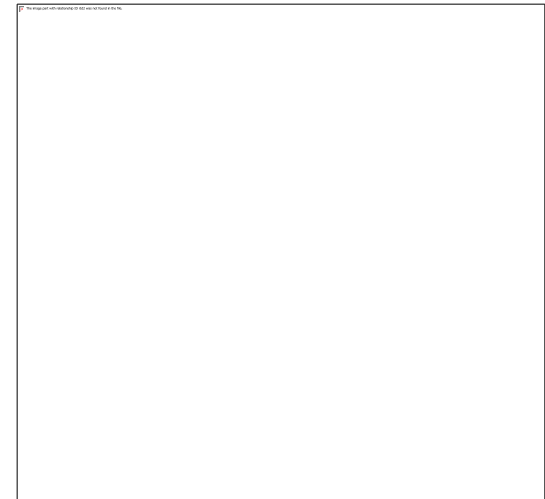
# Pre-tenure Renewals

- Mini-tenure cases
- Substantive feedback to faculty
- Letter (if written to dean) must be transmitted to faculty member at same time (or very soon after)
- Hard conversations
- Non-renewals are sometimes tough but appropriate – avoid hard case later

# Tenure Clock Policies

Legitimate reasons to stop tenure clock:

- Family circumstances (childbirth, adoption, elder care etc.)
- Personal or family illness
- Unforeseen impediments to research (request to Provost)
- Flexible work schedules do not necessarily result in clock stoppage



# Tenure Timing Issues

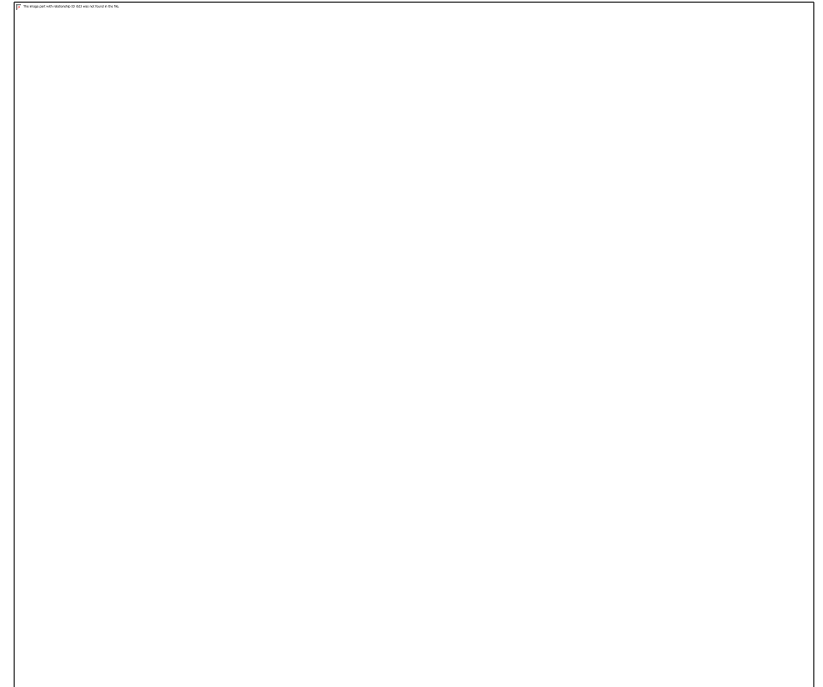
- Document and explain tenure clock adjustments in chair's letter.
- No clock stoppage for research leave or fellowship
- Early tenure: No policy against but high bar
  - Often an issue in retention cases
- Late tenure (7<sup>th</sup> year) – only in cases of absolute necessity. Must be approved by dean. Never guaranteed.
  - Advise candidate on pros and cons

# Issues for Promotion to Full Professor

- If denied after President's review, need to wait 3 years
- Advance when case is ready
  - Faculty member has right to request
  - Not a function of years in service
  - Has the faculty member earned unequivocal national and, highly desired, international reputation as a leader in a field
  - Has faculty member demonstrated sustained record of scholarly excellence appropriate for the discipline AND evidence that the record of scholarship will continue into the future
  - Demonstration of impact in discipline
  - Has faculty member performed important department, university, disciplinary service
  - Mentoring of students
  - Importance of annual reports, CV review with faculty member
  - Resolving "readiness disputes": Importance of open/candid discussion with:
    - Candidate (most important)
    - Full professors in department (never should only be a chair decision)
    - Dean

# Selecting External Reviewers

- Start early – give reviewers ample time
- OK to contact first to assess willingness
- Follow template for solicitation letter – Not a chair's letter – do not praise, or evaluate candidate – be neutral
- Seek several reviewers, more than required minimum of 4 AAU disinterested reviewers
  - Some may be in the grey area of interestedness
  - Some may not respond in a timely manner
  - Some may not be AAU





# What does “Disinterested” Mean?

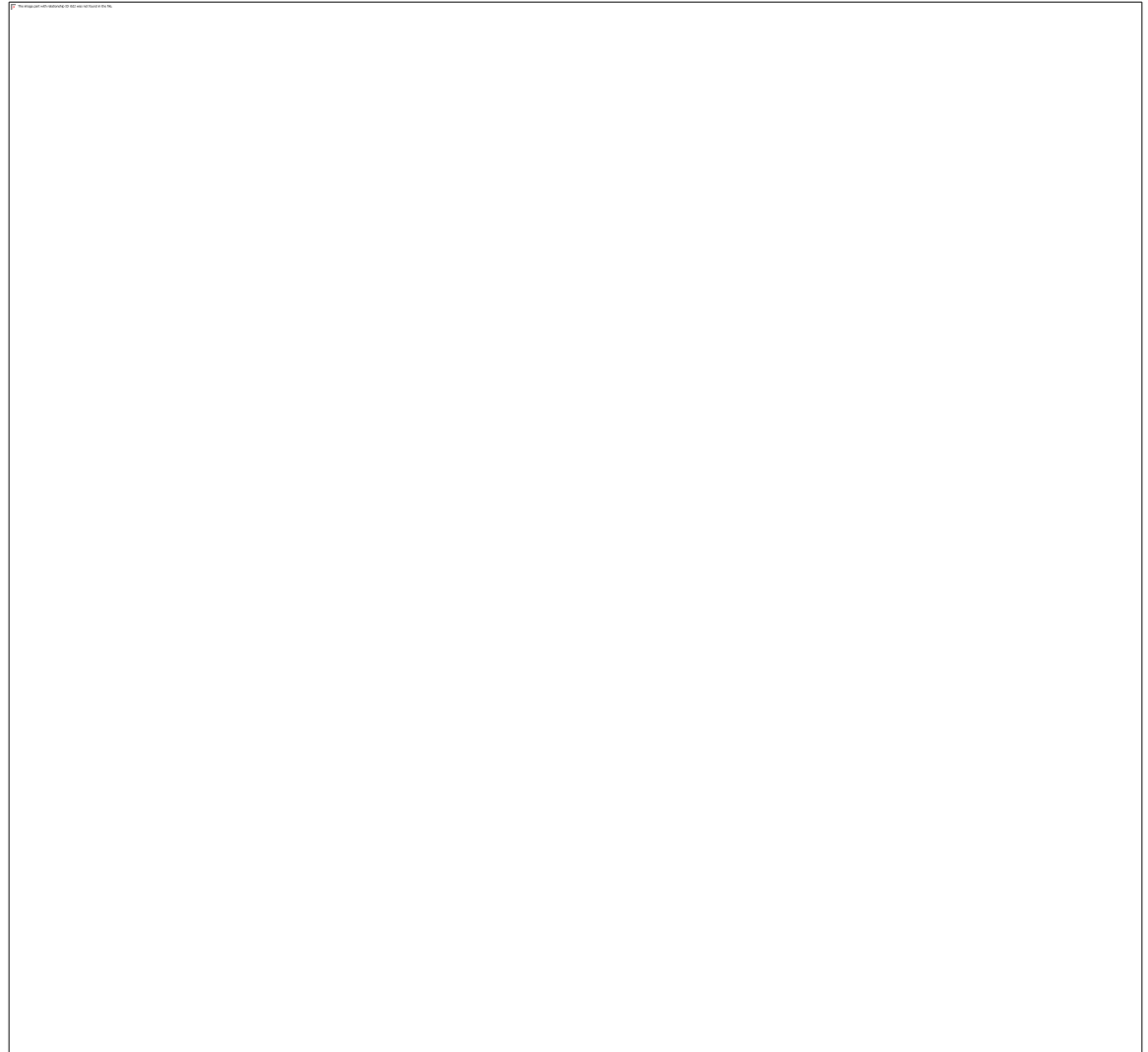
- Principle: Will reviewer’s own reputation be enhanced by praising or supporting the candidate’s work?
- Three categories:
  - Clearly interested: Mentors, co-authors, collaborators, current and former colleagues
  - Clearly disinterested: None of the above, but familiar with candidate from conferences/reading/citing work
  - Grey Zones: Editor of a book collection, journal special issue editor, conference/panel organizer
    - Was selection based on peer review and quality of work
    - Does the reviewer indicate that he/she can be objective

# Selection of External Reviewers

- From AAU schools unless field dictates using non-AAU (Explain)
- Candidate should not be involved in the selection
- Candidate can disqualify reviewers by submitting names
- Consult with colleagues in department and field to identify reviewers
- Clearly explain selection process used

## Content of Letters

- Testimonial letters are not helpful
- Emphasize to reviewers that they should engage and evaluate the significance of the scholarship
- Why do they think this person's work is of high quality/impact
- For promotion to full, appropriate to ask about issue of timing
- Likelihood of receiving tenure at their institution



# Internal Letters

- Only two are required
- Comment on Service, Teaching, and collegiality
- Considered “interested” reviewers of scholarship

## Chair's Role

- University wants your candid recommendation: don't abdicate!
- Not just transmitting or endorsing departmental vote
- Need to be an honest broker and keep the process fair
- Chair's letter must be a thorough and fair presentation of the case

# PRB Deadlines

We accept and encourage early submissions and accept submissions on a rolling basis due to the high volume of cases the PRB manages each year. **The posted deadlines are NOT to be considered due dates but the last possible submission dates to guarantee review in a timely manner.**

## **Deadlines for Promotion to Full Professor/Librarian:**

October 1 for promotions effective July 1 of the following year

December 1 for promotions effective September 1 of the following year (subject to revision)

## **Deadlines for Continuing Appointment/Promotion to Associate Professor/Associate Librarian:**

October 1 for promotions effective January 1 of the following year

**Final submission date for all dossiers: February 1: [Petition for Extension\(42 KB\)](#)**

**N.B. This deadline is not a due date but is the last possible submission date for all dossiers to be considered for review in that academic year.**

# Chair Letter

- Vote
- External reviewers – general description without identifying
- External reviews/letters
- Expectations and standards in discipline
- Scholarly and creative outlets: reputation
- Scholarly contributions and impact
- Teaching
- Service
- Unusual aspects in the department
- Unusual aspects of the case

# Departmental vote

- What was the vote (eg., 7-0-0; 5 for, 3 against, 2 abstentions; etc.)
- Give number of faculty who did not attend departmental vote, and where known, reasons for not attending
- What were the comments/reasons given in support of giving tenure to the candidate, if any
- Any concerns expressed in the meeting; what were they—why should or shouldn't these concerns prevent the candidate from achieving tenure



# External Reviewers

- Why those particular reviewers were selected
- Discussion of why their institution is considered a 'peer' or 'aspirational peer': Note: sometimes our aspirational peers in a discipline come from institutions that do not count as our peers. **It is critical** that this be explained in your letter.
- Relationship with candidate—explain why this person is 'at arm's length', if questionable
- Describe what they were asked to review
- Brief description of request letter reviewers received

# External Reviews

Review of external letter writers' comments. Summarize what reviewers said, and what you think of their estimations of your candidate. If there are any negative or questionable comments in the external letters, **address and explain them directly**. Do not try to ignore doubts raised by external letter writers, hoping that committees at higher levels will not notice. Any sense that the chair is trying to hide something may result in added scrutiny and doubt about the candidate. Negative comments will not necessarily doom the candidate. But they should be explained/placed in context, etc. **Refer to reviewer comments by number (or letter), not name.**

# Expectations and Standards

Description of expectations for tenure in the discipline or sub-discipline of the candidate. This can be based on what peer institutions expect, or be pulled from existing practices/documents in the department. Be clear about expectations for research, teaching and service. If the department has such expectations in writing, this document can be included in the file.

# What about collaborations

- Issue of team science
- Status of collaboration in field
- Discussing collaboration

# Letters from Collaborators

- Both internal and external collaborators
  - Grants
  - Books
  - articles
- Spell out nature of collaboration and specific contributions of candidate

# Scholarly and Creative Outlets

- Description of kinds of work recognized as ‘scholarly’ in the discipline or sub-discipline (journal articles, grants, governmental reports, books, book chapters, patents, concerts, exhibits, conference papers, etc.).
- This is especially important for any case involving anything that might be viewed as non-traditional forms of scholarship by other disciplines; for example, community-engaged scholarship, practice oriented publications, blogs, etc.

# Scholarship Contributions and Impact

- Impact and importance of candidate's work that merits tenure
- Trajectory and potential for the future
- Description of the quality/ranking of the journals/publishing locations where the candidate has published. Where do they rank in the discipline or sub-discipline? Top Tier? Bottom quality? Who says so?
- Clear and thorough citation analyses
- When co-authored work is present, point to part of dossier where the candidate's contributions are explained. Co-authors may be asked to describe such contributions. However: co-authors' letters will not be counted as among the external review letters.

# Teaching

- Teaching, in comparison to departmental average
- Courses taught
- New courses developed
- Quality of teaching (evaluations, letters)
- Special circumstances associated with classes (required classes, unpopular, difficult)
- Student mentoring
- Graduate students overseen/Ph.Ds completed
- Curriculum development



# Service

- Service: load and quality of work as reported by colleagues
  - Consulting
  - Reviewing
  - Editing
  - Assistance to profession, community, agency etc
  - Conference roles
  - Committee work and leadership, task forces, work groups
  - Community service (describe)

# Unusual Aspects in the Department

Description of any unusual aspects of the department that affect the candidate's trajectory: # of students changing radically over time; # of faculty changing in the department; unusual teaching or service loads and why, etc.

# Unusual Aspects of the Case

Description of any unusual aspects of the case (e.g. stopped tenure clock, 7<sup>th</sup> year issue, unusual scholarly trajectory or output for the discipline, gap in productivity, unusual load in teaching or service, dual appointment with another department...)—anything that will make this candidate sound ‘different’ from an ‘average’ candidate coming from your discipline or your department. Explain those things clearly.

**Be Transparent!**

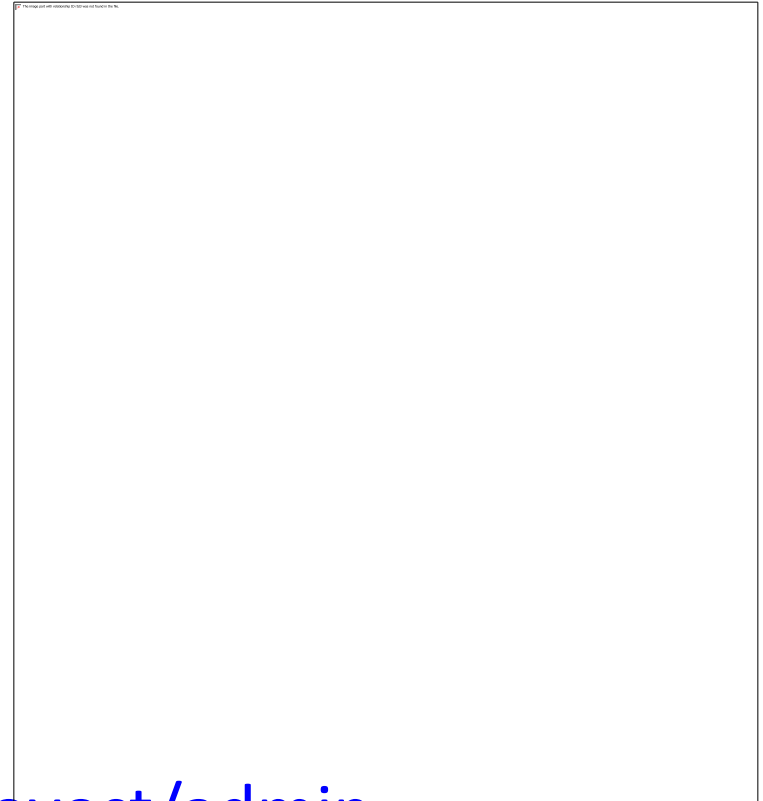
# UB and SUNY Awards Deadlines

Award Name	Final Nomination Due Date
SUNY Distinguished Professor	July 15 (November decision) November 15 (May decision)
SUNY Distinguished Service Professor	July 15 (November decision) November 15 (May decision)
SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor	July 15 (November decision) November 15 (May decision)
SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Faculty Service	November 15
SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship & Creative Activities	November 15
SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching	November 15
SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Adjunct Teaching	September 15
UB Distinguished Professor	March 1
UB Exceptional Scholar Award (Sustained Achievement/ Young Investigator)	March 15
UB Teaching Innovation Award	March 15

Candidates will be considered twice a year at sessions of the SUNY Board of Trustees meetings in March and September. Announcements occur in May and November.

# External Awards

- NRC Awards
  - 1300 awards and honors
    - Arts and humanities
    - Social sciences
    - Physical sciences and engineering
    - Life sciences
- <http://www.buffalo.edu/provost/admin-units/faculty-affairs/awards/ExternalAwards.html>



# Circulate Tips

## **National Science Foundation CAREER Award**

- **LEARN EVERYTHING YOU CAN ABOUT THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION.**
  - **DEPICT YOUR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION VISION FOR THE NEXT TEN TO TWENTY YEARS.**
  - **READ OTHER SUCCESSFUL CAREER PROPOSALS.**
  - **EMPLOY PROPOSAL READERS, BOTH EXPERTS IN YOUR FIELD AND OTHERS OUTSIDE YOUR FIELD**
  - **START EARLY.**
  - **ESTABLISH INDUSTRY COLLABORATIONS EARLY.**
  - **BE STRATEGIC ABOUT THE BROADER IMPACTS OF YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT**
  - **SEEK THE APPROPRIATE BALANCE BETWEEN RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PLANS PRESENTED.**
  - **HAVE A CONVERSATION(S) WITH THE NSF PROGRAM OFFICER ONCE YOU HAVE DETERMINED YOUR PROJECT GOALS.**
  - **UTILIZE HIGH-QUALITY GRAPHICS IN YOUR PROPOSAL TO ILLUSTRATE YOUR IDEAS.**
  - **INFORM THE PROGRAM OFFICER OF YOUR WILLINGNESS TO SERVE ON PEER REVIEW PANELS.**
  - **KNOW YOUR INSTITUTION**
  - **PROVIDE TIMELINES FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS IN YOUR CAREER PROPOSAL.**
  - **KEEP TRYING.**
- ZJ Pei , NSF CAREER Proposal Writing Tips, 2007.

# Consider Nominating/Lobbying for External Awards/Honors

- Begin early in faculty member's career - mentoring
- Help faculty members build a profile to receive awards
- Develop an awards committee to help coordinate awards
- Contact National Academy members in your professional networks to lobby on behalf of senior scholars – member nominations

# Thank you

- Comments and Questions