



# WISCONSIN

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Spring 2020

To: Department Chairs, Directors, and Deans

From: John F. Berry, Outgoing Chair and Alan Carroll, Incoming Chair, Physical Sciences Divisional Committee

Re: Submission of Tenure Review Documents for 2020-2021

**Please share this letter with all assistant professors in your department, as well as the chairs of mentoring committees for junior faculty.**

Documents relevant to the submission of tenure dossiers to the Physical Sciences Divisional Executive Committee, including tenure guidelines and a checklist of required materials are available at:

<https://secfac.wisc.edu/tenure/physical-sciences-divisional-committee/tenure-documents/>. Based on recent tenure cases, we recommend paying close attention to the following issues:

- *Documentation of Teaching Effectiveness.* For promotions, the committee expects to see the results of annual departmental peer review of teaching. These reviews are meant to be evaluative. A recommended form for peer evaluation of teaching is available on the website linked above. In addition to student evaluations and peer review of teaching, programs are strongly encouraged to provide evidence of instructor effectiveness beyond the quantitative summary. A growing body of evidence shows that student evaluations commonly reflect gender, race, age, or class biases. Possible indications of bias should be taken into account in the analysis of a candidate's teaching effectiveness.
- *Mentoring.* The candidate should provide a statement describing their mentoring philosophy, with emphasis on past experience and future plans (maximum one page).
- *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:* The candidate may include a statement describing their efforts in community engaged scholarship (CES), activities in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), or both (optional; maximum one page).
- *Publication List.* We recommend designating author contributions similarly to how they are given in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*: Designed Research, Performed Research, Contributed Reagents or Analytical Tools, Analyzed Data, and Wrote the Paper. If the candidate published collaborative research together with other faculty members, it is helpful to provide a brief statement identifying the collaborators and their expertise.
- *Three Impactful Publications.* These publications should be chosen from the candidate's probationary period (for promotions). It is helpful to provide for each of the publications a short paragraph that explains its significance and scholarly contribution for a general audience.
- *Chair's Letter.* Please provide information on the recruitment process for the candidate; departmental procedures for voting on tenure (e.g., rules re: quorum and absentee ballots), and the vote breakdown. When a department's executive committee vote is not unanimous, the letter should also summarize the major concerns raised during the discussion. A copy of the candidate's appointment letter should be attached.

## Divisional Committees

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608/263-5741 [www.secfac.wisc.edu](http://www.secfac.wisc.edu)

- *Split or Joint Appointments.* For candidates with split or joint appointments, the chair's letter may be written from the perspective of both appointments; two separate letters may be appropriate. Likewise, for candidates who perform crucial roles in centers, institutes, or clusters, supporting letters from the center leadership may be included under section J of the dossier, "Effect of appointment on center or cluster activity", or as an appendix.
- *Soliciting Letters of Evaluation.* The dossier must include a *minimum of five* "arm's-length" letters from experts who can provide objective evaluations. Letters from individuals such as the candidate's PhD advisor, postdoctoral supervisors, frequent collaborators, recipients of joint funding, or others who may have a conflict of interest in the candidate or his/her work are **not** "arm's length" and are given reduced weight by the committee. In general, the candidate should not be consulted in the selection of letter writers. The committee strongly discourages informal contact (e.g., by phone or email) with letter writers prior to formal solicitation. All formal or informal correspondence with letter writers should be documented. Please specify whether evaluators received the full dossier to review, and keep in mind that all materials provided to the letter writers must be included in the dossier.
- *Early Applications.* The expected level of accomplishment for tenure is the same regardless of the timing of the application. Most candidates require the full tenure clock in order to meet this expectation. The committee discourages early applications for candidates who have demonstrated strong but not exceptional performance, as candidates are only evaluated by the committee once (i.e., a failed early case will not be reconsidered a year later). However, the committee *will* consider early applications for candidates who have demonstrated exceptional accomplishment or productivity, as well as those with competing outside offers for whom early tenure consideration is part of a retention package. The chair's letter should explain the reasons for early consideration, and level of urgency should be noted in Section K: Urgency of the tenure dossier.
- *Tenure Clock Extensions.* Tenure clock extensions (e.g., for maternity/ paternity leave) *do not* count against a candidate. Unused extensions will not cause the case to be considered as an "early" tenure decision (but the cover letter should identify the original tenure clock and any extensions to make this clear).
- *Appointments.* Senior hires are generally evaluated for tenure only after they have accepted an offer. If there are extenuating circumstances that require evaluation prior to acceptance, please contact us with details *before* submitting a tenure dossier. In addition to the guidelines re: letters provided above, departments should explicitly note whether any writers of letters for the dossier also wrote letters for the candidate's job application to UW-Madison.
- *Example Dossiers.* An annotated composite tenure dossier and other sample dossiers are available for review in the Divisional Committees office, 133 Bascom Hall. *We strongly urge candidates and department chairs (or others responsible for preparing tenure packages) to examine these documents.* An incomplete or poorly prepared tenure dossier may be returned to the department for revision without review. Pre-tenure faculty members are encouraged to begin constructing tenure dossiers in their first year at UW.
- *Role of the Physical Sciences Divisional Executive Committee.* Divisional committees do not search for new information regarding candidates for tenure or appointment but rather evaluate the information provided by the department. We therefore hope that the resources noted in this memo are helpful for you to provide us with complete materials for review.

We look forward to working with you over the coming months. Please contact me ([carroll@geology.wisc.edu](mailto:carroll@geology.wisc.edu) or 608-345-0667) or Divisional Committees Coordinator Michaela Aust ([michaela.aust@wisc.edu](mailto:michaela.aust@wisc.edu) or 608-263-5741) if we can be of assistance.