

March 2013

Includes revisions approved by the Faculty Senate in December 2012 and February 2013

GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY APPOINTMENTS, PROMOTION, TENURE, AND RENEWAL OF CONTRACTS

APPLIES TO ALL RICE UNIVERSITY FACULTY GOVERNED BY POLICY #201-97

Preface

This document is a companion to the University's policies on Appointments, Promotion and Tenure (#201-97 and 201-01). It applies to [1] faculty hired after July 1, 1997 and [2] assistant, associate and full professors hired between July 1, 1995 and July 1, 1997 who chose review under policy 201-97. Serving as a guide for candidates, department chairs, deans, and members of the University Council's Promotion and Tenure Committee, it describes three review processes: [1] the third-year review of assistant professors for contract renewal, [2] the review for tenure, and [3] the review for promotion from the tenured ranks of associate to full professor.

(In this document, the word "promotion" will mean advancement in rank, conferral of tenure, or both. When the tenure issue alone is being addressed, it will be so indicated.) This document was prepared by the Promotion and Tenure Committee of the University Council (herein referred to as the P&T Committee or "the Committee").

A. Introduction

To confer (or not to confer) tenure is the single most important decision a University can make with regard to a member of its faculty. From the individual's perspective, it is a decision of enormous magnitude -- one that can have a major impact on the candidate's career. From the perspective of the University, it is a commitment to support an individual's program of scholarship and teaching throughout his or her career at Rice until retirement. Over a period of time, many such decisions can have a profound influence on the character and quality of the University. Although contract renewals and promotions that do not affect tenure are less consequential, they too have an important impact on both the individual and the institution. For these reasons the processes leading up to these decisions require great care and attention. While keeping the goals and quality standards of the University in mind, we must be scrupulously attentive to the process to ensure that all candidates receive a fair and thorough review.

Except for changes due to policy revisions, the procedures by which candidates are evaluated should also remain consistent over time. Turnover occurs in the ranks of those who evaluate candidates for promotion and tenure; new members are elected and appointed to University Council; deans and department chairs change. These guidelines are intended to provide continuity to the process; they are a tutorial for those who are new to the process and a reference for those who have participated before.

As much as possible, it is also important that the process be applied uniformly to the many

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different disciplines at Rice. The P&T Committee recognizes that both the nature of scholarship and the venues that are used to communicate it vary widely from discipline to discipline. However, where similarities between disciplines do exist, such as the different areas of engineering or the humanities, we expect the procedures for evaluation to be very nearly identical.

This document does not establish policy, but the Committee considers the guidelines to follow historical practice and to be fully consistent with policies described in the relevant Policy 201-01.

Strict adherence to confidentiality is important at all stages of the review process. Except as specified in these procedures, all persons involved in a promotional review must hold in strict confidence all discussions and materials related to the review, including but not limited to the letters of both internal and external reviewers, letters of recommendation from deans and department chairs, testimony to the P&T Committee by deans, department chairs, and internal reviewers, and all deliberations of the P&T Committee. No person meeting with the Committee should draw inferences about the process or disclose to the candidate or to others what takes place at a Committee meeting at any time. The president and provost may share the Promotion and Tenure Committee's recommendations with the respective deans, but otherwise no one may disclose those recommendations either before or after the list of promotions has been published.

B. The Promotion and Tenure Process

Except in a mandatory year (normally the seventh year of service for an assistant professor who has begun his or her Rice appointment at the entry-level, but possibly some other year owing to prior written agreement or adjustments for leaves), consideration of an individual for promotion and/or tenure is at the discretion of the department. However, in the mandatory year, the full deliberation, including solicitation of outside letters, is to be undertaken and the case submitted through the entire process of consideration through the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.

B.1. The Review Schedule

The promotion and tenure review process consists of a sequence of stages, beginning with the candidate's department and progressing through the level of the division, the University-wide Committee, the president, and finally, the Board of Trustees. (It is understood that in schools without a clearly defined departmental structure, the school is the candidate's principal home base. In such cases the term "school" should be substituted for "department.") At each stage the candidate's qualifications are reviewed and evaluated. The complexity and thoroughness of the process invariably requires both time and dedication on the part of all those involved. For this reason, the schedule extends over many months (an accelerated schedule is used for candidates from other institutions who are appointed to a tenured position at Rice-- see section B.3).

The process typically begins in the spring of one calendar year and concludes with a spring Board meeting of the following calendar year. Since assistant professors must be promoted no later than their seventh year of employment at Rice (including adjustments to the tenure clock as described in policy #204-03, "Faculty Family, Primary Caregiver, Medical, and Professional Leaves"), the process must begin at the department level in the spring of their sixth year. The

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schedule for promotion of associate professors to full professor parallels the process detailed for assistant professors. A timeline for these reviews is given in section D.

B.2. Early reviews

Early reviews are encouraged only in cases where candidates are making unusually rapid progress and have already shown high accomplishments. To be successful, the case must be very clear and compelling. If the department wishes to put forward a candidate early, it should make a proposal in writing to the dean, summarizing the reasons, prior to initiating the review process.

B.3. Interim reviews

When a candidate is hired at advanced standing, an interim review for tenure is usually necessary. To speed the recruitment process, these interim reviews are conducted on an ad-hoc basis and may occur at any time of the year. The process for preparation of the case follows the same guidelines as for normal reviews. Once forwarded to the provost's office, the case is read individually by the members of the P&T Committee who record their comments and vote. If any one member of the Committee feels it is necessary to call a meeting of the P&T Committee, such a meeting will be called. Once the review is concluded, the provost will forward the dossier to the president along with his or her recommendation and the Committee's vote.

B.4. The role of the department

The most important stage of the review process occurs in the department. It is here that the case originates, and it is here that the dossier is prepared. The faculty members in the department also have the most extensive knowledge of the candidate's work and the most relevant expertise to evaluate it. It is here that the quality standards are most effectively applied. Ideally, if the departments execute their responsibilities fully and correctly, the vast majority of cases that are forwarded to the dean and to the P&T Committee with a positive recommendation will be approved. If a candidate does not qualify for promotion, it is best that a recommendation to not award promotion be made at the level of the department.

B.4.a. Responsibilities of the Chair

The department chair is responsible for informing candidates about the promotion process, including the candidate's role in the review, and the typical schedule for each stage of the review. The chair should also make a reasonable effort to ensure that the candidate has fully understood the process and that any potential confusion or misunderstanding has been resolved.

The chair should also explain clearly to the candidate the expectations for meeting university-wide standards of quality and productivity in scholarship, research, or other creative work, in teaching, and in professional service both within and outside the University. For assistant professors, this information should be provided to the candidate at the time of employment, reiterated at each performance review (see Policy 214-03), and again communicated to the candidate prior to review for promotion or contract renewal. At annual performance reviews, the chair should give assistant professors feedback about their progress toward achieving tenure and suggest constructive measures that will help address any existing deficiencies.

It is also the responsibility of the department chair to appoint the internal reviewer, with full consideration of suggestions made by the candidate, the faculty, and the dean. The department

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chair is also responsible for the preparation of the candidate's dossier. Although he or she may delegate much of the work to others, it is the chair who must oversee the process and ensure that the dossier is complete and complies with University guidelines. At the beginning of all meetings concerning promotion, the chair should remind the faculty of the confidential nature of the entire review process.

B.4.b. The Department's Promotion Review.

Eligible candidates: Each year, the department chair should determine which faculty members are eligible for promotion in the following year. This information should be obtained by a careful review of the department's records and should be confirmed with the dean and provost. Special consideration is needed to account for the effect of leaves on the tenure clock.

Decision to conduct a promotion review: The Department Chair meets with the appropriate faculty in the Department to decide which, if any, of their eligible faculty members they will review for promotion. Once decided, the chair will then talk to each of the faculty members the department wishes to review. He or she will:

- a) explain fully the review process and timeline to all eligible candidates,
- b) secure their consent to proceed with the review,
- c) request suggestions for external reviewers (see section B.6 for a description of the process for selecting external reviewers),
- d) request suggestions for the internal reviewer (see section B.7 for a description of the role of the internal reviewer), and
- e) supervise the compilation of the dossier.

If the department formally decides not to conduct a non-mandatory review, the eligible candidates will be so informed by the chair, given the reasons for the decision, told when a future review might be expected, and advised how best to prepare for it.

The dossier: The following information must be included in the dossier:

- 1) An abstract summarizing the following key information about the candidate's work:
 - a) The candidate's department, current, and proposed rank.
 - b) The candidate's education.
 - c) The candidate's teaching record at Rice, including a summary of courses taught, student evaluations for each, new courses implemented, courseware developed, department assessments of teaching, and any other relevant information. (Student evaluations from the fall semester of the year in which promotion is considered should not be included.)

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d) A list of current and past graduate students, with a record of their placement.

e) The candidate's record of scholarship, including refereed articles published in journals, articles in journals that are not refereed, books authored, book chapters authored, books edited, and other relevant creative works. The record should begin with a table summarizing the numbers for each item. This table must be followed by a chronological list of the items in each category.

Where appropriate, a record of citations should be provided, including comparisons to other faculty. The citation comparison for a candidate should use the same number of years prior to promotion, or since receiving tenure, when compiling citations for the same relative years of the previously tenured comparison faculty.

If the candidate has been previously promoted at Rice, the department shall provide a copy of the previous promotion Abstract (or CV if tenure did not occur at Rice), and specifically identify items listed as accepted or submitted in the previous Abstract (or CV) or taken into account by internal and external reviewers at the time promotion was awarded.

f) A list of awards and prizes.

g) Where appropriate, a record of external support for research, giving the source of funding, title of the grant or contract, the total amount, the amount allocated to the candidate, and time period.

h) A list of the external reviewers, indicating whether they were suggested by the department or the candidate. All external reviewers who were asked to review the candidate's case should be listed whether they agreed to participate or not. Those who did not participate should be indicated and the reasons given.

i) A record of service both to Rice University and to the external professional community. Examples include the following: service on departmental and university committees; service in the colleges and in organizations sponsored by the University and its Alumni Association; educational outreach to the community.

2) A report, of no more than two pages, in which the candidate expands upon the broader intellectual significance and contribution of his or her scholarship, research, or other creative work and indicates the direction of future work.

3) Copies of all articles, books, reviews, reports and/or other creative works produced by the candidate. Note, the status of each should be clearly stated: (1) published (date) in (journal); (2) accepted for publication (date) in (journal), with or without revisions required; (3) submitted (date) to (journal); (4) unpublished; (5) in preparation. In fields for which published articles or books are not the norm, photos, recordings, drawings, and/or other representations of creative works by the candidate should be provided.

4) Status of works under preparation: copies of correspondence, notification, and official

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contracts from publishers.

5) Copies of reviews written by others about books, grants, or other creative work produced by the candidate.

6) A current *curriculum vitae*.

7) Letters from external reviewers, copies of the letters sent by the chair to the reviewers, and a brief biography of the reviewers. The name and affiliation of the external reviewer and any connection between the reviewer and the candidate should be indicated on the first page of each letter.

8) A report on teaching and educational objectives, of no more than two pages, in which the candidate reflects on the distinctive aspects of his or her teaching career and practice; service courses taught, curricular innovations, role as mentor to graduate or undergraduate students, special efforts to help students with writing or oral presentations, integrating teaching and research, and so on.

9) Letters attesting to service to professional organizations, University and Department committees, and community outreach. The candidate may also choose to include a one page, or less, statement describing departmental or university service that has had a major impact, or general service to the university, profession, or other institutions.

Note: The candidate may seek a preliminary assessment of the tenure case, in which case the department will examine the CV, teaching record, and any other materials the candidate wishes to present. Regardless of the department's judgment, however, the promotion process will proceed unless the candidate declines to participate further. On the basis of its internal dossier (consisting of all of the above items, except for the external reviewers' letters), the department may deem that the awarding of tenure is unlikely. If so, it will inform both the candidate and the dean. After consultation with the dean, the candidate may withdraw from the process, which will then continue no further. However, if the candidate does not withdraw, the department will request external letters and bring the process to completion.

Occasionally, a candidate may wish to be considered for early tenure. In this case the department will examine the CV, teaching record, and any other materials the candidate wishes to present. Should the department decide that proceeding with an early tenure case is not warranted, it will explain the reasons for its decision to the candidate.

It is important that the candidate provide the necessary material to the department in a timely manner. Invariably, some material will change over the period of the review. A letter may be received from an editor indicating that a book manuscript has been accepted for publication, or notification may be received that an important grant has been awarded by a foundation or government agency. Late materials such as these may be included in the candidate's dossier by forwarding them through the department chair, dean, and provost, to the P&T Committee. The P&T Committee will decide at its discretion when to cut off the inclusion of late materials.

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Dossiers of candidates for promotion from associate professor with tenure to full professor should emphasize work done since the last promotion.

The review: When the full dossier has been compiled, including the external reviewers' letters, the department chair will convene the tenured departmental faculty to review the proposal for promotion. (Note: for promotion of assistant professors, all tenured faculty in the department will meet; for promotion of associate professors to full professor, only the full professors will meet.) When considering a candidate for promotion the following questions should be addressed:

1. What is the quality and impact of the candidate's scholarship or creative work? Is the work original and innovative? Are the questions addressed in the research important and has the candidate made substantive contributions to answering them?
2. How has the candidate influenced the understanding or practice of his or her discipline(s)? How has the work of the candidate been recognized in the profession? Has the candidate established a national or an international reputation in his or her chosen field(s) of research or creative work?
3. Has the individual been involved in leadership activities and service in professional organizations in his or her field(s)? What has been the candidate's impact within the external professional communities, nationally and internationally?
4. How does the candidate compare with others in the field, both at Rice and at other institutions, at a similar stage in their careers?
5. What has been the individual's teaching performance, and what is their potential for improvement? This evaluation should, among others, be based on the following: student teaching evaluations, departmental evaluations, letters from students, prizes and awards for teaching, record in mentoring graduate and undergraduate students, implementation of new courses, novel deployment of information technology for teaching, and curriculum development.
6. Has the candidate made useful contributions to service in the Rice Community and in the external professional community?
7. Does the candidate strengthen the department, the school, and the university and if so, how?
8. What is the reason for believing that if promoted, the candidate will continue to be a creative scholar, a proficient teacher, and an interactive member of the Rice community? It is useful to remember that tenure and promotion are not granted as a reward for past achievements. They are given with the anticipation that the promise suggested by the record of scholarship, teaching, and service to date will be fulfilled many times over in the future.
9. The increasing prevalence of multi-authored publications and scholarly works presents a special challenge in assessing candidates for tenure and/or promotion. In preparing a dossier, the department should pay particular attention to ascertaining and documenting the specific quantitative and qualitative contributions of the candidate to multi-authored works.

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Documentation of the individual's contributions can (and probably should) include several approaches, including a specific statement from the candidate addressed to this question. In soliciting outside letters of reference, specific question should be raised about identifying the candidate's creative and conceptual contributions to joint work. In the interest of obtaining a penetrating assessment of the candidate's contributions to collaborative work, it may be appropriate to target some number of reference requests to collaborators and co-authors, with the context of a sufficiently rich list of outside references.

Once the discussion is complete, the department chair may call for a straw vote on the promotion. At this point, the department chair should make a clear distinction between a straw vote to evaluate the candidate and the final promotion vote to be forwarded to the dean. After discussing the straw vote evaluation, the department will hold a final vote on its support of the promotion. All mandatory tenure cases must be forwarded to the dean, even if negative at the department level.

Reporting the decision: Once the faculty has decided whether to support the case, the department chair will promptly inform the candidate of the decision. However, under no circumstances may the chair or anyone in the department communicate the specific vote or the votes of any individual department members to anyone. The chair should also review the procedures that will be followed with the candidate. If the department's decision is negative, the chair should summarize the reasons for the decision, explain fully the consequences of the decision, and inform the candidate of the right to an appeal on procedural grounds. (See section D.4 for specifics of the appeal process.)

Next, the chair will write a confidential memorandum to the dean in which he or she will: [1] summarize the department's deliberations, including the vote; [2] describe the reasons why the department feels the promotion is merited, or not; [3] describe how the proposed promotion will strengthen the department; [4] include comments by the department faculty on service and teaching, including contributions to reforming curricula and mentoring students; [5] explicitly address both the procedures followed in reaching the departmental recommendation and the quality of the candidate's scholarship, teaching, and service; and, [6] summarize his or her own individual evaluation of the candidate's qualifications for promotion. The chair will include this memo in the dossier and forward it to the dean.

B.5. The candidate

Once a department chair has informed a candidate of the department's intention to conduct a review for promotion, and he or she consents, the candidate is responsible for providing the following information in support of the review:

- a) The names of persons who might serve as an internal reviewer.
- b) The names of individuals to be considered as possible external reviewers.
- c) The names of individuals in the University or elsewhere who should be asked for letters concerning the candidate's service to the university, the community, and the profession.

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d) All necessary material for the dossier.

B.6. The external reviewers

Once the department has decided to proceed with a review and has informed the candidate and received his or her consent, the chair will consult with the dean to discuss the selection of the external and internal reviewers. These will be chosen from a list drawn from suggestions made by both the department and the candidate.

The external reviewers should be chosen from among the recognized leading scholars in the candidate's field. They should also be from programs or departments that are at least of comparable quality to Rice. In cases where a candidate's work involves more than one sub-field or discipline, it is very important that the reviewers be selected to provide a range of expertise that matches that of the candidate. This is especially important for individuals whose work contains significant interdisciplinary content.

The majority of external reviewers should be independent of the candidate and provide a balanced representation of the field(s) in which the candidate works. That is, they should not be doctoral thesis supervisors, co-authors, or co-investigators. If it is necessary to utilize such individuals, the department shall identify any relationship and explain why it is beneficial to do so.

A minimum of six complete letters is required, of which at least four should be from persons suggested by the department. Since some of the external reviewers may decline to write, approximately twice this number of requests will be needed. (Note: all contact with outside reviewers with regard to the evaluation of the candidate should be conducted by the department chair, dean, provost, or president.) The department should compile its list first, without any knowledge of the candidate's list. Once complete, the department will then request a list of potential reviewers from the candidate. Any names that overlap should be designated: "department, also candidate" and will count toward the minimum number of four letters from reviewers that are suggested by the department.

The final list of external reviewers should be approved by the dean. Once the dean and chair agree on the selection, the chair will write to the external reviewers asking them to write a confidential assessment of the candidate's qualifications for promotion. In making this request, the chair will use a standard letter approved by the dean and the provost. Although the specific language in this letter may vary from school to school to account for the different nature of the work and modes for communicating it, all departments will use the same letter within their school. Modifications of this standard letter must be approved by the dean. This letter will consist of the following elements:

- a statement of the candidate's department, current rank, and proposed rank;
- a request to evaluate the impact of the candidate's work to date and potential for future contributions;
- a request that the writer describe any prior or existing relationship with candidate such as thesis advisor, co-author, etc.;

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- a request for comparisons with other scholars in the same field(s);
- a question whether the candidate would qualify for promotion at the reviewer's institution;
- a pledge of confidentiality; and
- a statement of appreciation coupled with an acknowledgment of the time and attention needed to make such assessments. The external reviewers should be asked to respond directly to the dean.

To enable their evaluation, the chair will send all necessary materials to the external reviewers. These will include, but not be limited to items 1a-g, 2, 3, 4, and 5 in section B.4.b.

In some cases, the department may wish to secure external reviewers' consent to make an assessment before sending them the full package of materials.

Phone, e-mail, and other informal contact with the reviewers should be avoided to the extent possible, and when unavoidable, should be neutral in tone and should not prejudice or bias the reviewer. When substantive informal discussions do occur, the date and gist of the conversation should be recorded and reported in the candidate's dossier.

B.7. The Internal Reviewer

The principal function of the internal reviewer is to write an evaluation of the candidate's scholarship and/or creative professional work. If the internal reviewer has reason to be particularly knowledgeable about the candidate's teaching and service, he or she may address those aspects of the candidate's work as well. For that reason he or she will most often, but not necessarily, be from the candidate's department. However, when the candidate's work has significant interdisciplinary content and overlaps with other departments, consideration should be given to appointing an internal reviewer from another department. In special cases the internal reviewer may be from another institution. This may arise, for example, when no one at Rice has the expertise to evaluate the candidate's work.

All materials about the candidate's scholarship, including letters from outside reviewers, will be available to the internal reviewer when preparing the written evaluation. (Note: in exceptional circumstances when the "internal reviewer" is from another institution, the letters from external reviewers will not be made available to protect their confidentiality.) The internal reviewer is bound by rules of confidentiality and may not discuss the case except in his or her official capacity. He or she must be especially circumspect in avoiding any conversations with the candidate during this period.

Prior to the department's review, the internal reviewer should review the dossier, write an evaluation of the candidate's qualifications for promotion, and submit it to the chair for inclusion in the dossier.

During its deliberations, the P&T Committee, at its discretion, may ask the internal reviewer to appear before it for further consultation.

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B.8. The Dean

Once a case has been reviewed by a department and forwarded to the school, the dean will make an evaluation of the candidate's qualifications for promotion. At his or her discretion, the dean may draw on the opinion of other faculty in the school by, for example, appointing a school-wide review committee. The dean may also request letters of assessment from faculty in the candidate's department. Such letters will be treated in confidence and will be included in the dossier when it is forwarded to the provost. Should letters be received by the dean from others, whether solicited or not, copies of such letters will be sent by the dean to the department.

Upon completion of the review, the dean will write a confidential memorandum to the P&T Committee. This memo will describe his or her evaluation of the candidate and will assess the potential impact of the promotion on the long range goals of the school and the University. It will be added to the dossier and sent to the provost's office for review by the P&T Committee.

Occasionally, a dean may disagree with the recommendation of the department. This may occur when a dean feels that a candidate whom the department supports is not qualified for promotion; or conversely, a dean may feel that a candidate should be reviewed by the P&T Committee when the department feels otherwise. The dean will in all cases forward the dossier to the P&T Committee along with a confidential letter of recommendation.

When appearing before the P&T Committee, deans will be asked to elaborate on their recommendation.

B.9. The Promotion and Tenure Committee

The principal responsibility of the P&T Committee is to advise the president about all proposals for promotion and tenure that have been forwarded to the provost's office for review. During its deliberations, the Committee may invite the deans and department chairs individually to discuss their recommendations. The Committee may also call internal reviewers or any other person that it feels may provide information considered vital to a fair and thorough review. Rules of confidentiality do not prevent the Committee, on its own initiative, from addressing questions to the internal reviewer about materials in the dossier, thereby conveying at least the substance of particular issues that have been raised in its deliberations.

It is best practice of P&T Committees that all members of the committee read every case dossier. For each case, one member of the Committee is picked by the Provost to "present the case," i.e., to provide a summary of the contents of the dossier. Deliberations then begin, and every committee member is given the opportunity to comment on the case. Further evidence is requested, as needed, to address open questions that arise during these deliberations.

For each case, at the conclusion of the deliberations, a member of the Committee will be assigned by the Provost the task of authoring an "Executive Summary" of the committee deliberations. The final draft of the Executive Summary, including a record of each vote without the name of the specific Committee member attached to it, should be approved by the Committee and added to the dossier.

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Under certain conditions, specific members of the P&T Committee should be recused from considering all or part of a specific case:

- A member of the P&T Committee who is in the candidate's Department should not vote twice and must be recused in one or the other.
- A member of the P&T Committee who is the candidate's Department Chair has already made his/her recommendation, contained in the dossier, and therefore should abstain from voting and deliberations in the Committee, but may answer other Committee members' questions as needed.
- A member of the P&T Committee who has a conflict of interest or who feels he or she may not be able objectively to evaluate the candidate has the responsibility to disclose the nature of the conflict to the Provost or General Counsel prior to deliberations and, if deemed appropriate, will be recused from deliberations and voting.

The membership of the P&T Committee should be available to all candidates before the Provost forwards the dossier to the P&T Committee. If a candidate believes there is a potential conflict of interest or asserts an improper bias involving a member of the P&T Committee, the candidate must raise it prior to deliberations on the case so that the P&T can evaluate the claim and act appropriately.

After completing its review, the provost, as chair of the Committee, communicates the Committee's recommendations along with his or her own to the president. In making a decision, the president may call on other persons who might provide information considered vital to a fair and thorough review. Once each case has been reviewed, the President then meets with the Committee to discuss the decisions before transmitting them to the Rice Board of Trustees.

All candidates who are reviewed by the P&T Committee, whether successful or unsuccessful, will be notified by the president of the decision. This communication is made immediately following the president's decision and precedes the formal approval of the Rice Board of Trustees. Unsuccessful candidates will be informed by the president of their right to an appeal. (See section D.4 for specifics of the appeal process.)

In addition to discussing candidates for promotion, the Committee also discusses with each dean those individuals in their school who are eligible for promotion in the current year but are not being reviewed (the "promotables"). These are all associate professors with tenure who have been in that rank for a total of nine or more years.

C. Contract Renewals

C.1. Candidates for contract renewal

The employment of assistant professors at Rice is governed by two consecutive contracts, each of four years duration. The first contract is awarded at the time of employment and the second is awarded following a successful review of work done during the first contract period. This review will take place no later than the spring semester of the candidate's third year of the first four-year contract period.

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Successful assistant professor candidates will be eligible for a one-semester junior faculty leave, which may be taken at any time following the review but not later than the semester immediately prior to the one in which they will be reviewed for promotion to associate professor by the P&T Committee.

Assistant professors whose contracts are not renewed will be entitled to one full year of employment following their review (the fourth year of their contract), but lose the right to participate in faculty searches. Candidates will be notified in writing of the decision regarding contract renewal no later than one year prior to the termination of their contract. Candidates whose contracts are not renewed may petition the Appeals and Grievance Committee of the Faculty Council for a review of the procedures that led to the decision. (Note: appeals are reviewed on procedural grounds only, not on issues of substance.)

Assistant professors who are hired on January 1 will also follow a cycle of two four year contracts. However, all candidates, regardless of when they are hired, must be reviewed for their first contract period no later than their third year; and must be reviewed by the P&T Committee for tenure no later than their seventh year (with appropriate account of leaves). This means that the tenure clock of candidates hired on January 1 will begin on July 1 of the prior year.

The decision to award a second four-year contract to an assistant professor is a major commitment. Consequently, the review process must evaluate the candidate's performance in the same categories of scholarship, teaching, and service as are addressed when a candidate is reviewed for tenure. The review process must also respect the legitimate expectations of the candidate and reflect the informed judgment of his or her peers (normally the tenured members of the department). Since the period of evaluation is less -- typically two and one half years for a contract review versus six and one-half for a tenure review-- the evidentiary basis for judgment will be far weaker than that expected for tenure. The option of non-renewal is not meant to compromise the integrity of the normal probationary period, for the university well understands that creativity is not easily assessed and need not arrive on a fixed schedule. However, the same general standards and principles should apply; the decisive criteria are the quality and impact of the work to date and that the candidate is making reasonable progress toward tenure.

The materials required for review of a tenure-track contract renewal are thus of the same kind as for a tenure review and they should be assembled by following the same steps described in the previous sections. The only exception is that external reviewers are not required. There may, however, be cases where a department feels that the review would benefit from an external opinion. In such cases, the same guidelines for selecting and communicating with external reviewers as for a tenure review apply. The appointment of an internal reviewer is also optional.

Contract renewal files for Faculty Fellows consist of a current curriculum vitae and a letter from the department chair, endorsed by the dean, stating that the individual continues to satisfy the conditions for appointment to the position, and including a very brief narrative describing the individual's scholarly program and sources of funding and support.

The approvals and notification process for contract renewals follows the same path as for promotion and tenure, except that the P&T Committee does not participate.

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D. Timelines for Promotion and Contract Renewal

The following timelines summarize the important dates involved in the review process. Except for the dates shown in bold related to the submission of dossiers to the provost's office for the review by the P&T Committee, these should be regarded as approximate and will vary from school to school. (Note: each department and each school is encouraged to establish its own timelines that will lead to expeditious processing of the reviews.) The attached chart summarizes this process.

D.1. Promotion Review Timeline for Untenured Faculty

Spring semester prior to the review:

Candidate begins to compile internal dossier (vita, copies of published and accepted publications or creative works, and teaching evaluations).	March 1
Internal dossier complete.	March 25
Department decides whether to alert the dean and candidate of a weak case.	April 5
If Department proceeds with review, the chair solicits names for external reviewers from candidate and eligible department faculty.	April 15
Department chair chooses an internal reviewer after consulting with the candidate and the dean.	May 1
Department chair sends out preliminary requests to external reviewers.	May 1 - May 15
Departments send letter and materials to external reviewers.	June 15

Fall semester of the review:

Deadline for external reviewers' responses.	October 1
Dossier with external reviews complete.	October 15
Internal reviewers' report available for faculty.	October 15
Eligible faculty vote. Following the vote, chair forwards full dossier to dean accompanied by a written recommendation and a summary of the department's deliberations.	November 1
Where appropriate, dean asks school committee to review dossier.	November 15
Dean, after reviewing full dossier including the department's and, if available, the school committee's recommendation, forwards it to the provost with a written recommendation.	December 1
Provost forwards dossiers to P&T Committee.	December 15

2nd spring semester of the review:

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P&T Committee reviews dossiers, hears testimony from department chairs, deans, and, where appropriate, from internal reviewers.	January 15 - February 28
P&T Committee votes. Provost submits vote and summary of P&T deliberations along with his or her recommendation to the president.	March 1
President reviews P&T recommendations and meets with P&T Committee.	March 15
President informally notifies candidate(s) of the decision.	March 30
President submits recommendations for Board approval.	Spring Board Meeting

D.2. Contract Renewal Timeline (Assistant Professors)

Fall semester of the 3rd academic year

Candidate works with department administrator to gather materials demonstrating progress in research, publication, teaching, and service.

Spring semester of the 3rd academic year:

Preliminary dossier without external letters compiled.	March 1
Preliminary dossier complete and tenured departmental faculty meet.	March 15
Chair forwards internal dossier and department recommendation to dean.	April 1
Dean reviews department recommendation and forwards it and dean's recommendation to provost.	April 15
President notifies candidate of renewal decision; termination notices are sent to non-renewed assistant professors.	no later than June 30

D.3. Notification to candidates about outcomes of reviews

All candidates who are reviewed by the P&T Committee, whether successful or unsuccessful, will be notified by the president. Unsuccessful candidates will be informed by the president of their right to an appeal based on procedural grounds. (See section D.4 for specifics of the appeal process.)

D.4. Appeals

Candidates may appeal decisions by writing to the Faculty Council not later than twenty calendar days after the candidate has been officially notified that promotion has not been awarded. This review, which is conducted by the Appeals and Grievances Committee of the Faculty Council, examines procedural issues only and does not assess the substantive issues having to do with the candidate's qualifications for promotion. Once the review is complete, the Appeals and Grievances Committee files a written report of its findings to the president, who subsequently decides what action to take.

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