

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Regarding PTCs and DPCs**

### **What will DPCs do under the new system (4.1.3.1)?**

DPCs primarily will be responsible for credentialing, hiring, reviewing and promoting non-tenure-track faculty. (Appalachian has also adopted a new system to create ranks for non-tenure-track instructional, clinical, and research faculty, see 3.13).

Depending upon the procedures adopted by a department, DPCs may function as search committees for tenure-line hires or receive hiring recommendations from search committees for tenure-line hires. In other words, the possible roles for DPCs in searches have not changed under the new system.

Depending on the procedures adopted by a department, DPCs may make recommendations for interdisciplinary appointments or affiliate faculty memberships of various sorts (for example, a faculty member tenured in the Department of History could be also a member of the faculty in Global Studies).

What is very different under the new system is that DPCs will no longer be involved in reappointment or tenure and promotion decisions, nor will DPCs make recommendations regarding emeritus or graduate faculty status. These functions have been transferred to PTCs.

“Reappointment” is a term that applies only to tenure-track faculty members who are concluding one contract and beginning another (a 4-year and then a 3-year), the latter of which will be their last termed contract before a tenure decision.

### **What will PTCs do under the new system (4.1.7.1)?**

PTCs will be responsible for making recommendations regarding contract renewal for tenure-line faculty (third-year review and reappointment), promotion, tenure, emeritus status, and graduate faculty status.

### **How do the compositions of DPCs and PTCs differ? And what is the composition of PTCs?**

The composition of DPCs is unchanged and is stated in 4.1.2. DPCs continue to have alternate members.

PTCs consist of all of the tenured faculty members in a department, except for the department chair and any tenured faculty members who must recuse themselves. In 4.1.8.8 there is specific mention that any candidate up for promotion is automatically recused from service on the PTC. There is no mention of faculty who are coming up for emeritus status; thus, they may serve on the PTC in the year they will be reviewed for emeritus status. The departmental chair does schedule and attend meetings. In departments with fewer than four tenured faculty members, there are provisions for the nomination and election of faculty members from allied disciplines (4.1.6.1). There are no alternate members of PTCs.

### **How should voting be handled in DPCs and PTCs?**

Voting for both DPCs and PTCs should be done by secret paper ballots. All of the voting for DPCs must be done in person, but absentee ballots are permitted in PTC voting.

### **Do DPCs need to be elected for this year?**

Yes. DPCs have not been abolished, and they have important functions. Members should be elected in the usual way (4.1.2) and according to the schedule and length of terms stated in departmental governance documents. Regular and alternate members are elected.

### **Do PTCs need to be elected?**

Generally not. Because all tenured faculty members are members of the PTC, typically there is no need for elections. The exception is when a department has fewer than four tenured faculty members. In that case, there are provisions for the nomination and election of faculty members from allied disciplines (4.1.6.1).

### **Do post-tenure review (PTR) committees need to be elected this year?**

The changes for 2013-14 do not affect the PTR process. Members are to be elected as provided in 4.7.3.

### **Who chairs the DPC?**

The department chair is the chair of the DPC (4.1.2.2).

### **Who chairs the PTC and what are their duties?**

The members of the PTC elect a chair from among its members. However, the department chair is responsible for scheduling PTC meetings and attends the meetings (4.1.6.2-3). The PTC chair will run the PTC meetings; 4.1.6.3 further specifies that “the committee chair's responsibilities include: compiling the votes of the committee members, and forwarding the votes and the vote justification letters to both the departmental chair and dean.” The vote justification forms must be submitted to the departmental chair and the dean within three working days. (4.1.8.4)

### **What are the procedures for PTCs under the new system (4.1.8)?**

Many DPC procedures are carried over and are required for PTCs as well.

However, several procedures for PTCs are new and very different than the DPC procedures under which we have operated for decades.

Meetings of PTCs are to be held on campus, and members are strongly encouraged to attend. However, absentee voting is permitted in “extenuating circumstances” (4.1.8.2-3). Absentee voting has been and still is prohibited for DPCs (4.1.4.2).

There is a new procedure to promote transparency. Members of PTCs are “encouraged to complete a [PTC vote justification form](#) (look for it near the bottom of the section of Forms) citing specific evidence of why the candidate does or does not meet departmental criteria for contract renewal, promotion, and/or tenure in the areas of teaching, research, and service as per the departmental guidelines. Such vote justification letters, which may be anonymous, shall be

submitted within three working days of the PTC meeting at which the vote is taken. These letters shall be given to the committee chair, who will then provide these to the departmental chair and the dean at the end of the aforementioned working days, and sent through the dean to the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor” (4.1.8.4).

All tenured members of the department will be able to view the materials of candidates (4.1.8.9). That is, the circle of confidentiality is considerably wider than it has been with DPC materials.

The guideline for the department chair to notify the faculty member of the results of a PTC vote is within three working days (4.1.8.11)—the guideline for notification of DPC votes has been one working day.

### **What happened to the Equal Opportunity Associate (EOA) in DPCs and PTCs under the new system?**

The specific position of EOA has been eliminated. In both DPCs and PTCs, the role of the EOA has been delegated to every faculty member and administrator involved in faculty personnel actions. Department chairs, PTC chairs, and every member of DPCs and PTCs are responsible for understanding and adhering to the [University’s policies on equal opportunity](#), *Handbook* sections 3.1 and 4.4.2, and any other relevant policies. For example, DPC members involved in searches are responsible for understanding and adhering to [EPA hiring policies](#).

### **Does medical leave count in appropriate experience for promotion to Professor?**

Yes. “Appropriate” experience 3.8.7.2 has been defined as holding the position. Medical leave or other kinds of leave such as OCSA or a fellowship count as years of experience in relation to the criteria for Professor.

### **How can absentee ballots be cast?**

Departments may create rules governing the casting of absentee ballots, but departments may not prohibit the casting of absentee ballots. Departments may not create rules governing absentee ballots that are less restrictive than those given below.

At a minimum, absentee ballots must be delivered to either the department chair or the chair of the PTC no later than 5:00 p.m. on the business day before the PTC meeting is to take place. The absentee ballot must be delivered in a form (email, signed letter, hand-delivered ballot) that provides assurance that the ballot is genuine and is from an eligible voter. The PTC chair must be in possession of all absentee ballots at the beginning of the PTC meeting, and the PTC chair will announce the number of verified, relevant absentee ballots to be cast on a question at the beginning of the discussion of the affirmative motion. The PTC quorum consists of a combination of members, some who are present in-person and some who are present through having provided the committee chair with absentee ballots. The absentee ballots must specifically relate to a question before the PTC to be counted as part of the quorum. The identity of the voters casting absentee ballots will not be announced to the other PTC members.

One area developed this procedure which provides clear directions:

- Obtain a packet of ballots from the departmental office in time to submit by 5pm on the business day before the PTC meeting is to take place.
- Enclose only one (1) ballot and one (1) Vote Justification Form (voluntary) per action per person in a standard business envelope (aka #10 envelope).
- Write your name on the outside of each envelope.
- Write the candidate's name and PTC action on each envelope, e.g. *Jane Doe, Promotion*.
- If voting on more than one action for a single person (e.g., promotion & tenure), use separate envelopes for each action completed as in b-d above.
- Deliver the envelope(s) in-person to PTC chair prior to 5pm on the business day prior to the meeting. g) The PTC chair will separate the envelope from the ballot and/or Vote Justification Form at the time of count to maintain anonymity of all votes.

**Are there two separate PTCs, one for promotion to associate professor and for tenure, and another one for promotion to full professor?**

No. There is only one PTC per department. All tenured faculty (except those who must recuse themselves and the departmental chair) are eligible to vote on all matters governed by the PTC.

**How will additional members of PTCs be elected in departments with fewer than four tenured faculty members?**

The Office of Academic Affairs is working with affected units and their deans to answer questions related to this issue as the questions occur.

The new Handbook language is this: “In departments with fewer than four (4) tenured faculty members, the tenured faculty members will make nominations of tenured faculty in allied disciplines on campus and will elect from those nominated for a total of four (4) members who will serve for one year. Every election made to or by departmental Promotion and Tenure Committees shall use the procedures in *Robert's Rules of Order* as currently revised.”

This process is analogous to the one used for PTR (4.7.3).

There does not appear to be a problem for units that have two or three tenured faculty members. Those faculty members can proceed to select the other members of the PTC as provided in 4.1.6.1.

However, some questions are not clearly answered, such as what happens if a department has no tenured faculty members? Perhaps that question can be addressed by the Faculty Senate in the coming year, as well as the question discussed in the next paragraph.

For now, the biggest question is how to select the other three members of a PTC when there is only one tenured faculty member in a unit. **The answer is that the single tenured faculty member in the unit should select a tenured faculty member in an allied discipline to become the second member of the PTC. Those two PTC members should then proceed to select an additional two tenured faculty members from allied disciplines to compose the**

**PTC.** This solution avoids having a single tenured faculty member in a unit unilaterally choose the other three members of the PTC from allied disciplines.

It is permissible for deans to arrange for faculty members in their college/school to provide suggestions regarding what are appropriate allied disciplines from which to choose additional members of the PTC. For now, these suggestions are advisory only and not binding on the members of the PTC charged with elected members from allied disciplines. It is recommended, however, that the Faculty Senate and the colleges/schools work together this year to establish a system for designating appropriate allied disciplines for departments.

**Is a tenured faculty member going up for promotion in an academic year eligible for service on the PTC during that academic year?**

No. According to 4.1.6.1 and 4.1.8.8, a faculty member going up for promotion must recuse themselves from service on any PTC for that academic year.

**What DPC procedures have changed under the new system (4.1.4)?**

There are only a few changes to DPC procedures under the new system. Departments are no longer required to preserve written ballots in DPC votes. The position of Equal Opportunity Associate (EOA) has been eliminated.

Department chairs previously were supposed to notify faculty members of the results of a DPC vote within one working day, except in extenuating circumstances. There is no timeframe for notification specified in the new DPC procedures.

**The requirement of a ¾ majority for a positive DPC recommendation has been eliminated.** All motions must be stated in the affirmative (4.1.4.8). A majority in favor of an affirmative motion means that it passes and that the candidate is being recommended. A majority against an affirmative motion means that a candidate is not being recommended. Regardless of the outcome, the vote tally is reported.

**What constitutes a quorum in a DPC?**

The concept of a quorum really does not apply to a DPC. All DPC meetings require the “full voting membership” to be present (4.1.4.2).

**What constitutes a quorum in a PTC?**

The standard definition of a quorum in *Robert’s Rules of Order* is that the majority of an assembly must be present to conduct business. That is, if there are twenty members of a group, eleven must be present to constitute a quorum.

The same requirement for a quorum applies to PTCs, **with one additional provision.** The *Handbook* (4.1.8.3) provides that absentee votes will be counted in PTCs, whereas *Robert’s* really does not provide for a mixture of absentee and in-person votes in an assembly. Because of the mixed voting method for PTCs, a quorum is defined as a majority of the PTC, **counting both those present and those having provided an absentee ballot on the question at hand.** That underlined phrase is important. If a PTC of twenty has nine members present and two absentee

ballots in favor of tenure for Candidate A, a quorum exists to make a recommendation regarding candidate A. But if those same nine members are present but there are no absentee ballots regarding the case of Candidate B, the PTC cannot conduct business regarding Candidate B. Nor can the PTC conduct any other business as long as only nine members are present (either in-person or through absentee ballots specifically related to the question at hand).

To explain the matter in somewhat different terms, it is possible to have a PTC quorum consisting of a combination of members, some who are present in-person and some who are present through having provided the committee chair with absentee ballots. But the absentee ballots must specifically relate to a question before the PTC. It is impermissible for a PTC member to be generically counted “present” for a meeting just because he or she has submitted an absentee ballot on one matter.

Another issue in relation to a PTC quorum is should departments count full time administrators whose tenure home is in the department in their total number of PTC members. The *Faculty Handbook* does not address this issue, but on a pragmatic level it is suggested that administrators who make recommendations on promotion and tenure will not want to attend meetings nor should they. Chairs might be wise to check with departmental members who have other kinds of full time administrative assignments to see if they want to participate. Faculty Senate may want to address this matter.

#### **What constitutes a positive or negative vote in DPCs?**

**The requirement of a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority for a positive DPC recommendation has been eliminated.** All motions must be stated in the affirmative (4.1.4.8). A majority in favor of an affirmative motion means that it passes and that the candidate is being recommended. A majority against an affirmative motion means that a candidate is not being recommended. Regardless of the outcome, the vote tally is reported.

#### **What constitutes a positive or negative vote in PTCs?**

**There is no requirement of a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority for a positive PTC recommendation.** This is different than past practice in DPCs.

All motions must be stated in the affirmative (4.1.8.7). A majority in favor of an affirmative motion means that it passes and that the candidate is being recommended. A majority against an affirmative motion means that a candidate is not being recommended. Regardless of the outcome, the vote tally is reported.

#### **Why should members of the PTC fill out vote justification forms explaining their votes (4.1.8.4)?**

The vote justification forms promote transparency and equity, and they provide an important faculty voice in promotion and tenure cases. Essentially, PTC members are asked to explain how they compared the candidate’s record to the relevant criteria. Criteria may be departmental, college/school, university, or University of North Carolina system criteria. PTC members are only responsible for discussing the criteria that they used. In most instances, they will primarily

use departmental criteria, and the vote justification form specifically prompts PTC members to compare candidates to departmental criteria as stated in an approved departmental document. Vote justification forms will provide information about the recommendation of the PTC for the faculty candidate, the chair, the dean, and the provost.