

Handbook for Tenure Review Committee Members

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Preface

Valencia College initiated a revised induction process for tenure-track faculty in 2001. As part of Valencia's shared governance system, key college stakeholders and interested parties came together to revamp policy issues surrounding the tenure process through small meetings and college-wide summits. After a series of summits attended by all stakeholders, the Faculty Council endorsed and the College Learning Council approved the current tenure process. In 2007 and 2010, the decisions made through the shared governance process were written into college policy and/or procedures. The current tenure process provides for participation by departmental Tenure Review Committees (TRC), and this handbook is intended to serve as a guide to assist deans (note: any reference in this handbook to “dean” also refers to “director,” as may be appropriate) and faculty members who serve on these committees. This handbook supplements, but does not replace or supersede the college’s [policy and procedures](#), the terms of which should be consulted and will supersede in the event of a conflict with the provisions of this handbook.

Guidelines for Tenure Review Committee

OVERVIEW

Valencia has two components to its tenure process which run concurrently. One component, the successful completion of which is a prerequisite to be eligible for consideration for tenure at the tenure review committee stage and beyond, is the candidate’s Individualized Learning Plan (ILP). The ILP is primarily formative and developmental, is supervised by the candidate’s dean, and is supported by the Teaching/Learning Academy (TLA). The other component entails the assessment of the candidate’s ongoing professional practice and is supervised by the candidate’s dean. Over the pre-tenure period, candidates receive feedback from their dean and ILP/Portfolio review panelists on their progress toward completing their ILP/Portfolio, and from their dean on other aspects of conduct and performance, as appropriate. When warranted by successful completion of the ILP/Portfolio and responsible professional performance, both components culminate in the evaluation of the candidate’s completed pre-tenure work by the tenure review committee (TRC), followed by appropriate recommendations from the dean to the campus provost/VP, to the president, and from the president to the District Board of Trustees (DBOT).

The TRC participates in a summative assessment of the eligible candidate’s pre-tenure record and provides written remarks and summaries to be considered by the dean in making a recommendation. The TRC’s primary role is to review information relative to candidate performance and to counsel the dean on the division recommendation for tenure for each candidate. Here are some of the key points:

For eligible tenure candidates, each tenure review committee will provide written remarks supported by primary documentation, such as tenure candidates’ performance evaluations, which may include formal evaluation of faculty instruments (required by annual process), supplementary evaluation and information

related to classroom and laboratory performance, student conferences, department participation, curriculum development, service on committees, service to program, department, and college, counseling and guidance, professional development, and service to the community; student assessment of instruction data; records of classroom visitations; faculty portfolio documentation, and the like. A written synopsis of feedback from several sources, including without limitation, deans, directors, program and department chairs, coordinators, and tenured faculty also will be considered by the tenure review committee. The elected faculty members' summaries and remarks will become part of the official record, to be transmitted with the dean's recommendation to the campus provost/VP and president.

- The tenure review committee does not re-evaluate the ILP/Portfolio. This has already been done and the ILP/Portfolio has been judged. TRC members may refer to these primary materials as needed, but are not conducting a re-evaluation of the ILP/Portfolio, artifacts or any elements of the faculty portfolio.
- The TRC faculty members make recommendations to the dean in the division's tenure recommendations to the campus provost. The dean has the responsibility and the authority to make the formal divisional recommendation and the responsibility to send it forward to the campus provost. The recommendation must include all comments by the TRC along with the entire official record.

Forming the tenure review committee - The dean, after initiating division elections among tenured faculty, forms the tenure review committee.

In each campus division, two tenured faculty members will be elected to serve in a two-year advisory role to the dean for the purposes of Year-5 tenure reviews and potential Year 4 appeals panel creation..

Counselors and librarians are considered to serve respectively in college-wide divisions. When there are at least three tenured counselors and/or in that college-wide division, two tenured faculty members from different campuses are elected by the college's tenured faculty to serve in an advisory role to the dean in making that year's tenure recommendations. The dean and the two elected faculty members will form the division's tenure review committee. Committee members who have served on ILP/Portfolio review panels are eligible to serve on TRC committees, as long as they did not serve on the current tenure candidate's review panel.

HOW IS THE TENURE REVIEW CONDUCTED?

The tenure review committee is charged with conducting a holistic review of the candidate's official record. "Holistic" means an evaluation of professional work in which the judgment is based on the overall quality of the artifact or performance rather than the individual elements of an artifact or performance. Keep in mind that the whole body of evidence contained in the candidate's official record is greater than the sum of its parts. Though tenure review committee members may differ in the weight they give particular

elements of this record, they will be able to reach comparable conclusions about the candidate by considering the official record as a whole, in light of the Essential Competencies of a Valencia educator and the Valencia standards of scholarship.

The following bulleted list provides a summary and guide to the tenure review committee process:

- The dean and two tenured and duly elected faculty members shall comprise each division's tenure review committee.
- All members should review the college [policy](#) regarding tenure and this handbook.
- All members are required to complete the TRC training before serving on a committee.
- All members of the committee participate in the review process. **Note:** The tenure candidate does *not* attend the TRC meeting.
- The dean will convene a committee meeting to review the role of the committee in the tenure process.
- Each member of the committee will have access to the candidate's official record, including primary materials, and will take an appropriate amount of time to review the tenure candidate's official record.
- All members are encouraged to keep the holistic nature of this review well in mind. In other words, evaluation of professional work in which the judgment is based on the overall quality of the artifact or performance rather than the individual elements of performance.
- Each member documents his or her specific conclusions on the [Tenure Recommendation Form for Faculty](#), noting specific evidence in the official record that supports the individual's opinion, where possible. Please note that each candidate will have access to the entire record at the conclusion of the process, including written comments.
- Dean makes recommendations regarding the candidate and forwards the official record, including the written comments of this committee, and the [Tenure Recommendation Form](#) to the campus provost/VP, who makes a recommendation for approval by the president, who makes a recommendation for approval by the DBOT.

ILP/Portfolio Review appeals - Completion of an "acceptable" faculty portfolio, as indicated by approval from the ILP/Portfolio review panel, is a necessary prerequisite for a faculty candidate to be eligible for tenure consideration at the tenure review committee stage and beyond.

Therefore, an unacceptable faculty portfolio disqualifies the candidate from any further consideration for tenure and would impact the renewal of the candidate's employment contract. Should an ILP/Portfolio review panel disapprove of a candidate's work on his or her ILP/Portfolio, an appeals process has been established. Tenure review committees have an important role in the appeals process and must reassign the review of an ILP/Portfolio under appeal to a new set of ILP/Portfolio reviewers. The ILP/Portfolio appeals process is as follows:

When a candidate's final portfolio is considered "unacceptable" by his or her ILP/Portfolio review panel, the candidate may appeal to the appropriate tenure review committee, which would refer the matter to a second ILP/Portfolio review panel for further consideration and review. The second review panel consists of one dean and three tenured faculty members selected by the tenure review committee from the pool of trained ILP/Portfolio reviewers. None of the members of the candidate's original ILP/Portfolio review panel are eligible to serve on the second review panel. The second ILP/Portfolio review panel will consult all primary sources, including the original panel's final report. This second panel should assess the portfolio holistically, taking into consideration the original panel's final report. If the second review panel finds the candidate's portfolio to be "acceptable," then the prerequisite for further tenure consideration would be considered met.

Therefore, a portfolio deemed unacceptable by the second panel disqualifies the candidate and renders them ineligible for further consideration for tenure. Regardless of the final decision, the candidate's official record would include both the original and the appeals panel ILP/Portfolio review panel's reports.

Commitment to Equity

STATEMENT ENCOURAGING POSITIVE ATTITUDES ABOUT EQUITY

- ◆ In evaluation situations, we know that it is natural to be favorably inclined toward candidates who seem like ourselves... who talk or think as we do, whose backgrounds are similar to our own, who look like us.
- ◆ However, sometimes our sense of who fits or belongs can limit our potential for broadening the Valencia community and what we can accomplish as an organization.
- ◆ Therefore, in support of Valencia's commitment to diversity, it is important for each of us to recognize our natural comfort with "same-ness" and to consciously leave our assumptions at the door... to face each candidate with an open mind and intentionally focus on identifying the accomplishments of the individual behind the gender, skin color, ethnicity, accent, physical ability, etc.
- ◆ Doing so will allow us to make our recommendations from a more informed and inclusive base of information.

Principles for Evaluation

As a member of the TRC, you are participating in an important faculty evaluation process – important to the candidate whose academic career is being considered and important to the college as it determines which candidates will be recommended for continuing contracts. Your evaluation work should adhere to the following principles:

1. Be Prepared

In most cases, candidates and many others have expended a lot of time and energy to produce the documentation you are being asked to review. Please review everything completely and diligently. The better prepared you are to participate in deliberations on a candidate, the better able you will be to advocate one way or another as an informed and credible committee member.

2. Be Accurate

Please base your evaluations and conclusions on actual knowledge, or documented facts or opinions. Do not exaggerate or generalize. Refrain from relying upon or giving weight to innuendo, word of mouth, or unwritten campus myth. The stakes for the candidates and the college are too high for anything but your best work here.

3. Be Fair and Consistent

Even in the absence of actual discrimination or harassment based on a protected category, you can run into trouble if your conclusions are perceived to violate the college's policy on nondiscrimination or to be, arbitrary or capricious. For instance, you should be consistent, candidate to candidate, in the way you assign weight to particular aspects of the official record. If different treatment is warranted, be sure to provide clear documentation as to why one situation is different from the other. As stated earlier, you may differ with other committee members as to the weight that should be given to particular elements of this record, but consensus about each candidate should be reached by the committee's consideration of the official record as a whole, in light of the Essential Competencies of a Valencia educator and Valencia standards of scholarship.

4. Be Honest, Be Compassionate, and Be Professional

These principles are keys to any performance evaluation. It is important to remember that your conclusions reflect an evaluation of work performance, not a personality assessment. Committee members should not allow personal friendship with or dislike for a candidate to affect their assessment of the candidate's performance or qualifications for a continuing contract.

Appendix

[TLA's tenure review page](#)