

WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

Promotion and Tenure Committee

Preparing for Promotion or Tenure Review

If you are preparing for promotion or tenure, you may want to consider the following ideas as suggestions. Nothing here is intended to replace or supersede the (1) CSU-AAUP/BOT Collective Bargaining Agreement (referred to as “the contract”), (2) the Faculty Handbook and (3) your department bylaws. In no way are these suggestions comprehensive, binding, or “official”. These suggestions have been accumulated from discussions among the P & T members over several years. As the membership on P & T constantly changes, we realize that these suggestions can never be finalized. However, we have compiled this list with the hope that it is helpful to you as you struggle to keep your anxiety at a productive rather than impairing level. It is also our hope that you can use these suggestions to more clearly document your performance and thus provide evidence to support your application for tenure and/or promotion. We also encourage you to become familiar with the bylaws of the P & T Committee which contains useful information about the procedures it follows. Good luck.

Your P & T portfolio will be examined and evaluated by your Department Evaluation Committee (DEC), your School Dean, the Promotion and Tenure Committee (P & T), and the Provost. It is important that your portfolio clearly documents both campus and off-campus/professional activities and achievements.

Regarding DEC and its evaluation:

- According to the Faculty Handbook, “It is the responsibility of the chairperson of the department to see to it that the DEC’s are constituted properly and in a timely manner. If a member of a department believes that the composition of the DEC is inappropriate or not timely, appeal may be made to the Vice President for Human Resources”¹. For example, all DEC members must be tenured², the DEC must consist of at least three people, and no member who is a candidate for promotion may serve as a member of any DEC for any candidate for promotion,³ and in no case shall a Department Chairperson being considered for promotion participate in the promotion evaluation process; being considered for tenure participate in the tenure evaluation process; or being considered for renewal participate in the renewal evaluation process.⁴
- You have the right to appear before the DEC and also have the right to write a reply to the DEC report. Be sure that you check on the time frame for those communications. The dates can vary by department.
- Be aware of the expectations your department has articulated by which quality of performance in each of the five categories (except #5, years in rank) is to be judged by your DEC. If you are not aware of them, ask your department Chair.

¹ WCSU Faculty Handbook, July 2008, page 237

² See exception for Athletics and Counselors in Articles 6 and 7 of the CSU-AAUP/CSU-BOT Collective Bargaining Agreement, August 25, 2007-August 25, 2011, pages 46 and 50

³ WCSU Faculty Handbook, July 2008, page 232

⁴ CSU-AAUP/CSU-BOT Collective Bargaining Agreement, August 25, 2007-August 25, 2011, pages 21-22

Organization of your materials:

- The contents of your portfolio should be organized in a logical fashion. The first items should be the three required recommendations: (1) DEC, (2) department chair if he or she is not a member of the DEC⁵ and (3) your school Dean.
- After these required items (above), you should have an updated or current resume. Resumes can be organized according to the five contractual categories. Using this organization makes it easier for the individuals evaluating you to review your accomplishments rather than spend their time looking for evidence of each category.
- Your application should contain documents to support each of the five contractual categories (more on this below).
- State your achievements objectively. Be specific about what your responsibilities were.
- If you are applying for promotion, stress your accomplishments since your initial appointment or the date of your last promotion. Your accomplishments prior to that date can be included in your history but the promotion focuses first on what you did since your initial appointment or last promotion.
- Document, document, document! It is not enough to say you did something. The Faculty Handbook states that “It is the responsibility of the candidate to provide evidence for claims of accomplishments. In the absence of such evidence the claims should be ignored.”⁶
- Be accurate in how you describe your contribution or achievement. It is disturbing to read evaluations from DECs and Deans extolling your virtues because of a publication in a prestigious journal, when that publication turns out to be a half-page “letter to the editor.”

Category 1: Responsibilities for which you receive load credit:

- List all responsibilities for which you received load credit for each semester. For example, teaching, research, department chair, student supervision, laboratory supervision, program coordinator, and administrative work other than department chair.
- If you received reassigned time for research (or some other activity) document what you have accomplished. Any activity for which you receive load credit should be identified and evaluated.
- Indicate the variety of courses taught and the breadth of your proficiency.
- If you received load credit to develop a course, include the outline, rationale and/or sample assignments.
- Include a self-evaluation of your load credit activity and focus on your developed strengths. Be sure to provide examples and not just include abstract statements.

Student evaluations:

- The number of submitted course student opinion surveys for each semester should correspond to the directives in the Faculty Handbook “Student evaluations should be

⁵ See exception, above

⁶ WCSU Faculty Handbook, July 2008, page 237

done for most of the courses taught by faculty members for at least one year prior to his/her evaluation. However, all the courses taught by the faculty member during the year should be listed in the DEC report. A department may, through its bylaws, require student evaluations for a longer period than one year...⁷

- If you did not have student evaluations for most of your courses, you should explain. In other words, if you taught 4 courses, you should have evaluations from at least 3.
- Your DEC report should include summaries of your student opinion surveys organized by course.

Peer evaluations:

- Classroom visitations document your teaching performance. Most departments have specific provisions for this in their department bylaws which should be reviewed and followed.
- Consider requesting more than one peer evaluation for a semester. If the two peer observations are done at the same time, rest assured that someone will be comparing them.

Category 2: Creative activity

- Be sure to see the definition of Scholarly Activity in the Faculty Handbook.⁸
- Organize these activities by type and present the most recent first. Group the authored versus edited academic/textbooks, trade books, chapters, journal publications, letter to the editor, performances, exhibitions, invited addresses, paper presentations, posters, column in a department newsletter, newspaper articles, etc....
- It would be helpful if you identify your creative activities that were subject to peer, editorial, or professional review.
- For scholarly publications since your last promotion and/or appointment, at minimum, put a copy of the Table of Contents or the first page of the publication in your portfolio.
- If you published articles previously which were reprinted, be sure to refer to these as “reprints.” Perhaps you might want to include the letter that states why the article will be reprinted. That information attests to the significance of your work.
- If available, include a peer evaluation or review of your work.
- Document posters, papers and talks given at professional conferences (include the program and mark the page that refers to your paper). If this was an “invited” address, include the letter. Indicate if the paper was a general submission and whether or not it was refereed.
- Document exhibitions, performances, etc and the significance of their venues. Include copies of letters of invitation, reviews, etc.
- If you presented a poster or paper at a professional meeting and later had that work published, indicate so.
- If you submitted a poster or paper presentation (using the same data) to more than one professional meeting, then say so.

⁷ WCSU Faculty Handbook, July 2008, page 238

⁸ WCSU Faculty Handbook, July 2008, pages 172-173

- If you submitted an article for publication and it was not accepted, consider including a copy of the article and the letter of rejection. The letter can clarify the nature of the rejection (e.g., faulty study, inappropriate submission for the topic of the journal issue, etc). The letter also documents your scholarship. Not everyone is fortunate enough to get articles published on first submission.
- If you submitted a grant for funding to an outside agency (e.g., NIH) and it was not funded, include that information. Although the grant may not have been funded, the submission attests to your scholarship.
- If you received a grant, and at this point have not collected data or submitted an article for publication, include a statement detailing what you have accomplished. Sometimes a grant provides equipment that requires extensive calibration before it can be used for data collection. If you do not document your activities, it may appear that you are just getting grants and not carrying them out.

Category 3: Service to the department and university

- For each academic year, list the department, school and university-wide committees in which you held membership.
- Organize this section of your portfolio in this order: department, school, university, CSU.
- Include information that tells how frequently each committee met and also indicate how many of those meetings you actually attended.
- Give enough details regarding the committee's tasks that allow readers to determine the nature and value of your service. Did you chair any committees? Were you responsible for specific actions that were put into effect?
- You might ask the chair of the committee to write a letter describing your specific contributions to the work of the committee.
- If you performed other services for the school and/or university that were not compensated with reassigned time, be sure to describe those tasks.
- Note that service to the outside community does not count in this category. Relevant service to the outside community may count in category 4: Professional Activity.

Category 4: Professional activity

- Show more than just membership in professional organizations. Document conferences attended, offices held, etc.
- Presentations in your field of expertise (lectures, workshops, panels, etc) to community organizations enhance both your profession and the university.
- If you served as a consultant to a community organization and were involved in the organization over a period of time, get a letter from the chair of that organization or list a contact person that knows of your contributions.
- Pursuit of relevant personal endeavors and extracurricular service to the community should be reflected in your portfolio. A statement as to why the endeavor or service is relevant may be included in your portfolio.
- If your activity is not obviously connected to your professional responsibilities at the University you should explain why it is relevant.

Category 5: Years in rank

- Remember that “years in rank” for promotion eligibility refers to “full-time service in a college or university”⁹ at the appropriate rank, and not necessarily at WCSU. Be sure you have appropriate documentation in your submitted materials if this is your situation.

Other documentation that should be in your personnel file:

You may want to check your personnel file at the HR office to make sure that these are in the file:

- Letter of appointment and subsequent extensions or modifications (if any) to the letter of appointment.
- Official transcripts of degrees and other credentials held.
- Letter from the Academic VP or Provost, identifying the number of years credited towards tenure, if any, for service at a prior institution.
- All previous recommendations for renewal, tenure, or promotion at WCSU and record of subsequent action by the Provost and/or the President.

P & T Committee,
WCSU
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⁹ CSU-AAUP/CSU-BOT Collective Bargaining Agreement, August 25, 2007-August 25, 2011, page 34