Chapter 3: Promotion to Tenure (Tenure Line)

Updated 8/1/2018

Note: Promotions to tenure at Stanford University are governed by the guidelines and procedures set forth in the Stanford University Faculty Handbook and the Stanford University Faculty Appointment Forms, both of which are published by the Provost's Office. The policies and procedures described below are specific to H&S and have been approved by the Provost's Office as consistent with overall University policy. Those carrying out promotion reviews are urged to examine both University and School policies and procedures.

3.1 Timeline and Checkpoints for Promotion Activities

See chart and checklist for promotion to tenure [1]

3.2 Tenure Clock and Timing for Review

University policies regarding the tenure clock are set forth in the Stanford University Faculty Handbook, Chapter 2.1.

Subject to Ph.D

It is School policy that those who held the rank of Assistant Professor (Subject to Ph.D.) during their initial appointment may have their tenure review delayed by a maximum of one year.

Early Promotions

Assistant professors with truly exceptional records may be proposed by the department chair for promotion to tenure prior to the seventh year of their appointment. An early promotion process can be initiated only with the written consent of the candidate. Normally, the promotion will be to a tenured associate professorship. Consultation between the chair and the cognizant dean is essential prior to initiating a review process leading toward early promotion. Since the University is being asked to make the tenure commitment to a person who may have a shorter track record in scholarship and teaching, the record must present unequivocal evidence that the candidate has achieved true distinction in scholarship and meets the standard for teaching.
Unsuccessful candidates for early promotion may be proposed again at the normal time if that remains desirable to the candidate and the department. In order to avoid the potential awkwardness following a negative tenure decision, it is prudent to initiate early promotion cases only in rare instances.

3.3 Notification to the Candidate

Candidates should be notified in writing by the department chair that the tenure review will be conducted with information about timing and the materials required from the candidate for the review.

3.4 Criteria

Both scholarship and teaching are important factors in evaluation for tenure at Stanford because the School and University are dedicated to outstanding achievement in both. Scholarly distinction is especially important for tenure because it sustains both the University’s research mission and its distinctive type of teaching, which draws its strength from the teacher’s continuing involvement in scholarly research at the frontiers of a field. While non-tenured term appointments are (in general) made with the clear possibility of reappointment and/or promotion, there is no entitlement to reappointment or promotion at the end of the term, and such action is by no means automatic. Instead, decisions about reappointment and promotion are, like decisions on initial appointment, subject to the exercise of professional and scholarly judgment and discretion by the University’s departmental faculty and academic leadership.

For recommendations of reappointment or promotion of a member of the Stanford faculty to tenure status, the department or school is required to present evidence that the candidate’s overall performance justifies the award of tenure, including evidence that the candidate has achieved true distinction in scholarship. The scholarship must clearly reveal that the person being proposed for tenure is not only among the best in his/her experience cohort in a broadly defined field, but is also likely to become one of the very best in the field. Letters from referees should support that assessment in an unequivocal fashion. The judgment is both comparative and predictive. It focuses on issues such as whether the candidate is performing the kind of innovative, cutting-edge research on important questions in the field that breaks new ground, changes the way the field is viewed, broadens our understanding of the field, or opens up new methods or new areas of investigation, and thereby has (or is likely to have) the fundamental impact on the field that is expected from the very best scholars in the field. Factors considered in assessing research performance or promise include (but are not limited to) the following: scholarly activity and productivity; impact, innovation and creativity; recognition in the field; ability to work effectively as part of a research team (if relevant); effective communication with colleagues, staff and students; and professionalism, institutional compliance and ethics.

Teaching is an important component of professorial appointments at Stanford, and the University is dedicated to outstanding achievement in this area. The teaching record must clearly reveal that the candidate is capable of sustaining a first-rate teaching program during his or her career at Stanford. Teaching is broadly defined to include the classroom or laboratory, advising, mentoring, program building, and curricular innovation. The teaching record should include undergraduate, graduate, and, if appropriate, postdoctoral instruction, of all types. Factors considered in assessing teaching performance or promise include (but are not limited to) the following: knowledge of the material; clarity of exposition; positive style of interaction with students; availability; professionalism, institutional compliance and ethics; effective communication skills; helpfulness in learning; and ability to stimulate further education. To the extent that teaching achievement is based on work that extends beyond the classroom, such as writing a textbook, there should be evidence about the national impact of this work and recognition.

In judging candidates for tenure whose work involves creative writing, dramatic or musical composition or
performance, works of art, and the equivalent, special criteria must be defined and applied. The comparison group, for example, should be artists, musicians, and writers who work in universities, conservatories, or institutes, and have obligations of faculty membership in addition to their artistic activities. As a rule of thumb, the candidate's creative products must have gained a critical recognition equivalent to what Stanford expects of scholarship by tenurable faculty in other humanities disciplines. In general, the judgment of teaching quality for these fine arts faculty can follow normal procedures applicable to all faculty.

Service (including what might be called institutional citizenship), is relevant, although it is not a primary criterion for tenure. Junior faculty can make valued contributions to the life of the department, to Residential Education, to the extra-curricular life of the students, and to various departmental and university committees, but service, however exemplary, cannot substitute for shortcomings in scholarship or teaching.

Uniqueness of function is also not a criterion for tenure. The fact that a candidate is the only faculty member teaching in a specific area or doing scholarship on a certain subject is not relevant to the process of judging the quality of scholarship and teaching. Moreover, the School's requirement that a candidate for tenure be compared with other scholars in the given discipline provides departmental faculty, the appropriate Appointments and Promotions Committee, and the Dean with a perspective on the area in which a candidate works. Hence, a department's tenured faculty and/or the Dean, either independently or upon advice from the Appointments and Promotions Committee, may on occasion decide at the time of a tenure review that a candidate does not warrant promotion to tenure even though that person may be the best available within a field. That is, the reviewing group may decide that the best candidate in a weak or overly narrow professional field should not become tenured at Stanford. Deans and department chairs must try to avoid such situations by ensuring that initial searches, appointments, and reappointments are made in areas in which the quality of scholarship is relatively strong, and in which the subject area is sufficiently broad. If teaching needs exist in potentially weak areas, then non-faculty appointments should be considered until that field improves or a strong candidate in it emerges.

### 3.5 Forming the Evaluation Committee

The tenure evaluation committee in the department has the responsibility for gathering data on scholarship, teaching, and other relevant matters. Any tenured member of the Academic Council may serve on a tenure evaluation committee. While the structure of committees varies among departments, normally the minimum is three members, with a senior faculty member serving as the committee chair. Members of the evaluation committee should have no collaborative or mentoring relationship with the candidate although this may sometimes be unavoidable or preferable to other alternatives. The department chair should consult with the Senior Associate Dean in such situations. Any mentoring or collaborative relationship between the candidate and a review committee member or letter writer should be clearly disclosed in the cover memos from the department and school. Once the department chair has selected the committee, he or she must consult with the cognizant dean, who retains authority to approve its membership.

### 3.6 Reviewing the Scholarship

Confidential letters from professional peers and students are the cornerstone of the evaluation process at every research university. Candid assessment of scholarship and teaching, without concern for breach of confidentiality, can best be obtained if explicit assurance is given that Stanford's policy is to vigorously protect the sources of information contained in third-party evaluation.
External referees

External referees evaluating the individual's scholarship are to be chosen with great care. In selecting the referees, the committee should consult with the candidate as to who is knowledgeable about the field, as well as possible scholarly conflicts. The candidate should suggest no more than three referees. A preliminary list of external referees should be prepared by the evaluation committee after considering the suggestions (positive and negative) of the candidate, as well as their own knowledge of the field. Not all of the persons suggested by the candidate will necessarily be asked to write, nor will the negative suggestions of the candidate necessarily be followed.

Usually, all of the referees who wrote at the time of the candidate's reappointment are asked to provide a letter for the promotion review.

In constructing the referee list, a wide variety of considerations are appropriate, including, but not limited to the following:

1. The list should include individuals with expertise very closely related to that of the candidate and those who work in the same, or a closely related, specialty in order to obtain critical evaluations of the scholarship.
2. The list should include individuals in related fields and those with a broader range of interests in order to obtain insights into the breadth of impact of the candidate's work.
3. The list may contain individuals (generally, no more than three), including former mentors and current or former collaborators, who would be useful in educating readers of the file about the structure of the field.
4. Normally, an individual perceived by the candidate as having a strong negative personal bias toward the candidate or a clear conflict of interest should not be asked to serve as a referee. If for some reason letters from such individuals are judged likely to be useful and are solicited and received, the existence and nature of the concerns regarding the perceived bias or conflict of interest should be clearly indicated in the evaluation committee report.
5. The list should contain individuals from strong academic institutions where tenure standards are generally high, in order to get letters from people who are comfortable with reading and writing the type of frank and critical evaluations that Stanford's tenure process requires.

After the preliminary list of external referees is prepared, the department chair should present the list to the cognizant dean together with brief biographical sketches, including current title, institution, and stature in the field, and should identify any individuals with special ties to the candidate (e.g., dissertation advisor, collaborator, etc.). The cognizant dean may suggest and/or require that changes be made to the list in order to obtain a more appropriate evaluation of the candidate. The cognizant dean is responsible for approving the final list.

Eight to twelve letters from external referees must be included in the file. To obtain this number of letters, a department should solicit 12-14 letters. Potential referees should generally be asked in advance by email if they are willing to provide evaluative letters. If the reply is positive, departments should then follow up with more detailed information, including the candidate's curriculum vitae, research and teaching statement, and selected publications. Sample letters for the preliminary letter and the more detailed letter are provided by the H&S Dean's Office, and should be followed closely. In all cases, referees should be given sufficient time to respond, normally at least four weeks. All letters received by the department must be placed in the file, together with a list and biographical sketches of all the referees who were solicited. Letters may not be solicited by the candidate, and the candidate should not be told the identities of the external referees chosen for the evaluation process.

The wording of the letter soliciting evaluation of the candidate's scholarship and ranking is of critical importance. Referees should be asked to be quite specific in their comments about the faculty member's scholarship, as well as in their comparisons and rankings of the candidate relative to other named persons in the field. In soliciting opinions
from external referees, the department (or the Dean's Office or the A&P Committee at later stages of review) may request special commentary on one or more items in the candidate's bibliography. All such letters should be expressly approved by the cognizant dean before they are sent.

Phone calls should not be made to external referees prior to letters being sent to them. Departments are to maintain a written record of all follow-up done with referees. For example, if, after receiving no response from the referee, a phone call is made to solicit a letter, then a written log of conversation is to be kept and included in the file.

Once the referees have been selected by the department, those involved in the process should avoid communication with them relating to the review process, both before and after letters are sent out.

If a referee chooses not to write, the communication explaining this decision (e.g., letter, e-mail message or phone conversation summary) is to be included in the file. If it becomes necessary to supplement the original referee list, the cognizant dean must approve the addition of any new names.

Once a letter of evaluation is received, it is inappropriate for the department to ask a referee for an interpretation or clarification of his or her comments. Any exception must be approved in advance by the cognizant dean.

Comparison Set

The first criterion for tenure is that the individual has achieved true distinction in scholarship and is not only among the best in his/her experience cohort in a broadly defined field but also is likely to become one of the very best in the field. To obtain information from the referees that is useful in determining whether the candidate meets these criteria, the referees should be asked to compare the candidate with a group of people (the "comparison set") consisting both of highly regarded people in the field who have recently obtained tenure, as well as more senior people who are setting the standard of excellence for the discipline. The comparison set should consist of persons belonging to the faculty rank that the candidate would join upon approval of the proposed action, or of higher rank, and it should be composed of individuals recognized as world leaders in their fields, and, when possible, from institutions comparable to Stanford. In most cases, a comparison set that includes individuals with: (1) a rank below that of the proposed appointment, (2) a more recent date of PhD than the candidate, or (3) less professional experience than the candidate should not be used as the set does not provide a useful basis for comparison. Any variance from these guidelines should be explained in the file. A useful guideline is that the comparison set should include at least three of the most distinguished names from the list of referees. (In the specific letter written to a referee, the referee's name should, of course, not appear on the comparison set.)

In constructing the comparison set, the field of the candidate for tenure must not be defined in overly narrow terms. Thus, a specific research topic should not define the comparison set; instead, an appropriately broad segment of the discipline should be used.

After a preliminary comparison set has been prepared by the search committee, the department chair should present the list to the cognizant dean together with brief biographical sketches. The biographical descriptions should include the year and school from which the individual received his or her highest degree, his or her current title and institution, and a description of his or her area of expertise. The cognizant dean may suggest and/or require that changes be made to the list in order to obtain a more appropriate evaluation of the candidate. The cognizant dean has the responsibility approval of the final list. The comparison set should normally range from four to six names depending on the candidate's field(s) of interest.

Internal referees

Stanford senior faculty from outside the department with special professional competence to evaluate a candidate normally may be asked to contribute to the file. Such internal referees may also be asked to comment upon the candidate's teaching performance. The file should contain brief biographical sketches of the internal referees, along
with a short explanation about why the person is being asked to write. The cognizant dean has the responsibility for approval of the final list. A sample letter to internal referees is provided by the H&S Dean's Office.

**Published scholarship**

The candidate for tenure has the responsibility for designing and pursuing a schedule of research and writing that results in publication well in advance of the tenure review. In good part the candidate's reputation as a scholar derives from published articles and books that have been subjected to broad, formal professional scrutiny. The candidate's curriculum vitae should list peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed publications separately.

It is the joint responsibility of the candidate and of the evaluation committee to ensure that all works by the candidate that have appeared in print be considered in the tenure review process. The evaluation committee bears ultimate responsibility for determining which of these works is sent to external referees. The same set of published materials must be provided or made available to each referee.

**Unpublished scholarship**

The decision regarding which, if any, unpublished works should be sent to external referees rests with the candidate. The candidate is encouraged to seek advice from the department chair or senior colleagues in this matter. Such works may range from materials that have been submitted for publication in final form to incomplete manuscripts. The same set of unpublished materials must be provided to each referee.

**Performances or exhibitions**

Faculty whose creative work involves either performance or exhibition, but not conventional publication, may require a special type of evaluation. For instance, chairs may solicit from qualified referees, near the time of a performance or exhibition, evaluations for future use during reappointment or tenure evaluations. In addition, sketches, tapes, samples of paintings, recordings of performance, or other artifacts of such events may be brought to the attention of the referees so that those persons may better judge the candidate's creative accomplishments. The solicitation letters should reflect special aspects of the particular creative activity. The file should contain published reviews of the work.

**Candidate's Statement**

The candidate should include a statement describing the present and future course of his or her research and teaching. The candidate should consult with his or her chair regarding the content and length of the statement, which ordinarily should not exceed three pages. Candidates who submit longer statements should be asked to revise the statements to meet the three-page limit. The evaluation committee should comment on these planned activities and potential for professional growth. The candidate's statement should be included in the materials sent to all external referees.

**3.7 Reviewing the Teaching**

The second criterion for tenure is a record of high quality teaching that clearly reveals that the candidate is capable of sustaining a first-rate teaching program during his or her career at Stanford.

It is the responsibility of the department and the candidate to plan teaching assignments so that the candidate will
have the opportunity to gain experience and develop skills in the various types of coursework that are relevant to the educational mission of the department and appropriate for the candidate (e.g., large and small classes; undergraduate and graduate courses; lectures, seminars, laboratory classes, etc.). Evidence of the skill of the candidate in all areas should be collected and considered in the tenure evaluation process.

Teaching evidence gathered for the promotion file should include:

- a summary of the teaching commitments since the beginning of the candidate's Stanford appointment (or since the last multi-year reappointment) with course titles, numbers, units, and enrollments;
- course evaluation summaries;
- description of any pedagogical innovations or course development activities in which the candidate has participated;
- confidential letters from students enrolled in the candidate's courses, as well as letters from teaching assistants, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows for whom the candidate is an advisor or mentor;
- evaluation by senior faculty who have visited the candidate's classroom and/or who have evaluated the candidate's course materials (optional).

Letters from students are a critical component of the promotion process. The number of letters and selection of students are directly related to the teaching and advising load of the faculty candidate. Following are guidelines for obtaining student letters:

- Include letters from all current and former direct graduate and/or postdoctoral advisees of candidate;
- If appropriate to the candidate’s role, the file must include 4-6 letters from undergraduate students; more undergraduate letters may be solicited if that is the department's practice. This number may include undergraduate student advisees, students in classes taught by the candidate, or a combination of the two groups. The goal is to obtain input from a cross-section of undergraduates taught or advised by the candidate. A department may establish its own process for selecting students; such a process should be used for all promotion reviews and should be described briefly in the file. Following are general guidelines for selecting undergraduate students:
  - Advisees: Letters from undergraduate student advisees may be solicited from all students on a list assembled by the department or provided by the candidate, or from a random selection of students on the list.
  - Students in Classes: Depending on the size of classes taught, the department may ask all students in the candidate’s classes to provide a letter, or may solicit letters in a random manner from class lists (for example, selection of every tenth student, every twentieth student, etc.).
- Two follow-up requests should be made to non-respondents.
- E-mail may be used.
- The department should document the process in the final file. Tallies of the number of letters requested and received are to be included, along with a copy of sample solicitation letter and follow-up request letters.
- Unsolicited letters may not be included in the file.

The evaluation committee should provide an analysis of the qualitative data as well as commentary on the content of the student letters. Negative comments should be addressed.

3.8 Department Discussion and Confidentiality Issues
Should a faculty member within the department write a personal letter for the file evaluating the candidate before the case is discussed or voted upon, he or she may not participate in departmental discussions regarding the promotion and, must recuse himself or herself from voting.

As a standard practice, the supporting documentation should be made available to Academic Council departmental faculty who are eligible to vote on the promotion for their review only after the file is substantially complete, that is, after most of the referee letters have been received. It is expected that each voting faculty member in the department will carefully and objectively evaluate this material before the case is discussed or voted upon.

The candidate's work and information to be included in the promotion papers should be read carefully and objectively prior to the formal vote by every faculty member eligible to discuss and vote on the file. The evaluation committee will then present its recommendations for discussion and consideration by the department's faculty. To underscore Stanford's policy of vigorously protecting the sources of information contained in third-party evaluation, department chairs are required to read the following statement to their faculty before every discussion of an individual's appointment or promotion:

"The entire promotion proceedings during which specific individuals are discussed are to be held in strict confidence by all participants. The University takes extensive measures to protect the privacy of the candidate by preserving the confidentiality of the information it receives regarding the candidate. Similarly, it is Stanford's policy to protect vigorously the sources of information and evaluations used in these proceedings. The opinions expressed by the school or department faculty or by internal or external referees shall not be discussed with the candidate or with other parties. The chair of the department or his/her designee shall convey whatever information needs to be transmitted to the candidate. A breach of confidence by a participant in an appointment and promotion matter may be considered to be a serious violation of professional ethics."

### 3.9 Voting

Tenured associate professors and full professors vote on the promotion of assistant professors. At the department's discretion, faculty holding non-tenure line appointments for continuing terms at the rank of associate professor or professor may vote. A clear departmental policy should be established in this regard and applied consistently. Emeritus professors (whether or not recalled to active duty) may not vote on promotions to tenure. Students may neither participate in departmental deliberations nor vote.

Eligible department members are expected to vote. Faculty not on leave should make every effort to attend the department meeting. They are expected to read all of the written materials related to the recommendation and to vote. Although faculty on leave are not expected to participate in the tenure review process, the department chair and cognizant dean may request that a person on leave participate in the process by reviewing all materials and voting. In such cases, faculty away from campus should ensure that their votes are received by the chair in advance of departmental balloting. Some faculty must recuse themselves from participating and voting, including spouses, domestic partners, those who have written a letter on behalf of the candidate prior to departmental discussion and voting, and others who have conferred with the cognizant dean and agreed in advance with him or her regarding recusal prior to the departmental vote.

School policy allows for secret or open ballots on promotions. Departments should adopt one system and apply it consistently in all cases. The practice of conducting a straw vote which, if positive, is followed by a final "unanimous vote" is prohibited. The specific number of yeas, nays, abstentions, and non-votes must be recorded and reported for all votes on faculty appointments and promotions. Every faculty member who votes on a case is entitled to provide a written explanation of his or her vote in the papers submitted by the department.

Split votes. In cases where the vote is split, the department chair retains the authority to decide whether or not to
forward a file to the Dean's Office.

Abstentions. If there are any abstentions, the chair should summarize the reasons for them, if possible.

Dissenting votes. If there are dissenting votes, the chair should summarize the reasons for them, if practicable. Dissenting voters are strongly encouraged to summarize their views for the file.

Communications to the Dean regarding the case. Faculty members who vote may communicate directly with the Dean's Office about their vote, and their written statements will be added to the papers that are considered by reviewing bodies. In such instances, however, the faculty member must provide a copy of his or her letter to the department chair, who will have the option of forwarding a written response that will also be added to the file. Both the faculty member's letter and the department chair's response must be held in strictest confidence and not be shared with other members of the department's faculty.

In extraordinary situations, however, faculty members, graduate students and postdocs may communicate in writing to the Dean's Office with the assurance that their communication will be held confidential from other members of the department, including the chair. Letters of this type may be added to the papers that are considered by reviewing bodies if, in the opinion of the cognizant dean, (1) the letter discusses information or views that are relevant to the review of the appointment or promotion; (2) the letter clearly states the reason why the writer desires to communicate confidentially; and (3) the reason for confidentiality is a compelling one.

If such a letter is included in the file, the file should note that the letter is confidential and has not been reviewed by the department chair. Where appropriate, the cognizant dean may gather any additional information that he or she believes is helpful to verify the accuracy of any problematic statements in the letter and record his or her findings in the file.

3.10 The Rank of Non-Tenured Associate Professor

Depending on the outcome of department deliberations, the rank of non-tenured associate professor may occasionally (though rarely) be used as a means of retaining especially promising people who may not yet have the strong credentials required for promotion to a tenured rank. Such an appointment may be three to five years in length and may involve promotion from an assistant professorship at Stanford, although the seven-year-tenure-by-length-of-service rule may limit options for the length of such appointments. As with all faculty appointments, the person must clearly have the potential to be tenurable at Stanford. Such a promotion, however, implies no commitment or prejudgment with respect to the outcome of any future tenure review. If the department is considering this option, the department chair should discuss with the cognizant dean as early in the process as possible.

3.11 Negative Decisions at the Department Level

A department's decision on promotion is subject to the exercise of professional and scholarly judgment and discretion by the faculty, based on the information available at the time of the review. If a candidate for tenure is turned down at the department level, the chair should first discuss the outcome with the cognizant dean. Shortly after the meeting, the chair should provide the cognizant dean with a copy of the file, a detailed memo outlining the reasons for the tenure denial, along with a draft of the letter that notifies the candidate of the decision. Under normal circumstances, the candidate should be informed within one week from the time of the decision.

3.12 Submission of the Tenure File
If the department votes positively on the tenure decision, the chair of the evaluation committee is responsible for preparing the documentation necessary to complete the file. The promotion papers should be assembled in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Stanford University Faculty Appointment Form B3: Academic Council Faculty: Reappointment or Promotion Conferring Tenure or Continuing Term of Appointment (Appendix B of the Stanford University Faculty Handbook). The department administrator (or person responsible for faculty affairs within the department) will have the required forms and can assist the faculty in assembling the file.

The department chair is responsible for writing the cover letter for the file. In addition to serving as a letter of transmittal, the letter should also include pertinent information obtained during the course of the candidate's review and should state the effective date of the promotion, which is normally September 1 of the following academic year. The department chair should not simply summarize letters or excerpt text from letters. Instead the chair’s letter should identify and evaluate any criticisms raised in referee letters or teaching evaluations, summarize the candidate’s placement with regard to the comparison set and provide any relevant information not included in referee or student letters.

**3.13 The Review Process**

When the file has been completed, the department administrator should send the file to the Faculty Affairs Officer in the Dean's Office for review. After reviewing the materials for adherence to policy and procedure, the Faculty Affairs Officer will return the file to the department for any revisions before copying. The department administrator can then send the original file plus the necessary number of copies to the Dean's Office. The Dean's Office, in its discretion, may solicit additional information regarding the file.

The following steps occur after the file leaves the department:

- H&S Faculty Affairs (review and forward to Cognizant Dean/Cluster A&P Committee)
- Cluster A&P Committee (review and vote on recommendation)
- Cognizant Dean (review and approve for Dean's consideration)
- Dean (final approval at School level)
- Provost (review and approve for Advisory Board consideration)
- Advisory Board of the Academic Council (review and approve)
- President (approve and report to Board of Trustees)

All proposals for promotion to tenure in H&S are reviewed by a cluster-based Appointments and Promotions Committee, consisting of senior H&S faculty members. In some clusters the A&P Committee consists of department chairs only. The members are appointed by the Cognizant Dean and approved by the Dean, and are announced each year in the fall. It is inappropriate for any Academic Council member to communicate with a member of an A&P Committee concerning a pending case.

The cluster A&P Committee is provided with the full dossier as submitted by the department and has the responsibility to review the case carefully and to make recommendations to the Cognizant Dean. At its discretion, the Committee may ask the Dean's Office to obtain additional information from inside or outside Stanford about the candidate; this is usually done in consultation with the department and dean. Committee members may themselves gather information about the referees, the comparison list, or the candidate's subdiscipline. The A&P Committee may review all or parts of the candidate’s primary scholarly documents. The A&P Committee members vote by open ballot and make a recommendation to the Cognizant Dean.
The final decision is made by the Dean, who can take action other than that recommended by the A&P Committee. Both the A&P Committee’s recommendation and the Dean’s decision are ultimately matters of judgment and are based on the information available at the time of the vote.

If the decision by the Dean is positive, the recommendation is forwarded to the Provost for her independent review and decision. The Provost can obtain additional information to help assess the recommendation. She can then make a favorable decision, a negative decision, or remand the case to the department or school for further information or consideration.

If the Provost’s view is favorable, the Provost submits the case to the Advisory Board for its review. Occasionally, the Advisory Board may request additional information before voting on a recommendation or may table the matter for review by each member of the Board. The Advisory Board then makes a positive or negative recommendation to the President. The President, who makes the final decision, can choose to accept or not accept the recommendation by the Advisory Board. He can make a favorable decision, a negative decision, or remand the case to the department or school for further information or consideration.

3.14 Negative Decisions at the School Level

If the decision is negative at the School level, the Dean must inform the department chair of that decision and the reasons for it, and must communicate the decision in brief to the candidate. Under normal circumstances, the candidate should be informed within one week from the time of the decision. The dean and cognizant dean should also prepare a memo for the Provost stating the reasons for the tenure denial.

Reconsideration of a negative decision by the Dean will occur only if the department presents convincing evidence that new and material information bearing on the case exist, such as information that could not have been available in the original evaluation. Reconsiderations are rare and may be avoided by consultation between the chair and the cognizant dean at appropriate intervals in the process.

If a faculty member is denied tenure during any stage of the review, he or she may obtain information on the relevant University policies by consulting the Stanford University Faculty Handbook.

Links