Chapter 5: Tenured Appointment (Tenure Line)

Updated 8/1/2018

Note: Appointments 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 faculty searches are urged to review both University and School policies and procedures.

5.1 Timeline and Checkpoints for Tenured Appointment Activities

(see chart and checklist for tenured appointments) [1]

5.2 Search Authorizations

Appointments to the tenure-line faculty in the School can be initiated only by departmental or joint departmental action. In most cases, recommendations for an appointment are to be preceded by a rigorous and comprehensive search. On occasion, however, the Provost may approve a search waiver for a position when an exceptionally talented person is unexpectedly available.

A department chair must present the case for a new appointment to the Dean's Office and obtain formal authorization before a search can be launched. Officially, every billet that becomes vacant for any reason returns to the Dean's Office. In some circumstances, it is returned to the department for a replacement or for a search in another field. In other cases, the Dean may reallocate that billet to another department or hold it in reserve in the Dean's Office.

The cognizant dean meets with the department chair to discuss faculty appointment needs, normally in the spring. After consulting with the cognizant dean, the department chair should submit a search authorization request form, provided by the Dean's Office at the beginning of the process. Such requests are then reviewed by the deans, and approvals are communicated to chairs in June.

Departmental faculties and the deans must regard every search authorization as a potential long-term commitment. The dean's authorization is based upon an assessment of the department's present and predicted future needs in
scholarship and teaching and involves judgments about priorities both within the department and between
departments. Teaching needs of interdisciplinary programs also may play a role in assigning authorizations to
departments.

A decision regarding the area of search is among the most important in the process. Whenever possible,
departments should search broadly rather than in narrowly defined subfields. A search that yields a small number of
applicants may signal that the search has not been defined broadly enough, or that the net may not have been cast
widely enough.

It is expected that most searches will be authorized at the assistant professor level. The department chair and the
cognizant dean, however, should confer regarding the appropriate rank, which should be determined in accordance
with the department's mix of ranks, long-range hiring plan and programmatic needs.

5.3 Forming the Search Committee

The search committee in the department has the responsibility of gathering data on scholarship, teaching, and other
relevant matters. While the structure of search committees varies among departments, normally the minimum is
three members with a senior faculty member serving as chair. Any faculty member who is eligible to vote in the
department on a new tenured appointment may serve on the search committee. A member of the committee should
be assigned the job of overseeing the diversity aspects of the search.

Once the department chair has selected the committee, he or she must consult with the cognizant dean, who retains
authority to approve its membership. By School policy, a department may permit emeritus faculty and a graduate
student to serve on and vote in a search committee. However, emeritus faculty and graduate students are not
allowed to vote at the department (as opposed to the committee) level. The department chair retains final approval
regarding the selection of students for committee membership.

5.4 Advertising

Searches should include advertising in professional journals or other widely-disseminated professional publications.
All advertisements are to be forwarded to the cognizant dean for approval. A sample advertisement is provided by
the H&S Dean's Office and should be followed closely.

Search committee members and other department faculty are encouraged to call and write colleagues at other
universities in order to identify applicants and to encourage them to apply. Solicitation letters should be carefully
phrased to make certain that recipients understand Stanford's eagerness to receive applications from all highly
qualified candidates. A sample letter is provided by the H&S Dean's Office and should be followed closely.

The School encourages contact with institutions that have significant minority enrollments, as well as professional
groups of women and minorities, including advertising in special journals so that such groups are alerted to a search.

5.5 Candidates with Stanford Affiliations

Persons who hold or have held acting or visiting titles at Stanford or who have been at the University in other
capacities occasionally become candidates for regular professorial appointments. The credentials of such persons
may be more easily assessed than those of others, but the search committee is still required to undertake a
thorough search in order to consider by all appropriate means the credentials of candidates having no prior
association with the University. This obligation should be made clear to candidates who hold or have held Stanford appointments.

Faculty members from outside of the department but internal to Stanford may serve as a reference for such candidates. A sample letter to internal referees is provided by the H&S Dean's Office and should be followed closely. A faculty member within the department also has the prerogative to write a letter on behalf of the candidate. If this option is exercised, however, he or she may not participate in departmental deliberations regarding the search and must recuse himself or herself from voting. Exceptions to this requirement may only be granted by the cognizant dean.

5.6 Criteria

Excellence in both scholarship and teaching is an important prerequisite for tenured appointments at Stanford because the University is dedicated to outstanding achievement in both. Scholarly distinction is especially important for tenured appointments 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. The purpose of the appointment evaluation is to appraise, on the basis of the record to date, the candidate's standing in his or her scholarly discipline (broadly defined) and the candidate's quality as a teacher. Decisions on initial appointment are subject to the exercise of scholarly and professional judgment and discretion by the University's deepermal faculty and academic leadership.

The first criterion for a tenured appointment is that the individual is the best scholar available at his or her level of professional development in the relevant field. The candidate must have achieved true distinction in scholarship. At the rank of associate professor, the scholarship must clearly reveal that the person being proposed for appointment 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. At the rank of full professor, the expectation is that the candidate has achieved the status of one of the very best in a broadly defined field. In both cases, letters from distinguished referees should support that assessment in unequivocal fashion. The judgment is comparative and (for the Associate Professor rank) 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.

The second criterion for a tenured appointment 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. 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 interactions with students; availability; professionalism, institutional compliance and ethics; effective communication skills; helpfulness in learning; and ability to stimulate further education.

In making judgments about candidates for tenured appointments, for those 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. The candidate’s creative products must have gained a critical recognition equivalent to what is expected of the scholarship of 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), although relevant, is not a primary criterion for a tenured appointment. Service, however exemplary, cannot substitute for deficiencies in scholarship or teaching.

Uniqueness of function is also not a criterion for a tenured appointment. The fact that a candidate is the only faculty member teaching in a specific area or carrying out 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 a tenured appointment 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. As a result, a department’s faculty and/or the Dean, either independently or upon advice from the appropriate Appointments and Promotions Committee, may on occasion decide that a candidate does not warrant a tenured appointment 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 be appointed to a tenured position 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.

5.7 Department Faculty Review of Candidates

Should a faculty member 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 search, and must recuse himself or herself from voting. Exceptions to this requirement may only be granted by the cognizant dean.

As a standard practice, the supporting documentation should be made available to Academic Council departmental faculty who are eligible to vote on the appointment 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.

5.8 Developing the Short List
When the search process has resulted in a short list of candidates, the department chair should consult with the cognizant dean to discuss the search (including the diversity aspects of the search), the quality of the applicant pool, and the ranking of the candidates. If, at this stage, the candidate pool is judged insufficiently strong, no appointment should be made; the deans may authorize another search in the same or another field during a subsequent year.

Diversity Action Plan. All candidates known to be women or minority group members are to be discussed by the search committee. If the short list does not include women or minority candidates, the department chair is to provide the cognizant dean with an explanation. If the qualifications of a woman or minority candidate identified in the search process do not fit the opening, but are consistent with the standards and future direction of the department, the cognizant dean should be informed.

5.9 Bringing Candidates to Campus

The search process will include visits to the campus by the leading candidates, who should have an opportunity to speak with faculty and students. Normally, three candidates are invited; in some cases, the dean may approve more than three candidates. The department chair must obtain the approval of the cognizant dean to invite any number of candidates for a campus visit. The cognizant dean should also be given an opportunity to meet with the finalists. Background materials on candidates (including a curriculum vitae and other relevant information) should be assembled and made available to those scheduled to meet with the candidate.

The Dean's Office can serve as a liaison in providing information to candidates on housing, benefits, and employment opportunities for partners.

5.10 Guidelines for Student Participation

Student perspectives are important to the appointment process, especially when there is little evidence available on the candidate's teaching. During the search, students should be asked to participate in seminars, colloquia, and other public occasions where candidates present their research. This gives students an opportunity to interact with the candidates both as part of a group and individually. Departments are encouraged to provide a systematic process for students to give feedback and input, and to include this input for consideration in the faculty's deliberations.

5.11 Department Discussion and Confidentiality Issues

It is expected that each Academic Council faculty member within the department will carefully and objectively evaluate the credentials of all candidates before the case is discussed or voted upon. 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 search and must recuse himself or herself from voting. Exceptions to this requirement may only be granted by the cognizant dean.

The information to be included in the appointment papers should be read carefully and objectively by every faculty member voting on the candidate prior to the formal vote. The search 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 appointment 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."

Any inquiry about the search should be directed to the department chair.

5.12 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 in the letter to referees that Stanford's policy is to protect vigorously 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. Department chairs and evaluation committees are required to obtain eight to twelve letters from distinguished scholars outside of Stanford. In selecting the referees, the committee may consult with the faculty member as to who is knowledgeable about the field, as well as possible scholarly conflict. The candidate should suggest no more than three referees. A preliminary list of external referees should be prepared by the evaluation committee, taking into account 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 any negative suggestions of the candidate necessarily be followed. The initial preparation of the list is at the discretion of the evaluation committee. The set of names on the referee list should be at the rank of the proposed appointment or higher. 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., mentor, collaborator, etc.). The cognizant dean may suggest 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 for approval of the final list.

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), such as 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 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.

Eight to twelve letters from external referees must be included in the file. To obtain this number of letters, a department should solicit 12 to 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 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 candidate's scholarship, as well as in their comparisons and rankings of the candidate relative to four to six other named persons in the field. In soliciting opinions from external referees, the department (or the Dean's Office or the appropriate A&P Committee at later stages of review) may request special commentary on one or more items in the candidate's bibliography. All such special letters must be expressly approved by the cognizant dean before they are mailed.

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.

Comparison set. As previously mentioned, the first criterion for a tenured appointment is that the individual has achieved true distinction in scholarship. Departments must obtain information from the referees that is useful in determining whether candidates meet this standard.

For appointments of tenured associate professors, the evaluations of the scholarship must clearly reveal that the person being proposed for appointment 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. The referees should be asked to compare the candidate with a group of four to six people (the "comparison set") consisting both of highly regarded people in the
field who are in the candidate's experience cohort, as well as more senior people who are setting the standard of excellence for the field. "How does the candidate compare with the intellectual leaders of the field and at comparable stages of those persons' careers?" is an appropriate question.

At the rank of full professor, the expectation is that the candidate has achieved the status of one of the very best in a broadly defined field. The referees should be asked to compare the candidate with a group of 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 two or 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 a tenured appointment must not be defined in overly narrow terms. Thus, a specific research topic should not define the comparison set; instead, as broad a segment as possible 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 description should include the year and school from which the individual received the highest degree, the current title and institution, and a description of the area of expertise. This is typically presented at the same time as the referee list. The cognizant dean may suggest 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 the approval of the final list.

Published or unpublished scholarship. Departments may on occasion provide external referees with copies of the candidate's published or unpublished scholarship. If this is done, the same set of materials must be provided to each referee.

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 is responsible for the approval of the final list. A sample letter to internal referees can be found at Appendix 5G.

Candidate's statement. The candidate may include a statement (no more than three pages) describing the present and future course of his or her research and teaching. If the candidate submits such a statement, the department should send it to the external referees, along with the other materials. The evaluation committee should comment on these planned activities and potential for professional growth.
5.13 Reviewing the Teaching

The second criterion for a tenured appointment 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.

At the tenured associate professor or tenured professor rank, the file should include substantial evidence about the candidate's teaching. While statistical data from course evaluations by students are not available at some academic institutions, the search committee should make every reasonable effort to obtain direct comment on teaching from the candidate's professional peers, past (and, if possible, current) graduate students, teaching assistants, undergraduate students, and any other person knowledgeable about the candidate's teaching. Evidence of the skill of the candidate in all areas of teaching (e.g., large and small classes; undergraduate and graduate courses; lectures, seminars, laboratory classes, etc.) should be collected and considered in the appointment process. In special cases where the person has not taught before, specific comments on his or her potential lecturing ability and capacity to interact with students should be included.

Teaching evidence gathered for the appointment file should include:

- a summary of the teaching commitments for at least the last three years with course titles, numbers, units, and enrollments; course evaluation summaries (if available);
- course evaluation summaries;
- description of any pedagogical innovations or course development activities in which the candidate has participated;
- confidential letters from students (both undergraduate and graduate) 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 appointment process. The number of letters and selection of students are directly related to the teaching and advising load of the faculty candidate. In some cases candidates for senior faculty appointments may not wish to provide names of students. The department should consult with H&S Faculty Affairs in such situations.

Following are guidelines for obtaining student letters:

- Include letters from all current and former direct graduate and/or postdoctoral advisees of candidate. The candidate should be asked to provide a list of these students.
- If appropriate to the candidate's role, the file should include 4-6 letters from undergraduate students; more undergraduate letters may be solicited and included 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 candidate should be asked to provide a representative list of undergraduate students and advisees. The goal is to obtain input from a cross-section of undergraduates taught or advised by the candidate.
- 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
5.14 Voting

The School permits departments, at their option, to allow all Academic Council members, with the exception of emeriti (whether or not recalled to active duty), to vote on appointments of outside scholars at any rank, tenured or non-tenured. Emeritus professors (whether or not recalled to active duty) may not vote on the appointment of outside scholars. Students may neither participate in departmental deliberations nor vote.

Departments must have a clear and consistent voting policy. Any modification of the policy needs to be discussed in advance with the cognizant dean. 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 are expected to vote. Although faculty on leave are not expected to participate in the tenured appointment 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 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 in advance with the cognizant dean and agreed upon recusal prior to the departmental vote. Emeritus faculty and graduate students serving on search committees may (at the discretion of the department) vote on the appointments at the committee level, and/or participate in the department's deliberations, but they may not vote at the departmental level.

School policy allows for either secret or open ballots on appointments. 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. Votes should be taken independently for each candidate considered by the department. The specific number of yeas, nays, abstentions, and non-votes must be recorded and reported for all votes on faculty appointments. 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 possible. Dissenting voters are strongly encouraged to summarize their views for the file.

Communication 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 subsequent 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 should 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.

5.15 Submission of the Appointment Papers

The chair of the search committee is responsible for preparing the documentation necessary to complete the file. The appointment papers should be assembled in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Stanford University Faculty Appointment Form B5: Academic Council Professoriate New Appointment 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 required forms and can assist the faculty in assembling the file.

The department chair is responsible for writing the cover letter to the cognizant dean for the file. The letter should include the pertinent reasons for the candidate's selection and the effective date of the appointment, 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.

5.16 The Review Process

When the file has been completed, the department administrator should send the file in draft form 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 will 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 appointment with tenure in H&S are reviewed by a cluster-based Appointments and Promotions Committee, consisting of six senior 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 cluster A&P Committee and the deans may review all or parts of the candidate’s primary scholarly documents. The A&P Committee members vote by open ballot and make a final recommendation to the cognizant dean.

The final H&S decision on a tenured appointment is made by the Dean, who can take action other than that recommended by the cluster A&P Committee or the cognizant dean. The A&P Committee’s recommendation, the cognizant dean’s recommendation, and the Dean’s decision are 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, she 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.

5.17 Negative Decision 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. Reconsideration of a negative decision by the Dean will be allowed only if the department presents convincing evidence that new and material data 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 search process.

5.18 The Written Offer

A draft of the written offer letter may be prepared by the department chair after the departmental vote and must be forwarded to the cognizant dean for final approval. A draft of the complete appointment file or the final version of the file must be submitted to the cognizant dean at the same time as the draft of the written offer letter. The offer letter must contain an explicit statement explaining that such an offer is contingent upon approval of the Dean’s Office, the Provost, the Advisory Board, and the President. Candidates may be referred to the Stanford University Faculty Handbook for rules and policies relating to the faculty.

Links