MEMORANDUM

TO: Tenure Candidates, their Chairs, and Deans
FROM: Rank and Tenure Committee
DATE: May 4, 2018
RE: Tenure Files and Tenure Review Process

This memo's purpose is: 1) to familiarize candidates for tenure, and their chairs and deans, with the Committee's charge and procedures with regard to tenure cases; and, 2) to offer helpful suggestions, based on the wisdom of past committees, for preparing strong tenure files.

Condensed Version: Important Points for Tenure Candidates, Chairs and Deans to Note

1. Tenure decisions involve "a judgment about the overall, long-term value of a candidate to the university and its mission. Such judgments are based upon recognition of significant accomplishment and promise of continued achievement." (*Faculty Handbook,* 2014: 24).

2. You make your case for candidacy with your tenure file. Consider it an argument that you construct, like other scholarly arguments, with claims and evidence that converge to make the case for <u>your record of accomplishment and continued promise</u>. ***Construct your file around the Faculty Handbook criteria, pp. 24-26***

3. The Rank and Tenure Committee works according to the criteria and procedures in the *Faculty Handbook* (2014): Article V – Rank and Tenure and Leaves of Absence, Section 1, pp. 22-27 and The Rank and Tenure Committee Procedures, pp. 87-91. Please read and use.

4. Become familiar with formal and informal norms and procedures for tenure in your unit.

5. Secure an official transcript with date of degree conferral for your tenure file.

THE RANK AND TENURE COMMITTEE AND ITS CHARGE

The Rank and Tenure Committee is a deliberative body of your peers from different parts of the University. The Committee operates according to the criteria and procedures (the latter with annual modifications) described in the *Faculty Handbook* (2014). The criteria for tenure are described on pages 24-26. The general procedures for consideration of tenure cases are described on pages 92-99.

The Committee is charged with reading, interpreting, and assessing the file of each candidate for tenure and then making a recommendation on each case to the president. The Committee assesses each candidate's file against the stated criteria in a way that recognizes the distinctiveness of different disciplines while ensuring fairness in the application of criteria across fields (2014: 88). When reading and interpreting the evidence in your file, the committee regularly will refer back to language found in the criteria. It will help the committee to better understand your work if you construct your file around the criteria.

As a nominee for tenure, you have received a memorandum with calendar from the Office of the Provost. Please note the dates on the calendar for 2016-17 issued through the Provost's Office supercede the calendar dates listed in the *Faculty Handbook*.

YOUR TENURE FILE: ITS PLACE IN THE TENURE PROCESS

Your tenure file, from self-assessment through the range of artefactual material that you include, is an argument constructed to document and explain your accomplishment and promise of continued achievement in teaching, scholarship, and service in your discipline as it fits within the university criteria. Referees' letters contribute to this argument.

<u>In tenure cases, the Committee is looking for demonstrated accomplishment and promise of continued achievement</u>. Hence, your tenure file should demonstrate a record sufficient in content and duration for each of the three criteria - teaching, scholarship, and service - to meet the requirements for tenure. <u>Successful candidates make a case for their distinctive and sustained accomplishments to date that gives evidence of promise of continued achievement</u>.

BUILDING A STRONG TENURE/PROMOTION FILE

- ***Committee members will find it helpful if you include in your file a table of contents, separate files for the materials on each class, and a user-friendly technology of presentation.*** Use file folders, not binders. Label files clearly.

- ***Provide a vita that gives a complete outline of your academic career.*** In it, clearly and articulately identify the key events, along with dates, for degrees, employment, major activities, and career milestones such as tenure and promotions.

- ***Take the self-assessment statement seriously.*** This document is part of how you make your case. It also exhibits you in action in your field and as a member of the professorate. <u>*Limit your statement to **20** pages, single spaced, 12 point Times, Arial, or Helvetica. A well thought-out statement is reflective on your teaching, scholarship, and service, not a report of accomplishments.*</u>

- Organize the reflective statement around the criteria for tenure, ***Faculty Handbook pages 24-26***. Provide assessment and reflection; do not simply narrate or list what you have done. Describe, interpret, and explain the meaning and significance of your teaching, scholarship and service. Make clear their significance and how they fit within your discipline, your department or school, and the university. Situate your teaching, scholarship, and service for the Committee in a way that helps us understand your achievements and their significance. (Do not assume that your letter writers will do this for you.) For example, when discussing scholarly work, describe your scholarly agenda, explain how your research relates to broader research questions and programs in your discipline. Or, perhaps your teaching has evolved because of recent disciplinary discussions of pedagogy. If so, and if it is important to understanding how you practice your craft as a teacher, explain how.

- Consider Committee members as readers of your statement. We are a committee of your peers from many different disciplines. Help us to understand the questions, issues, practices, and techniques that are the core of your expertise. Explain how particular features of your work constitute evidence of achievement according to particular criteria.

- Have peers you trust read and respond to a draft of your self-assessment statement. Note that the length is not necessarily a strength; thoroughness, clarity, substance, and insight are.

- ***When discussing teaching evaluations, both university forms and supplemental material, describe and interpret patterns in the data.*** The standard summary statistics (which you should check for accuracy) are crude measures. What do they mean? What patterns exist in the student comments? What sense do you make of them? If you have adjusted teaching approaches and strategies in response to evaluations, how have you done so? Address problem areas in teaching evaluations, and help the committee understand the sense you make of them. Do not presume a correlation between the university student evaluation form and the description under criterion (i), teaching in the ***Faculty Handbook*****.**

- ***Discuss your teaching in a way that helps Committee members understand the content of your syllabi, assignments, and your goals.*** Explain your thinking about teaching – what you have tried to do, what you think works well, what you are trying to improve, etc. Perhaps you have thoroughly evaluated your pedagogy: perhaps you are continuing the work of an important mentor; perhaps you have built some of your teaching on an experience in a particular class or semester that inspired you. Help us understand how you see your teaching – make it clear in the self-assessment how you work on your craft. Try to explain how the peculiar character of your discipline, your teaching philosophy, and your students come together in the classroom.

- ***Avoid using the categories of scholarship under criterion (ii), scholarship as a checklist.*** A candidate is not expected to have produced all the different kinds of scholarship. Describe your work using categories that are appropriate to YOUR scholarship. Similarly, employ the categories under criterion (iii), service appropriately to describe your contributions in the area.

- ***Most of your peers are familiar with the difference between the leading national or international peer-reviewed journals and presses, a regional or topically specialized peer-reviewed journal, a chapter in an edited volume, and a contribution to a newsletter. However, disciplinary differences exist.*** For example, what does it mean to say a conference paper or presentation is “peer reviewed”? How exclusive is a conference? Are abstracts or extended summaries of presentations peer-reviewed? What impact does such a presentation, and in particular the one cited, have? If yours is a field in which scholarly publication is not the primary mode of demonstrating scholarship, what is? How is this mode for professional "publication" adjudicated in your field? Again, don't presume that Committee members know your field.

- ***Letter-writers should understand the criteria used by the Committee. Off-campus writers can contact the chair of the Committee with questions***. Your letter writers can do something that is especially valuable to our deliberations: Explain the standards in your field, and how your work compares to them. You must ask them to do this. While the Provost's Office provides referees the criteria, you must guide each reviewer to particular areas of your record that you want them to address. It would be a great assistance to your outside reviewers if you provided them with a resume, your self-assessment, and a narrative on PLU's culture. Most outside reviewers have little if any knowledge of PLU's mission and goals.

- **In summary, all statements written by you, your dean, chair, peers, and outside reviewers should be clearly informed by the criteria in the Faculty Handbook and should articulate your case clearly and efficiently to the committee.**