Work of the FPC

In the longstanding academic tradition of peer review and shared governance, the FPC makes recommendations about sabbatical, tenure and promotion to the administration of Simpson College. The policies and procedures used by the FPC are those contained in the Faculty Handbook.

The Role of the Faculty Handbook

The Faculty Handbook outlines the charge to FPC and the policies and practices approved by the faculty for the execution of its work. The work of the committee must be based on the criteria and practices established in the Faculty Handbook. All committee members must become familiar with current policies and procedures. FPC members will be issued a paper copy of the Faculty Handbook. Members should bring the book to each meeting.

General Expectations of Committee Members

- Committee members must commit to reading the files and all materials collected for reviews, and participate fully in each decision of the committee. A faculty member should not accept a seat on FPC, if she or he cannot participate objectively and fully.
- The response of the committee must be based on the appropriate criteria established in the Faculty Handbook.
- Committee members should wait until they have reviewed all of the evidence, including where appropriate visiting class, meeting with the candidate and hearing the discussion at the FPC meeting before forming an opinion about the success of the person undergoing review against the criteria.
- Committee members should focus their attention on the evidence that is gathered during the process and not allow hearsay, previous contact with the individual, or other things extraneous to the process, to shape their views.
- FPC members must be present to cast a vote in decisions of the committee.
- In a situation where a member of FPC may play multiple roles in a review (an FPC member who is a department chair, for example), the FPC member gets one “vote” in the process. For example, an FPC member who agrees or is compelled to write a letter for someone up for promotion, does not participate in the voting of the committee regarding that person. The FPC member may participate in the discussion, but will not vote.

Role in a Sabbatical Review

All sabbatical proposals are read by all FPC members. The FPC first decides if the individual proposal is worthy of approval. This is done by a formal vote. The committee then works by consensus or by ballot to rank the approved proposals. The committee may seek additional information from the applicant before voting.
The FPC meets with each faculty member after she or he returns from leave. After the meeting, a letter is written to the faculty member that provides the committee’s response to the completed project. A copy of the letter is placed in the faculty member’s personnel file.

**Committee Member Role in a Mid-probationary Review**

A member of the FPC is selected by the chair of the FPC to chair the mid-probationary review committee for each faculty member under review. The FPC member is responsible for “presenting” the person under review to the full FPC before she or he is interviewed by the full FPC. The FPC member is not to serve as an advocate for the mid-probationary faculty member, but simply to present the file, the letter from the review committee, and any other observations gained during the review that might be helpful for the full FPC in making its recommendation. (See the Faculty Handbook and the Guidelines for Mid-Probationary Review, and Guidelines for Faculty Serving on Formative and Mid-probationary Reviews for specific policies and procedures pertaining to mid-probationary review.) After all information has been presented and discussed, the FPC takes a vote and provides direction to the academic dean.

**In regard to the selection of the outside of the department members to be on the third-year review committee:** *(added 9/19/12)*

The individual under review is supposed to provide the FPC member handling his or her review the names of three faculty members from outside of the department. The FPC member can pick the person that he or she believes would be the best fit. The FPC member should go through the list and make the decision and then check-in with the chair of FPC. The FPC member is looking for someone who doesn’t have a conflict of interest, but probably someone who knows a little bit about the field and someone the candidate trusts to give honest feedback.

The reason FPC does the asking, is because it is much easier for the person being asked to turn down someone they do not know rather than to turn down the person under review. In other words, we want the person not to feel pressured into saying yes. If the FPC member asks, they can say, “Well, I feel uncomfortable serving on the committee because he is my friend and I want to maintain our friendship. I think it would be better if you found someone else.” That is hard to say if the person under review is asking. Once the FPC member makes the decision about which person they think should serve, run it past the chair of the committee (this is not a requirement). Once the final decision has been made, make sure the FPC chair knows and that Sandy Condon knows.

**In regard to the selection of the off-campus evaluator:** *(added 9/19/12)*

The person under review should submit the names of three people. Preferably, the three are from similar institutions so that they understand the job and expectations. If the institution is too different, the person coming in to visit may not understand our working conditions and pressures.

Typically, they are not someone who has had a close personal or professional relationship with the person under review. Being a former teacher or mentor of the person under review is on the “iffy” side. The former teacher/mentor has an investment in the person under review.
When the FPC member gets the three names, get enough contact information to email or phone them. The FPC member’s first contact is something like,

_Dear Dr. Doe, my colleague Dr. Jimmy Doolittle here at Simpson College is coming up for review midway to tenure. I am chairing his review committee. As part of our midway to tenure review, we encourage the person under review to invite someone in his or her field to participate. Dr. Doolittle has recommended that I contact you in that he believes you might provide an objective and helpful perspective on his work. Serving in this capacity would mean coming to Simpson for a day, reviewing his file, meeting with his colleagues, and providing us a brief written review of his work. For this service, we will provide you with a modest honorarium._

_If you are interested in being among the people considered for Dr. Doolittle’s review, please respond by sending me a copy of your CV by October….I will be selecting the person from the three suggestions that Dr. Doolittle has provided me by November 1, 2012. The review itself will take place at a time of your convenience in January 2013._

_If you have questions about our process or my request, please contact me at your earliest convenience._

_I look forward to hearing from you._

_Sincerely,_

After the FPC member hears back from the three people, decide which one would be the best, contact the person and see if they are available during the time it needs to be done. If they are not, move on to the next person. Once the FPC member has a person and a date, bring the information to Sandy to send out a formal letter. It goes something like,

_“Dear Dr. Doe, it is my understanding that you have agreed to …”_

The FPC member can then start making the actual logistical arrangements for the visit. These may include hotel, meals, the schedule, etc. The FPC member will serve as “host” for the visitor when they are on campus.

**Committee Member Role in Tenure**

Two members of the FPC are selected to attend class and interview each candidate for tenure. FPC members will not normally be assigned to a tenure candidate within their own division. All FPC members read the files for each faculty member up for tenure. The entire committee interviews the tenure candidate, and a vote for or against tenure is taken and the results communicated to the academic dean. An FPC member who has written a letter in support of a tenure candidate will not be allowed to vote as a member of the FPC.

**Committee Member Role in Promotion**

Two members of the FPC are selected to attend class and interview each candidate for promotion. FPC members will not normally be assigned to a tenure candidate within their own division. All FPC members read the files for each faculty member up for promotion. The entire
committee interviews the promotion candidate, and a vote for or against tenure is taken and the results are communicated to the academic dean. An FPC member who has written a letter in support of a tenure candidate will not be allowed to vote as a member of the FPC.

**Committee Member Role Post-tenure Review**

All FPC members read the files for each faculty member up for post-tenure review. The FPC chair provides the person under review with a list of questions that will be used during the interview with the FPC. The entire committee interviews the person under review. Since the purpose of the review is formative, no vote is taken. A letter of response is drafted by a member of the FPC, approved by the committee and sent to the faculty member. The FPC may also provide instruction to the academic dean regarding recommendations regarding the future performance of the faculty member.

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance. Faculty members serving on the FPC must keep what they see and hear confidential. Committee members should not talk about the faculty under review, the data collected, or anything else that has to do with the work of FPC with anyone outside of the committee. This applies to colleagues within the department of the person under review who are not part of the formal process, and it also applies to the FPC member’s family. What is seen and heard as part of an FPC review must remain confidential forever and by agreeing to serve on the FPC, each faculty member is accepting this responsibility. Breaches of confidentiality will be taken seriously and faculty members breaching college expectations for confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action. Questions about confidentiality should be referred to the chair of FPC, or the academic dean.

**Conflict of Interest**

No faculty member should serve on a search committee where a real or perceived conflict of interest exists. All FPC members should review the college’s conflict of interest policy on the academic dean’s Website. Any committee member with a question about conflict of interest should discuss the issue with the chair of the search committee, or the academic dean.

Under no circumstances should a current member of the FPC provide personal or professional counseling to a faculty member in the year in which that person is under review by FPC. It is also important for committee members to be aware that even casual socializing with faculty members who are under review by the committee may be seen by others as inappropriate, if not a conflict of interest.

Obviously on a campus with small departments, it is difficult to address every possible perceived conflict of interest. The important thing is that committee members understand that the legitimacy of decisions made by the FPC is dependent on the community believing in the objectivity of the committee members. If committee members are known to have a significant personal or professional relationship with someone coming under review, it may put the legitimacy of the committee and its decisions at risk.
**Legal Issues**

FPC should understand that matters related to tenure and promotion have legal implications.

FPC minutes, files, letters, and the notes of individual FPC members are subject to subpoena. This means care should be taken with the security of these documents, including electronic documents.

Generally speaking, members of FPC are provided indemnification by the college for their work as members of FPC, providing the FPC members are working in good faith and within the scope of their responsibilities.

**Appendix**

Guidelines for Faculty Serving on Formative and Mid-probationary Reviews
Reappointment Guidelines for Committee Chairs, Department Chairs and Division Heads