UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

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July 17, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Academic Area Advisory Committees

FROM: Michael Nietzel
Provost

RE: Review of Dossiers

The Academic Area Advisory Committees serve an important role in the evaluation of faculty appointments. The committees provide recommendations regarding the rank and tenure status of initial appointments as well as the promotion and tenure status of continuing appointments. Ultimately, the University's achievements and national stature will be determined by the quality of its faculty, and the guidance provided by the committees serves the long-term interests of departments and colleges that seek to deliver quality educational and research programs and thereby elevate the University to national prominence.

Above all, you are evaluating the individual contributions of faculty members whose futures will be determined in part by your recommendations. A fair and accurate evaluation lies at the heart of this process, and you must take into account the considerable variation in research, teaching and service activities across the spectrum of the University's missions. The expression of creative scholarship and the outlets and applications for it vary across disciplines. Some disciplines regard the publication of scholarly books as essential, while for others the most important tangible results are journal articles. Still other areas may require exhibitions, compositions and/or public performances. Different approaches to teaching and the advising of students may be a factor unique to the unit and the individual faculty member's efforts. Appropriate service to the University, the profession, and the public should be evaluated along with quality of instruction and advising.

Because of the importance of your personal role in this process, we will convene a luncheon meeting on August 6 with the members of all area committees in order to discuss the promotion and tenure process, describe the nature of the reviews that we need from the committees, and answer any questions. Please plan to attend the following meeting:

Date: Wednesday, August 6

Time: Noon-2:00PM

Place: Boone Faculty Center

Although we anticipate a majority of the committee members will attend this meeting, we have provided the following, brief synopsis of our expectations for members of the area committees. We will discuss these topics in more detail at this meeting.

What should you do?

- Read and understand the Administrative Regulations II-1.0-1.
- Provide a rigorous but fair evaluation of professional accomplishments while maintaining an open mind about differing expectations in various fields of study.
- Evaluate the internal and external letters of recommendation.
- Comment, if needed, on the caliber of the individuals and home institutions of external reviewers.
- Provide an evaluation of the prospect for each candidate's continued excellence and productivity.
- Bear in mind the distribution of effort and the differing expectations of various title series and consideration of faculty who have substantial international involvement as part of their assignment. Remember that the criteria for appointment and promotion in the Special Title Series require approval by an area committee when the positions are created, independent of any applicant who might be considered for the positions.
- Consider carefully the letters from deans, chairs, and center directors who were asked to provide contextual information about unique expectations of their disciplines and the faculty member under discussion.
- Provide a detailed statement of the opinions of the committee, pro and con, on each candidate as well as the numerical vote (*e.g.*, 4 to 1 in favor of promotion).
- Describe any special strengths or weaknesses that impressed the committee.
- Act promptly. Although some faculty on the area committees hold nine-month appointments, we expect that you will meet, if needed, during the summer to consider cases.
- Maintain strict confidentiality.
- Request additional information, if critical, and request an *ad hoc* committee if the area committee feels it cannot reach a fair and timely decision by contacting Associate Provost David Watt.
- Maintain any files in your possession in a secure place.
- Transport files, if needed, by hand or using University Trucking in boxes marked confidential.

What should you not do?

- Discuss any aspects of these cases outside of committee meetings with anyone including other committee members when not in session.
- Make comparisons with other candidates, past or present, as part of the committee's evaluation of a particular candidate.
- Leave files unattended.
- Ship files through the campus mail.
- Use this as an opportunity to voice a personal opinion about the direction of a program or college.
- Evaluate personalities.

- Assume that extramural funding alone is a proxy for scholarship.
- Superimpose norms in your field of study on another field.
- Participate in any committee deliberations that involve faculty from your own educational unit and that involve faculty with whom you have even a remote familial tie.

Finally, you should understand that the area committee's letter is part of the official file of the appointment, promotion, or tenure proposal and is placed in a candidate's Standard Personnel File. The letter's statements should reflect the basis for the judgments made and demonstrate the committee's commitment to fairness. Committees may find it helpful to include a statement such as, "In accordance with the University's Administrative Regulations, we are providing our advice on the case of Professor X." Kentucky's Open Records Law does not abridge the committees' right to express their opinions. Committees may use the expression "in our opinion" or "some of us share the view" to express the majority view or even disparate views among the committee members. Phrases in the letter such as "in our opinion" will differentiate expressions of opinion, which is the legitimate role of the committee following full review of and deliberation about the materials, from assertions of fact, which should characterize the material of the dossier.

You play an important role in the tenure and promotion process, and your opinions will be given considerable weight. I will ask that you work with Associate Provost David Watt if questions arise in the course of your deliberations. I will make recommendations to the President who in turn will make recommendations to the Board of Trustees for final approval, after taking into account the recommendations of the chairs, directors, deans, and area committees. You may be assured that your advice will be taken very seriously, out of respect for the collective expertise and wisdom of the committee, even when my judgment may be different from that of the committee. David Watt and I will meet with area committees each year about the cases under review in order to enhance our understanding about the most difficult or complex issues that inevitably arise and to provide feedback on those few cases where we feel compelled to overturn a committee recommendation.

Attachment: 2003-04 P&T Calendar

cc: Deans, Department chairs/School directors/Graduate Program Center directors
Lexington Community College President, Academic Dean, Division chairs
President Lee T. Todd, Jr.
Associate Provost David Watt
Senate Council Chair Jeffrey Dembo

2003-2004 CALENDAR FOR PROMOTION AND TENURE PROCESS

January 12, 2004	Promotion and/or tenure dossiers due from Deans' offices to Provost's office
March 1, 2004	Completion of academic area committees' consideration of dossiers
March 8, 2004	Recommendations of academic area committees due in Provost's office
April 16, 2004	Recommendations of Dean of Graduate School due in Provost's office
April 30, 2004	Provost's recommendations to President completed