**2018-19 University Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure
Committee (URPTC) Annual Report**

Summary of the Review Process and Recommendations

URPTC Members

Karen Hollebrands (Chair)	Education
Marguerite Moore (Chair-Elect)	Textiles
Joe Brazel	Management
Chandra Cox	Design
Denise Gonzales Crisp	Design
Shu-Cherng Fang	Engineering
Loren Fisher	Agriculture & Life Sciences
Mi Gyung Kim	Humanities and Social Sciences
Gary Lackmann	Sciences
Yu-Fai Leung	Natural Resources
Jeannette Moore	Agriculture & Life Sciences
John Nietfeld	Education
Natasha Olby	Veterinary Medicine

Introduction

The University Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Committee (URPTC) is charged with evaluating the integrity of the RPT process. This is different from the charge to department and college RPT committees which instead evaluate the merits of the candidate. NC State University's faculty provide the teaching, research and service efforts that have earned the state's investment and the public's trust, and that have established us as a leading public university. The reappointment, promotion and tenure process lies at the heart of how we recruit and retain these faculty. By ensuring the integrity of the promotion and tenure process, we simultaneously affirm our faculty's faith in the system and reward our best and brightest.

This year's committee is comprised of representatives of each of the ten academic colleges, most of whom have served as Chair of their college's RPT committee. Our members are appointed for a two-year term with approximately half of the committee turning over each year.

Similar to previous years, the Provost requested that we review the dossiers of all candidates who received a negative decision from the Dean as well as several randomly selected dossiers from each college. Each dossier with a negative decision was assigned by the committee chair to two members of the URPTC (one second year member and one first year member) to conduct the initial review and prepare a draft of the committee's letter to the Provost. Each randomly selected dossier was assigned to committee members in the same manner. The

review and subsequent committee discussions resulted in the following observations and recommendations.

First, we support previous URPTC's recommendations for improvements to the current procedures for generating, updating and using faculty SMEs, and look forward to the transition to the Statement of Faculty Responsibility (SFRs). Committee members expressed concern regarding faculty reports of teaching and look forward to the implementation of the recommendations provided by the Evaluation of Teaching Committee. There were concerns about the external evaluation process and letters of assessment prepared by the DVF, Department Head, College RPT committee, and Dean. There was also concern about the charge to the committee.

We acknowledge the importance of independent faculty reviews of the RPT process and are pleased to provide our observations and recommendations for continuing improvement of the process to retain, promote, and confer tenure of faculty at NC State University. We also want to thank Amy Jinnette, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and Katharine Stewart, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs for their invaluable support of the committee's work.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the URPTC,

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Professor
Chair, URPTC

Issue #1: Statement of Mutual Expectations

Item #1.1: Lack of access to prior SMEs and inaccurate information provided in SMEs

Recommendation #1.1: The University Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee (URPTC) would like to see all SMEs, along with an explanation of changes that were made, to better understand the expectations of a faculty member over the period of his or her appointment. When a faculty member is promoted, the SME should be updated to properly reflect the new title. The committee anticipates concerns and issues with SMEs will be alleviated when SFRs are implemented next year.

Issue #2: Assessment of Teaching

Item #2.1. The URPTC expressed concern about the number of peer reviews of teaching included in some packets (some had fewer than the minimum). Another concern is the quality of the peer reviews included in the dossiers.

Recommendation #2.1: It is recommended that peer review of teaching include use of the Peer Review Template provided by the university at: https://ofd.ncsu.edu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/peer-review-form.pdf if the department does not already have a rubric for peer reviewers.

Item #2.2. The lack of uniformity for incorporation of comments from student evaluations was also identified as a concern.

Recommendation #2.2: It is suggested that the university teaching committee provide guidance about how student comments be included in the dossier.

Item #2.3. Another concern was raised about what happens when the Class Eval response rates are low.

Recommendation #2.3 There should be some guidance about how these data are interpreted and used in the RPT process.

Issue #3: External Letters

Item #3.1: Integration and Weighting of Opinions. In some of the cases, the assessment letter did not reflect the range of opinions expressed by external evaluators.

Recommendation #3.1: In cases where the opinions expressed in external letters are weighted unequally, explanations are needed in the assessment letters.

Item #3.2: Conflict of Interest. A conflict of interest was evident that was not mentioned in the assessment letters..

Recommendation #3.2: If it is not possible to avoid conflicts of interest, they should be clearly recognized in the letters of assessment.

Item #3.3: In the case of cluster hires, the required letter written by a faculty member from the partner college at NC State was included in the external letters.

Recommendation #3.3: A new section in the dossier should be designated as "Letter of Referral" to distinguish it from external letters in such cases.

Item #3.4 Review Materials Sent to Evaluators. In some cases, there was confusion about specific materials sent to external evaluators, as well as whether each evaluator received identical materials, was evident in a number of cases. In one case, materials appeared to be sent after the request for evaluation letters was sent.

Recommendation #3.4: Include a clear list of materials sent with the dossier, either in the request letter, or as a separate list in the dossier. All materials should be sent with the initial request.

Item #3.5: There should be a balance among the external evaluators selected by the candidate, DVF, and department head

Recommendation #3.5: The annotated list of external evaluators should be available to the DVF, College, Dean and University (as described in the dossier requirement VII B - https://provost.ncsu.edu/required-annotated-listing-of-external-evaluator/). If there is a significant imbalance in the proportion of external evaluators selected by the candidate, department head, or DVF an explanation should be provided in the department head letter.

Issue #4: Assessment Letters

Item #4.1: Review of the random and assigned cases suggest two areas of concern: preparation of internal assessment letters; and consistency in vote tallies among departments and colleges.

Preparation of internal assessment letters among departments showed a broad range of approaches, suggesting a pronounced lack of consistency across the university with regard to this task. There are clear instructions on assessment formatting (Reg 05.20.05 - Consultation and Written Assessments, Recommendations and Responses in RPT Review) but not all committees appear to be aware of, or review these instructions. In several random cases, departmental assessments offered little more than a few comments on candidates' performance with little or no mention of the realms of responsibility. Consistency in evaluating the candidates among the realms based on university policy should be evident.

Delving into common issues further, internal assessments for both assigned cases suggest concerns that were not entirely evident in the candidates' dossiers. In both assigned and random cases, there was a tendency for new information to be introduced that supported either a negative or positive assessment. This is at odds with regulation 05.20.05 - 2.3.1 - provide description rather than argument. Instructions state that summaries of the range of comments made should be included (Reg:05.20.05 - 2.3.2 - be inclusive in scope).

In addition, assessment letters included citations of external reviewers' opinions on whether an individual should be promoted, compounding the issue of reviewers providing this input, despite requests to refrain from including judgments.

Another area of inconsistency is vote tallies and adequate explanation of votes in the letters. Vote tallies among departments and colleges were not interpretable in some cases. The

information provided in Reg 05.20.05 is clear, but is either overlooked or misunderstood in some instances.

Recommendation #4.1: Overall, this committee suggests that additional training materials be made available regarding the intent and content of internal assessments. Provision of examples of well written assessments and frequent errors would also improve the integrity of the process.

Issue #5: Format requirements for assessments and responses

Item #5.1: Candidate written statements in response to decisions are limited to two pages, as are the DVF, Department Head, CRPT, and Dean letters. In negative tenure decisions, candidates necessarily comply with the page count, however the number of words per page seems to increase with the degree of contention. In both automatic cases that we reviewed, candidate responses submitted (as well as the Department Head letters) were excessively lengthy. To accommodate the text length, writers reduced point size and extended margins. Whereas a very full page that is typeset in a standard variable width font (such as Arial or Times Roman) at 10 pt. might comfortably allow for as many as 500-600 words per page, the letters and statements in question exceed 1000 words per page.

Recommendation #5.1: Formatting rules that recommend standard width roman font options (not narrow fonts, for instance) and a maximum word count per page might be implemented to ensure that texts are adequately edited. Another option is to allow the candidate as many pages as needed, at the recommended maximum word count per page, since the responses are typically quite detailed.

Issue #6: Need for clarity in URPTC charge

Item #6.1: The URPTC charge* states (item 7): *"Review all dossiers for faculty who received a negative decision for reappointment, promotion and/or tenure from the Dean and prepare a written evaluation of the process without voting."* Provost Arden clarified that discussion of matters of potential importance should be included in this evaluation. A revised template document would be helpful as a starting point for the evaluations. The reports for assigned cases should be concise, and omit minutiae, but should retain discussion of matters that related in a substantive way to the outcome. Candidates who receive negative outcomes can know that a group of faculty carefully and objectively considered the issues associated with their case.

Recommendation #6.1: We recommend a clearer articulation of the committee charge, specifically regarding process anomalies and negative cases. Clarity is needed regarding the term "written evaluation"; a suitable template document may be helpful as guidance to the URPTC.

* There are two different web pages containing the UPRTC Charge; it appears that the second URL below is more recent.
https://committees.provost.ncsu.edu/reappoint-promot-tenure/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2016/06/00_URPTC_Guidelines_Revised_Dec_2012.pdf
https://committees.provost.ncsu.edu/reappoint-promot-tenure/committee-charge/