University Reappointment Promotion and Tenure Committee (URPTC)
2023-2024 Annual Report

URPTC Members:

Cathy Crossland	**College of Education**	**Co-Chair**
Craig Friend	**College of Humanities and Social Sciences**	**Co-Chair**
Ken Adler	College of Veterinary Medicine	
Carla Barbieri	College of Natural Resources	
Mark Beasley	Poole College of Management	
Kofi Boone	College of Design	
Chris DePerno	College of Natural Resources Appointed by Chair of the Faculty	
Tarek Echekki	College of Engineering	
Blan Godfrey	Wilson College of Textiles	
Marguerite Moore	Wilson College of Textiles Appointed by Provost and Chair of the Faculty	
Mette Olufsen	College of Sciences	
Shannon Pratt-Phillips	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Appointed by Provost and Chair of the Faculty	
Mohamed Youssef	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	

Note: The 2023-2024 URPTC is an exception to the succession of the leadership of the Committee set forth in the by-laws of this University Standing Committee because a Vice Chair of the 2022-2023 Committee was not elected. At the final meeting of the URPTC in 2023, a discussion was held regarding this irregularity which resulted in two members of the Committee (Crossland and Friend) proposing and agreeing to serve as Co-Chairs for the 2023-2024 cycle. This format has worked exceedingly well. Shannon Pratt-Phillips and Kofi Boone have volunteered to serve as co-chairs of the 2024-2025 URPTC.

PREFACE

Purpose of the URPTC

The University Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Committee provides advice to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost for maintaining the Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure process that supports faculty excellence for Tenure Track Faculty and the Reappointment and Promotion process that supports the Professional Track faculty. One of the ways the URPTC offers advice is through the review of Mandatory and Non Mandatory cases (through the formal dossier) selected and assigned by the Provost for examination. The URPTC is advisory only and does not vote on any proposed action. A second way the URPTC offers advice is through suggestions/recommendations about the overall review processes related to *Policies, Regulations and Rules* (PRR) for Tenure Track and Professional Track faculty.

Investment of Faculty Effort in 2023-2024 URPTC

The URPTC held 6 formal committee meetings, beginning on November 20, 2023, and continuing through February 26, 2024. The Committee reviewed a total of 17 dossiers. Two of

the dossiers were identified as "Automatic" ("Mandatory") for Committee review, meaning that a Dean had denied the proposed action; 15 of the dossiers were identified as "Random" ("Non-Mandatory"), meaning they were reviewed to assure that RPT processes across the campus were conducted in compliance with the published PRR at each level (Department, College and University). Each meeting was 2 hours in duration, representing a total of 12 hours. The committee is comprised of 13 members; just the formal meetings consumed 156 hours of professional time, or the equivalent of almost 4 weeks, using the standard 40-hour work week. This does not represent the countless hours of investment reviewing each of the assigned dossiers, developing the written assessments, and the interactions of the committee members outside the formal meeting formats. As the co-chairs of the 2023-2024 URPTC, we are including these data in the Preface to underscore that the faculty have invested substantial effort and taken very seriously the scope of the responsibilities with which the Committee were charged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Each dossier should conform to the template in University REG 05.20.20 regarding organization. Three of the dossiers had errors on the cover sheet (page 1) where information was missing. The tabulation of the votes on page 1 sometimes differed from the voting results reported in the assessment reports of the DVF and CRPTC which caused confusion in understanding the votes. Department Heads and Deans should be reminded to confirm the accuracy of the votes before submitting the dossiers. **We recommend that all department heads and deans be reminded to confirm numbers.**

2. On its website, the Provost's office directs the following: "Nonmandatory reviews are not triggered by a prescribed time. Nonmandatory review categories are: Early Promotion and Conferral of Tenure: Early promotions and conferral of tenure of Assistant Professors are those cases for which the action is recommended at a time earlier than the required mandatory review. This raises two points of concern: (a) in the three (3) cases we reviewed that were identified as "early," neither the Department Head or the Dean included an explanation for the action in their Written Assessment; and (b) requiring only the administrators to "explain" the action means they are using criteria that are different from the DVF who are not required to address the issue of "early" in their Written Assessment. **We recommend the elimination of the word "Early" in these Nonmandatory actions and the requirement for administrators to "explain" the action.** The real question for all levels of review should be the same, "Does the individual's record meet the Standard for Associate Professor with Tenure" in the Department's Rule and in the College's Rule. It is unfair to require administrators to render an explanation that is different from that of the DVF or the CRPTC. Candidates, the DV and the CRPTCF are disadvantaged if there are no written rules or information related to the criteria that their Department Head or Dean should apply to "explain" the "early" decision.

3. **We strongly recommend that the wording of the current *COVID Impact Statement (Optional)* be changed in title to *Unforeseen and Extenuating Environmental Circumstances Statement (Optional).*** It is our judgment that this allows the continuation of an Optional Statement in the dossiers of each Tenure Track and Professional Track faculty member whose record has been substantially affected by a verifiable circumstance in their professional environment that is (a) significant, (b) unanticipated, (c) not within their ability

to control, (d) sustained, and (e) has a demonstrated impact on their ability to carry out their obligations consistent with the agreed upon expectations in their various realms per their Statement of Faculty Responsibilities (SFR). This Optional Statement is different from the individual circumstances prescribed by University *Policy* that permits an extension or delay in time for Tenure Track mandatory reviews.

> 3a. The proposed change in title acknowledges that unanticipated high impact environmental circumstances that affect the NC State campus in a sustained way can be recognized with an Optional Statement by candidates during the review process. *Examples* of such circumstances are the COVID 19 Pandemic and the closing of Poe Hall that disrupted hundreds of Tenure Track and Professional Track faculty, including the loss of offices, lab and clinical spaces, and specially equipped classrooms for teaching. **We suggest that this proposed change be put in place for the processes for Tenure Track and Professional Track faculty for AY 2024-2025**. The decision to do so should be based on an immediate consultation between the Provost and the Faculty Senate Personnel Policy Committee.
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> 3b. While not within the specific purview of the URPTC because it is not part of the of the Annual Review process for all faculty or the Post Tenure Review for Tenure Track faculty, **we strongly endorse incorporating the *Unforeseen and Extenuating Environmental Circumstances Statement (Optional)* in deliberations regarding Annual Review processes as well.**

4. **We recommend that the language of the PRRs and the website that provides guidance for the development of the dossier be more inclusive of the Professional Track faculty.** For example, the College and University Committees have "Tenure" in their titles; the signature of the candidate on the cover sheet (page 1 of the dossier) states, "To the best of my knowledge, sections I-VI of this dossier are a complete and accurate accounting of my responsibilities relative to review for promotion and tenure." The Professional Track faculty comprise an increasingly larger and significant number of faculty who are employed at NC State. We have moved beyond the discarded term of "Non Tenure Track" to differentiate them from Tenure Track faculty. It seems timely and appropriate to include the category in every possible way to establish parity between the two types of faculty who support our University.

> 4a. **Each Department and College (or Division) that has Professional Track faculty needs to immediately address the issue of Promotion for these faculty by establishing the Standards as well as the process and procedures for evaluating these faculty.** We reviewed one case for promotion where the College has no *Rule* that includes the Standards for Professional Track faculty and used Tenure Track *Rule* and Standards to evaluate the candidate which we consider to be a violation of the faculty member's entitlement to fair treatment.
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> 4b. **A Professional Track Faculty member (who holds the rank of Professor) should be added to the composition of URPTC.** The Committee reviews both Automatic and Random cases for various proposed actions for both the Professional Track (promotion in rank only) and the Tenure Track (promotion with tenure or promotion to the rank of Professor). The URPTC does not vote on any proposed actions. The participation and contributions of a Professional Track faculty member in the deliberations of the URPTC is both desirable and warranted to facilitate the

Committee's advisory role about the overall review processes related to *Policies, Regulations and Rules* (PRR) for both types of faculty.

5. The directions provided to each group with voting authority (DVF and CRPTC) in the review process need to be emphasized about how to report the number of votes accurately and consistently in each designated category. There appears to be a particular difficulty in understandings of the differences between *Abstain*, *Recuse*, *Ineligible* and *Missing* as categories. Explanations of Ineligible and Missing votes should be included in the written assessments of the DVF, DH and CRPTC. **We recommend that the cover sheet (page 1) of the dossier include these definitions as a reminder about how to accurately record the results of each voting group.**

6. The notion of an "appropriate mix" of input of the Candidate, the DVF and the DH regarding the selection of External Reviewers needs to be clarified and amplified by the Provost regarding what this means. (See [REG 05.20.05](#)). This was a recurring issue identified by our committee in the dossiers we reviewed at each level of the RPT process for Tenure Track faculty and is particularly concerning when disproportionate emphasis occurs by the DVF, DH, CRPTC and Dean occurs as evidence to support a decision. **We recommend that the rules for recommendations for external evaluators be revisited and sharpened to define the proportions recommended by the candidate, the DVF, and the department head.**
   - **We also recommend that all dossiers include an explanation of the number of evaluators invited, the proportion that came from the candidate and the department, and the number of letters received out of those invited.**
   - **We also recommend that, when non-academics are used as external evaluators, that there be some explanation as to why.**

7. **We highly recommend that candidates be instructed not to upload materials that are not part of the dossier**. For example, one candidate uploaded a separate video of an internal presentation to the DVF in their department. This was supplementary material without explanation for its inclusion in the materials made available to all levels beyond the DVF. To assure equitable treatment of each candidate in the review process, such materials should not advance in the dossier that is sent forward to the college or university.

8. **The Provost's office needs to develop more effective training for administrators (Department Heads and Deans) in the PRRs related to the procedures and processes for both Tenure Track and Professional Track faculty. Regular rraining should be required for anyone who serves in either role, including updated training on an annual basis,** A requirement to serve as the Chair of any CRPTC should require completion of university training for the role. We recognize that training modules are available, but they do not seem to be effective, based on the dossiers under review this year (and in the opinion of the Committee members who also served last year). This is especially necessary for administrators who are recently appointed to their role or who come from outside NC State. Many of the dossiers we reviewed this year included multiple and inexcusable errors that either escaped the attention of or were ignored by the DVF, DH, CRPTC and Dean. In some cases, it damaged the image of the candidate, the Department, and the College as guardians of accurate scholarship and their ability to follow the *Regulation* of the University,

or their Departmental and College *Rule* or the *Guidelines* and *Directions* that are available on the Provost's website. An example of the importance of training for Department Heads is directly related to Recommendation #1 in this Report.

9. **We strongly recommend that, if a department has mentoring as part of its RPT procedures, there should be acknowledgement that mentoring took place and explanation as to how that aided the candidate.**

Recommendation to subsequent URPTC:
The 2024-2025 URPTC considers the benefits of meeting in person rather than online. The in-person meetings of the 2023-2024 URPTC have been highly productive and facilitated excellent and informed discussions among the members. The workload moved smoothly and efficiently because the members were in a room discussing each case and responding to each other's questions. This format avoided the failures of technology that often impede work of this kind that requires interaction among the members. The in-person format also allowed the members to become acquainted with each other in more robust ways as colleagues than would have been possible with an online meeting format.

The URPTC wishes to express its deep gratitude to the following people:

Dr. Katharine Stewart, Senior Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, for her encyclopedic knowledge of NC State and her understanding of how the faculty process is supposed to work on our campus for Professional Track and Tenure Track faculty. No university could have a person in this critical position than we have had for the past decade. She has been a guiding force in advocating for the faculty governance process and has overseen the development of an excellent and fair process that sets us apart in transparency in a process that is often clouded with confusion and bias. The roadmap that carefully lays out the path by which all involved in any level of reappointment, promotion and/or tenure is a credit to her.

Amy Jinnette, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, for her ability to expertly manage every aspect of the multitude of tasks for which she is responsible. She has an uncanny ability to understand the challenges of working with a diverse group of faculty and their personalities without losing her equanimity or sense of humor. She is relentless in making certain every detail is properly attended from coordinating and scheduling complex calendars of multiple individuals and groups to providing for their comfort. In particular, her effort to reserve the Executive Board Room in the Talley Student Center for our meetings and to arrange much-needed beverages to sustain us during our weekly late Monday afternoon meetings is appreciated.
As Co-Chairs of this year's Committee, we are indebted to these two outstanding colleagues for the patience, wisdom, and responsiveness to all inquiries from us on behalf of our colleagues. It would have been impossible without their expertise.

Respectfully Submitted

Craig Friend and Cathy Crossland