

Proposed Resolution on the Selection Process for External Reviewers in Tenure Cases

Sponsor

Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty Committee

Background

What the colleges have to say about external letters and reviewers.

For promotions, opinions from external and internal reviewers are solicited. By definition, an internal reviewer works at Cornell University, within or outside the candidate's department, college or unit. An external reviewer is an individual who is external to Cornell University and provides an outside evaluation of the candidate's research and scholarship. Collectively, the reviewer letters should inform the reader about the candidate's breadth, depth, impact, and anticipated trajectory. **The remainder of this resolution applies to external reviewers.**

Because of the importance of this dossier component, the candidate and department should independently produce their own list of external reviewers. The lists are assembled with one goal in mind: the collection of proposed individuals can provide a fair and informed assessment of the candidate's work. To identify potential external reviewers, broad engagement of the voting faculty by the chair or unit head is recommended. However, it is understood that in the larger units the task may be delegated to a subset of the voting faculty.

The department proceeds to develop the final list of external reviewers using the independent list method. As part of this process, three numbers need to be identified: 1) Length of the independently-produced lists; 2) **Number** of external reviewers that must be chosen from the candidate's list; and 3) Total number of **received letters in the dossier** from external reviewers (**5 external reviewers is the stated minimum in the Faculty Handbook**). The independent lists need to be included in the dossier so that it is clear which of the received letters are from reviewers chosen by the candidate, the department, or both. The list should include reviewers that were asked and declined, plus the reason for declining, if given. Note that individuals may decline to review a promotion dossier for multiple reasons and declining a request for dossier review without a given reason does not reflect on the candidate's suitability for promotion, i.e., should not be viewed negatively against the candidate.

The Resolution

Whereas the selection of external reviewers is central to the tenure review process;

Whereas candidate input to the process should be structured in a way that is fair and transparent;

Be it resolved that the independent list method for selecting external reviewers be adopted by each college.

