

To: Tenured and Tenure Track Faculty
From: John Pelissero, Provost
Date: April 6, 2015
Re: University Guidelines for Mid-Probationary Review and One-Semester Paid Research Leave

Many schools and departments have adopted practices and procedures for mid-probationary reviews as elements in a unit's tenure and promotion guidelines. Consistent with that practice, and in the interests of insuring fairness and a reasonable degree of basic uniformity across the University in this important process, certain guidelines were adopted in 2003 and have been in effect since. These guidelines apply to persons newly hired into or currently in their first or second year of a probationary tenure-track faculty contract.

1. The Purpose and Nature of the Mid-Probationary Review: One purpose of mid-probationary review is to assist the individual to know the opinions of his or her colleagues regarding the progress being made toward tenure. A second purpose is to provide the department and the school with the opportunity to determine, in a fair-minded and evidence based way, whether a tenure-track faculty member, roughly at the mid-point of his or her probationary years, has reasonable likelihood of ultimately achieving tenure. The mid-probationary review is a holistic judgment based on three things: the overall quality of the candidate's accomplishments and promise in teaching, scholarship, and service as a candidate for tenure; the adequacy of the candidate's progress toward tenure; and the likelihood of the candidate's ultimate success.

2. Scheduling the Mid-Probationary Review: The specific semester of a person's mid-probationary review ought to be negotiated at the time of hiring and included in the person's letter of appointment from the Provost. Assuming a normal seven-year probationary period, with the tenure petition required at the start of the Fall Semester of the sixth probationary year, the mid-probationary review process normally occurs within the *Spring Semester of the third year of probationary service*. Depending on the number of years of the probationary period at Loyola, on the characteristics of research in a given field or discipline, or on the anticipated needs of the school or department, a Dean may recommend some other semester. In no case will the mid-probationary review occur in the academic year immediately prior to the year during which the application for tenure is to be made. The contracted semester for the mid-probationary review cannot be changed without the written approval of the Dean and the Chief Academic Officer.

3. Sequence of Events: The mid-probationary review should be completed within one semester. In anticipation of the actual review it is *suggested* that

- **By the end of week 3 of the semester:** The department Chair (or Dean, in the case of schools not organized into departments) should have arranged to have gathered and available such information as may be helpful and relevant to making an informed judgment regarding the candidate's progress toward tenure. For example, such information may include descriptive and evaluative information about the candidate's teaching activities; reviews by external experts, selected by the Chair from a list provided by the candidate and the tenured faculty of the department, of the candidate's scholarly accomplishments; descriptive and evaluative statements from colleagues on or off campus regarding the value of the candidate's contributions in the area

of service. For a fuller clarification of the sources of relevant evidence and the performance indicators relating to teaching, scholarship, and service, consult the November 5, 2002 Provost's Memorandum to faculty regarding "[Considerations Pertaining to the Evaluation, Promotion, and Tenure of Tenure-Track Faculty](#)."

- **By the end of week 3.** The candidate should submit relevant materials to the Chair (or Dean, in the case of schools not organized into departments). At a minimum these materials should include a personal statement regarding his or her teaching philosophy, scholarly program, and participation in institutional and professional service. An up to date academic resume. The candidate is strongly encouraged to supply backup materials such as samples of course syllabi, assignments, exams, and any evidence as may be relevant to indicating the effectiveness of his or her teaching; materials indicating the progress being made on his or her scholarship, including manuscripts submitted, datasets, works in progress, and the like; and such evidence as may be relevant to indicating the initiative, effort, and benefits resulting from the candidate's contributions in the area of service and institutional citizenship.
- **By the end of week 5:** A committee comprised of the tenured faculty and the Chair of the department (or the Dean, in the case of a school not organized into academic departments) shall carefully review the materials that have been assembled with the same thoroughness, as far as possible in the time allowed, as these are evaluated in a review for tenure.
- **By the end of week 6:** The committee of tenured faculty, chaired by the department Chair (or the Dean, in the case of a school not organized into academic departments) shall meet to deliberate regarding the overall quality of the candidate's accomplishments and promise in teaching, scholarship, and service as a candidate for tenure; the adequacy of the candidate's progress toward tenure; and the likelihood of the candidate's ultimate success. In those cases where it is judged that the candidate's accomplishments are strong, and that the candidate is making acceptable progress toward tenure, and that there is a promising and reasonable likelihood of the candidate's ultimate success in earning tenure the group should make a recommendation to the Provost to continue the candidate's probationary period. In those cases where it is judged that accomplishments of the candidate are not strong, or that the candidate has not made acceptable progress toward tenure, or that the candidate's prospects for meeting tenure standards and expectations are nil or highly unlikely, the group should make a recommendation to the Provost or that the probationary period be discontinued.

4. Communicating the outcome of the process to the candidate: The Dean should provide a letter expressing the outcome of the mid-probationary review and a summary of the significant considerations that formed the basis of that judgment to the candidate. In cases where the Dean had not participated in the departmental level review, the Dean may ask the Chair to prepare a draft of the letter. In such a case the mid-probationary review file shall be forwarded to the Dean for review and recommendation. The Dean will forward the department's recommendation to continue or to discontinue the probationary period to the Provost with his or her recommendation.

- **If the outcome of the mid-probationary review is to continue the probationary period:** The letter from the Dean to the candidate will include suggestions with regard to any problems in teaching, scholarship or service that remain to be overcome, indicators of success that are yet to be achieved, and recommendations for further strengthening his or her ultimate case for tenure. The Chair (or

Dean, in the case of schools not organized into departments) shall meet with the candidate to discuss the mid-probationary review letter and the suggestions it contains in detail. This conversation should occur by the end of week 9. This allows the candidate the opportunity to make timely application for a Probationary Faculty Development Grant (See below.)

- *The decision to continue the probationary period is **not** a guarantee that the candidate will ultimately achieve tenure.* No statement in the mid-probationary review letter, regardless of how positively or enthusiastically worded, shall legally or morally obligate the University to make a positive tenure decision, in whole or in part, at such time as the candidate's petition for tenure is being reviewed.
- **If the outcome of the mid-probationary review is to discontinue the probationary period:** The letter from the Dean to the candidate will state the outcome of the mid-probationary review and the reasons for the decision to discontinue the probationary period. Upon verification of the information with the Office of Faculty Administration, the letter should include a statement indicating the point in time when the candidate would no longer be employed as a tenure track faculty member. The letter should include a statement informing the candidate of his or her rights to appeal the decision under the existing faculty appeals procedures of the school/college (if any) and the University.

5. Use of the Mid-Probationary Review Letter: The letter from the Dean to the candidate will become part of the candidate's personnel file so that it can be included in the materials to be reviewed when the candidate petitions for tenure.

6. Mid-Probationary One-semester Paid Research Leave: For persons continuing in their probationary period, this leave provides support to pursue research and/or teaching development activities that will enhance their possibilities of achieving a positive tenure review. Applicants are strongly encouraged to focus their energies on advancing their research, furthering their development as teachers, and responding to the suggestions for improvement as may have been communicated in the mid-probationary review letter from their Dean.

- The one-semester paid research leave releases the candidate from teaching responsibilities for either the fall or spring semester of the year following their mid-probationary review.
- The decision to apply or not to apply for the one semester research leave is the candidate's. The application, made in writing, shall briefly describe the projects and activities that shall be undertaken, and their intended relationship to the further progress of the candidate toward tenure. The application shall propose a selected semester consistent with departmental and school instructional needs. Decisions on applications are made by the Provost on the recommendations of the candidate's Chair and Dean, and the appropriate University level committee. Given its purpose, one-semester paid research leave may not be taken at any time during the academic year in which one has applied for tenure. Candidates who intend not to apply for tenure shall inform the Provost and shall not make application for support via a paid semester research leave.