**Guidelines for Department Chair Letter & Presentation**

*Updated January 2025*

# **Guidelines for Department Chair Recommendation Letter**

The Chair’s recommendation is an important part of the candidate’s dossier and will be carefully read by SOE Promotion & Tenure Committee members, the SOE Dean, the Provost’s Advisory Review Committee (PARC) members, The Senior Vice Provost, and the Provost for review and evaluation. The letter should present a balanced, critical review of the candidate’s work, not simply a repetition of the case. The Department Chair’s recommendation should make the case for or against retention, tenure and/or promotion, based on materials and evaluations submitted to date, explicitly compared to departmental standards and criteria.

Per guidelines from the Office of Academic Affairs (AY24-25), the Department Chair’s recommendation should provide a clear statement of the candidate’s teaching performance, scholarly or creative works, and service and assign a rating of excellent, effective, or needs improvement, for each area of performance. The recommendation should also provide a clear rationale for each rating.

The Department Chair’s letter must include:

* a description for non-specialists of the place the candidate’s work occupies in the relevant discipline or field.
* an explanation as to why the candidate’s work is important to the department that this field be represented on its faculty.
* clarifications on departmental expectations and disciplinary culture (e.g., individual and joint authorship; disciplinary norms regarding order of authorship; importance of a particular publisher).
* It is also helpful for this letter to include information about the usual criteria for excellence in the candidate’s discipline (e.g., quality of the venues within which the work appears).
* As tenure and promotion reviews “shall take account of the annual reviews of the faculty member” (FHB B4.3.1(a)), it is helpful for this letter to include information on the candidate’s annual performance evaluations.

The Chair’s letter should present a balanced, critical review of the candidate’s work, not simply a repetition of the case. The Department Chair’s recommendation should make the case for or against retention, tenure and/or promotion, based on materials and evaluations submitted to date, explicitly compared to departmental standards/criteria for same.

# **Guidelines for Department Chair Presentations to the SOE P&T Committee**

The Chair of the Department (or an approved/agreed designee) will present each Promotion, Tenure, or Retention (Mid-Pro Review) case to the SOE Promotion & Tenure Committee. The presentation should be limited to 15 minutes and will be followed by a 15-minute discussion of the case. A copy of the presentation materials (PowerPoint recommended) should be distributed to the Committee at least one day in advance of the meeting.

The committee strongly recommends that the presentation should focus on:

* an analysis of the candidate’s dossier including a clear rating (excellent, effective, or needs improvements) for each area of candidate’s performance (teaching, scholarly or creative works, and service).
* illustrations of the candidate’s most important research, scholarly, service, or teaching achievements
* a summary of the discussion that occurred during the department faculty meeting in which the case was introduced for confidential ballots.

There is no need to reproduce facts/numbers already listed in the candidate’s dossier beyond the inclusion of a summary slide.

During the discussion immediately following the presentation, the presenter should be ready to address committee questions regarding the candidate’s excellence in research, excellence in teaching, distinguished service, and character. The presenter will be asked to concentrate on analyzing and commenting on the facts of the case, rather than merely listing them. One is also expected to illustrate important achievements, e.g., by highlighting papers, patents, licenses, citations, H-factors, and any relevant performance metrics.

The committee will deliberate on the cases being presented immediately after all presentations and discussions associated with a particular session is over. When the matter is put to a vote, the Committee member representing the Department in which the candidate holds primary affiliation will recuse himself/herself from voting on that case.