

MEMO

To: John Zomchick, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

From: PPPR working Group of the Provost's Faculty Review and Promotion Task Force
Julie Andsager, Professor, Journalism and Electronic Media
Paul Frymier, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Engagement, Tickle College of Engineering
Lisa Muller, Professor, Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries
Katherine Newnam, Associate Professor, Nursing
Richard Pacelle, Professor and Head, Political Science
Jason Young, Professor and Director, Architecture

Cc: Diane Kelly, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

Re: Final Report of the PPPR Working Group

In his August 26, 2020 memo to UT Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success Linda Martin, UTK Provost John Zomchick called for the formation of a working group charged with evaluating the UTK APPR and suggesting potential changes to the process or best practices to ensure that APPR remains substantive and useful. Therefore, the PPPR working group of the Provost's Faculty Review and Promotion Task Force was formed and formally charged by Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Diane Kelly on January 28, 2021. The working group met four times between January 28th and March 24th, 2021. Between these meetings, some working group members met informally or in small groups with faculty members and administrators to receive feedback on the current APPR process and suggestions to be considered by the working group.

As a result of these meetings and discussions, two initiatives were considered by the group to have sufficient merit to be presented to the provost. While the committee felt the APPR process is rigorous, it is the recommendation of the committee that the two initiatives below be implemented together to replace the PPPR process.

Initiative 1: Provide college guidance to the unit heads on the expected structure of the APPR written narratives they provide at least once every three years

The unit head narratives vary significantly in breadth and depth across campus and this makes it difficult for external constituencies to determine the expected level of accomplishment and how the accomplishments of individual faculty members compare to disciplinary expectations. The working group recommends that guidelines for the expected structure of the narrative be provided to unit heads. For example, the expected narrative structure could involve a brief broad overview/summary followed by appropriate section headings (e.g., Teaching, Research/Scholarship, Service), individual statements describing the accomplishments of the faculty member in each of the categories, and a brief statement of how this level of accomplishment meets, exceeds, far exceeds, falls short, or falls far short of expectations. The narrative could close with a paragraph discussing the faculty member's progress toward the previous year's goals and the goals for the upcoming review period. By nature, the actual structure of the written narratives will vary by college, and the structure developed at the college level should meet any relevant stated requirements, but a standard starting point used across campus will still be useful.

Initiative 2: Accommodate periodic enhanced review into the current APPR system for post-tenure faculty.

The current APPR system is focused on short term goals (a year at a time) while faculty careers span decades and often occur in phases: early, mid, late career, for example. The working group recommends that at a longer frequency (e.g., 6 years or every two cycles of the current three-year narrative with some flexibility for timing), post-tenure faculty members prepare an enhanced performance narrative as part of an enhanced APPR (EAPPR) that focuses on the faculty member's long-term impact to the profession/discipline to date, reflection on impact in the last 6 years (since the last enhanced review), and a set of longer-term goals (e.g., 4-6 years). Colleges should provide guidance on an appropriate page limit or expectation for length. College P&T committees could be engaged in reviewing these enhanced reviews, providing feedback and an opportunity for the faculty member to revise before making recommendations to the dean. For colleges without departments, the 6-year enhanced APPR would be reviewed outside the college, thus satisfying the requirement for external review.

Conclusion: These two initiatives taken together align with the process for probationary faculty, where an enhanced retention review supplements annual reviews and provides an opportunity for a broader and deeper reflection on the part of the faculty member and the administration, while providing a venue for feedback on the career trajectory.