



Susan M. Collins • Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

## Memorandum

TO: Academic Program Group  
Research Unit Directors

FROM: Susan M. Collins

DATE: July 30, 2021

RE: Promotion Casebooks for Instructional Tenure Track, Research Professor Track, and  
Clinical Instructional Track Faculty

The attached instructions set forth detailed procedures and requested format for submitting promotion casebooks. All casebooks should be submitted no later than **February 9, 2022**. I ask that you make every effort to meet this deadline. Instructional tenure track faculty promotion recommendations will be acted upon by the Regents at their May 2022 meeting. Promotion casebooks for Research Professors will be reported at the Regents' May meeting, along with Clinical faculty promotions.

For your reference, I have attached a copy of the Regental guidelines on "Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion in the Several Faculties of the University of Michigan" (Attachment A), which is particularly relevant to the preparation of promotion casebooks for Instructional tenure track faculty. I would remind you, and ask you to remind your chairs and promotion committees, that **no recommendation for Instructional tenure track faculty promotion or tenure is final until approved by the Regents**. Any announcement prior to that date is premature and is not appropriate. I would also like to remind you that it is the Dean's/Director's responsibility to contact individual faculty regarding a negative decision for promotion at the Provost's level of review.

**As you conduct the promotion review process in your units, I ask that you exercise realistic flexibility in recognizing excellence in the context of ongoing COVID challenges and disruptions. While the bar for quality remains unchanged, expectations about quantity, time frames, and metrics should be adapted appropriately. Units have made adjustments to address this need, including the creation of unit- or department-level impact statements for external reviewers and provision for an optional statement by the candidate for internal use. Such provisions may vary with respect to disciplinary norms and research and scholarship practices. However, each school or college will need to clarify any adjustments that have been made and ensure that they are being implemented consistently.**

**As a reminder, for faculty who have secured a one-year COVID extension to their tenure clocks, this extension should not adversely affect decisions or outcomes for promotion within your units. Given pandemic-related disruptions, I also ask that you explicitly encourage faculty who participate in reviews of promotion casebooks to exercise reasonable flexibility, while maintaining high quality standards for their assessments.**

**As a reminder, Winter 2020 course evaluations will not be considered as part of promotion and tenure decisions. They may be used for developmental purposes within the units, but should not be reported as part of candidates' casebooks.**

With respect to the broader process of promotion and tenure review, please note that units should attend carefully to potential COI issues in the assignment of faculty to promotion and tenure review panels or committees and throughout the review process.

Producing casebook materials requires a substantial amount of work, and I am grateful for your careful attention to the attached instructions. I would like to re-emphasize that the Provost and the President must have a consistent basis for review of recommendations from many different units and disciplines. I am, therefore, requesting that each individual casebook be accompanied by a signed cover letter from the Dean or Director. This letter should provide an **accurate, thorough, and balanced summary** of the casebook and the promotion review in the unit. Please highlight both the pros and cons, strengths and weaknesses, of the faculty member's record and explain the rationale for the decision to recommend promotion. In addition, I request a 2-3 sentence assessment from the dean on what substantive impact the faculty member's research or scholarly work has had either within their own field(s) or more broadly.

For those faculty with relevant activities, I ask that you comment on their contributions to interdisciplinary teaching. I also encourage you to recognize entrepreneurial, creative, and outreach activities as outlined in the promotion guidelines and the Provost's memo dated July 21, 2021. Please be attuned to the value such contributions may have in the context of challenges posed by the covid-19 pandemic, as well as concerns about equity and racial justice and ways to address them.

Additionally, many of our faculty engage in collaborative research, a practice strongly encouraged by the University. To acknowledge the contributions of these faculty, it is essential that schools/colleges document in the faculty member's casebook their specific expertise and contribution(s) to collaborative research that indicate research independence.

Please note that only one casebook is required for faculty being promoted in two or more units. In these instances, it is important that the units coordinate their casebook preparations, which will include a cover letter signed by all the respective Dean(s)/Director(s). In the event the faculty candidate is not recommended for promotion and tenure in a unit(s) in which they hold a title, the cover letter should clearly indicate the reason(s) for this decision. Additional details are given in the attached instructions (Item #3.b. in the Checklist).

For each faculty member being promoted on the Instructional tenure track or Research Professor track, at least five "arm's length" external review letters are required, and more are highly desirable. We do not consider teachers, advisors, mentors, or current faculty colleagues to be "arm's length." Co-authors and major research collaborators/former faculty colleagues are also not "arm's length" unless the most recent association occurred over 10 years prior to the promotion. Please note that for the Clinical Instructional track only, we will accept up to two of these review letters from University of Michigan faculty who have seen the candidate's clinical work and actual teaching but are neither mentors nor scholarly collaborators nor in the same department as the candidate. If you have any questions about the application of this requirement, please contact our office as soon as the question arises (Item #3.j. in the Checklist).

Academic units must forward materials to the Provost on each mandatory tenure review decision. Those cases being deferred for review to another year by the school or college should not be sent to our office. The materials forwarded on a negative mandatory tenure case should include the same materials that are submitted for a positive promotion and tenure case, with one exception: all negative mandatory tenure cases require an updated curriculum vitae, in addition to the original curriculum vitae. This should be a CV that has been updated to reflect the candidate's academic productivity at the time of the Provost's level of review. It is

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essential that the cover letter present a concise but complete and unbiased accounting of all aspects of the case and make clear the reasons for the negative recommendation. All documents created as part of the promotion process and relied upon in reaching a negative mandatory tenure recommendation should be included in the casebook and uploaded to DropBox.

Wise and objective decisions about appointment, promotion, and tenure are essential to the overall quality of the institution. The conferring of tenure represents long-term intellectual and financial commitments by the University. In fact, it may be the single most important responsibility that we have. I appreciate your efforts and success in attracting and retaining the very best faculty. Your attention to these guidelines will greatly assist the President and me in this critical joint decision-making process. **Please forward this memorandum and the attached instructions to Department Chairs, Program Heads, or others in your unit who are directly responsible for the promotional review of Instructional tenure track, Research Professor track, and Clinical Instructional track faculty.** These documents will also be available online at [http://provost.umich.edu/faculty/promotion\\_guidelines/](http://provost.umich.edu/faculty/promotion_guidelines/).

Your attention to this important process is greatly appreciated.

SMC/LJP/SBB/tas

Attachments

cc: Sara Blair  
Jim Burkel  
Rebecca Cunningham  
Tammy Deane  
Christine Gerdes  
Richard Holcomb  
Lori Pierce  
Mark Schlissel