Case Western Reserve University
College of Arts and Sciences

POLICY ON EVALUATION OF TEACHING

The quality of teaching by a member of the faculty will be evaluated in the third-year review and in the tenure review on the basis of several instruments, including four that are required: a portfolio, student evaluations, classroom visits, and letters from former students*.

***Note: Letters from former students are not used for the third-year review.**

Approved by A&S Faculty March 27, 1997

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SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Portfolio

The college's Executive Committee has recommended that each untenured tenure-track faculty member maintain a teaching portfolio which should contain (at the minimum):

- all course syllabi;
- representative class handouts, assignments, and examinations for each course;
- a short statement of the candidate's approach to teaching, describing common practices and the rationale for them; and
- a short description of the candidate's teaching role in the department (some candidates teach mostly graduate students, others specialize in certain service courses, and so on).

At the March 27, 1997 faculty meeting, it was suggested instead that departments maintain the teaching portfolios, which would include (in addition to the materials cited above) a brief description of the courses taught and level of responsibility.

This suggestion was not put to a vote; whether the faculty member or the department is to maintain the teaching portfolio is a matter to be worked out at the departmental level. Where faculty members are asked to assume this responsibility, it should not represent a significant drain on their time. Under either arrangement, faculty members may choose to supplement the recommended materials with other information relevant to their teaching.

The process of compiling the portfolio should begin in the first year and continue each year thereafter. Advice about the process (emanating from UCITE, perhaps) should be incorporated into new faculty orientation.

A departmental evaluation of a faculty member's teaching portfolio shall be included in the third-year review and tenure review files. Such evaluations are indispensable to the various review committees, given the distinctive challenges associated with teaching in each discipline.

Student Evaluations

Statistical data should be kept either electronically and/or on file by the faculty member or in the department office according to usual departmental practice. The third-year review file and the promotion/tenure file should include a narrative overview of this information written by the department chair or his or her appropriate designate (but not the candidate under review). A department may not rule out the use of such data since doing so could deny the candidate under review the chance to provide the best evidence of teaching effectiveness.

Classroom Visits

The Executive Committee has recommended that members of the department—assuming roles as mentors, advisors, and evaluators—make occasional visits to classes taught by untenured tenure-track faculty. The evaluation component should be carried out by senior members only. The implementation properly will vary from department to department.

At the March 27, 1997 faculty meeting, it was suggested that each untenured tenure-track faculty member, in consultation with senior faculty, choose one or more tenured faculty mentors (subject to change from time to time). The untenured faculty member and mentor would visit each other's classes at least once before the third-year review and once before the tenure review, and then discuss and review issues relevant to their teaching. It is expected that such senior faculty shall comment on these experiences for the annual, third-year, and tenure reviews.

Letters from Former Students

A candidate’s promotion or tenure file routinely contains letters from former students discussing the candidate’s teaching. It may be desirable as well to use exit interviews with graduating seniors as a source of evaluation. For the third-year review, however, letters (or other input) from former students are not considered.