

## **Faculty Personnel Committee Statement of Policies and Practices in the Faculty Evaluation Process**

*[Revised Spring 2019]*

*[Revised Again Spring 2021]*

### **A. Policies and Procedures with Regard to the Evaluation Process Itself**

In evaluating all faculty, FPC uses the 60/30/10 formula that has been in place for decades. This formula is used for retention, tenure, promotion, and merit recommendations, which involves both comparative and non-comparative discussions. Any change to this formula would have to come as a result of discussions by the faculty and a formal vote to change the Faculty Handbook.

The purpose of this document is to make more transparent the way FPC evaluates faculty in all three categories, and to advise faculty in ways to make their self-reports and other documents more helpful to FPC as they form an evaluation.

#### ***I. Effectiveness in teaching.***

As an undergraduate liberal arts university, Ohio Wesleyan places the greatest emphasis upon effectiveness in teaching. Teaching has traditionally been weighted as 60% of the overall evaluation, and in personnel decisions requiring comparison (i.e., promotion to Full professor and merit at all levels), committee members are asked to assign points up to a maximum of 60 to each faculty member eligible in that category. (These scores serve only to initiate discussion, not to conclude it.) The committee recognizes the existence of diverse paths toward effective teaching, even within a discipline, and takes pains to evaluate teaching effectiveness drawing on several independent sources from different constituencies. In addition to standardized course evaluations, the committee solicits syllabi, Peer Teaching Observation Reviews, peer evaluations, and evaluations from the student boards to give it a broad overview of a faculty member's contribution to fulfilling Ohio Wesleyan's teaching mission.

**General criteria applied to Category I work.** The questions which appear in the Self-Report and on the course evaluation form indicate the committee's criteria for effective teaching. They cover issues raised by the committee in discussion and by the Provost during annual counseling sessions (see p. 8 of this document):

1. Subject matter expertise.
2. Preparation for teaching, including course design and organization and class preparation and planning.
3. Teaching effectiveness in the classroom, including classroom management skills and dynamics, as well as issues of rigor and fairness.
4. Teaching effectiveness outside the classroom, including approachability and accessibility.
5. Quality of advising.
6. Ability to accommodate a variety of learning styles and abilities, as indicated by effectiveness with both majors and non-majors, upper- and lower-level students, and well-prepared and less-well-prepared students.
7. Other evidence of teaching engagement, such as direction of independent studies and honors projects, directed readings, and honors tutorials; major revisions of courses and innovations in approach and technique; effective incorporation of technology in teaching; and involvement of students in research and other professional activities.

**Additional considerations in assessing Category I work.** Additionally, the following are some of the committee's guiding principles for assessment in Category I.

1. In general, FPC does not merely look for a list of what is done in classes. Instead, the Committee is looking for evidence of reflective thought on what is being done. FPC wants to know *why* the techniques and methods used in a class were chosen, and *how* they were applied in the classroom. FPC also appreciates reflection on the effectiveness of these techniques. Teachers who show the ability to evaluate their approach to the classroom, looking for reasons why the approaches they take work (or do not work) are more effectively able to evolve their teaching throughout their careers.
2. Evaluations are most credible when they depend upon direct experience or observation. In peer evaluations, the committee always considers the basis for an evaluator's judgment, and gives less weight to comments for which no evidence is provided. Similarly, in student board evaluations, the committee looks for supporting evidence. Individual departments and individual student boards have different means for gathering information. In 2017, Peer Teaching Observation Reviews (PTORs) were first implemented. Probationary faculty must conduct one PTOR per year, and tenured faculty must submit two PTORs per review period. In addition, faculty are always welcome to share course materials with other colleagues and invite them to observe their classes informally.

3. The committee recognizes that few faculty members will succeed with every student, and that most faculty members are more effective with some students than with others. The student board often provides the committee with a broader perspective than do the students in a given course, especially if many students take the course to meet distribution requirements. Nevertheless, the university is committed to the academic development of all students it has admitted, so the committee looks for teaching success across a range of students, from beginning to advanced.
4. Because OWU is a teaching institution, the committee expects a faculty member's commitment to teaching to translate into an established campus presence. Regular office hours constitute one means to demonstrate accessibility to students. A pattern of student complaints regarding faculty accessibility is a sufficient cause for a negative personnel decision. Similarly, a pattern of class cancellations or excessive tardiness to class indicates that a faculty member does not adequately respect the students or is not fulfilling all of one's teaching responsibilities.

## ***II. Scholarly contributions as evidenced through research, publication and professional participation.***

Scholarly and creative work have traditionally been weighted as 30% of the overall evaluation, and in personnel decisions requiring comparison (i.e., promotion to Full Professor and merit at all levels), committee members are asked to assign points up to a maximum of 30 to each faculty member eligible in that category. (As is the case for Category I, these scores serve only to initiate discussion, not to conclude it.)

**The significance of scholarly and creative work.** The research and creative work of OWU faculty members not only support our teaching by generating and enhancing classroom content, but they model the kinds of activities in which we wish our students to engage. We value the teacher-scholar model. This work also reflects the quality of our faculty, thus improving the university's reputation in the world at large. If we truly hope to see our students embrace scholarly research and artistic creation with enthusiasm, we need to demonstrate our own enthusiasm for these endeavors, and our continued engagement with the kinds of problem-solving and scholarship that we ask our students to do. Just as we want to be perceived as a community of lifelong learners, we want to be perceived as a community of people engaged in ongoing discussions and explorations that encompass the world outside of Ohio Wesleyan. Moreover, the

reputation that stems from this model of teaching and scholarship brings us more students, and more of the kinds of students whom we all want to teach.

As the numerical breakdown of personnel evaluation attests, we continue to consider Category I activity to be twice as important as Category II activity. However, Category II remains 30% of a faculty member's overall evaluation. A positive recommendation for tenure and promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor rests upon clear evidence of both high quality teaching and scholarship. Diminution in scholarly activity post tenure can delay promotion to Full Professor and weaken a faculty member's competitiveness for merit.

When evaluating a candidate for merit, FPC looks at the production in the last merit cycle of three years. The judgement of what fits into what cycle is typically defined by the date the work was completed, not when the final product reaches publication. When evaluating a candidate for promotion to Full, FPC looks at the production over the entirety of the years at the Associate level. FPC looks at this production holistically, and does not penalize a candidate who has spent longer as an Associate with expectations for more scholarly productivity.

**The committee's expectations with regard to untenured faculty.** New faculty may be especially anxious regarding their evaluation in Category II. The committee understands, however, the challenges of teaching new courses during a period of adjustment to a new institution, and tends to emphasize the development of teaching in the early years of the probationary period, as long as there is sufficient evidence of potential for growth in Category II. As the tenure decision nears, the committee will expect significant production in Category II. The Committee believes the fourth year sabbatical should be used wisely, and will likely be important for scholarly productivity.

**General criteria applied to Category II work.** As in Category I, the Self-Report form indicates the committee's criteria in assessing effective scholarship or creative work. The form covers issues raised by the committee in discussion and by the Provost during annual counseling sessions (see p. 8 of this document):

1. Evidence of productivity, including articles in refereed journals; published books in academically recognized publishing houses, plays, or compositions; exhibitions or performances; papers presented at professional meetings; service to a professional organization in the form of offices held or meetings or sessions organized or chaired; professional contributions to performances or concerts; and attendance at professional meetings.

2. Evidence of an ongoing OWU research or creative agenda.
3. Evidence of engagement with the discipline at a professional level.

FPC is looking for more than just a bulleted list of accomplishments. FPC learns the most when the list is accompanied by an explanation saying why the contribution is important, how it came about, why the specific venue was chosen, how it fits into an overarching plan for production, the faculty member's role in collaborative and co-authored works, etc.

Similarly, what FPC is looking for in the "Work in Progress" section (IIB) is a description of how the topics being explored show an evolution or continuation of the candidate's scholarly path, as well as the plan for how these new directions will be brought to fruition.

**Additional considerations in assessing Category II work.** It is difficult to make a statement that covers all disciplines, and to a large extent FPC relies upon the judgment of peer raters in the relevant field. However, some basic principles can be summarized.

1. The committee is looking for evidence of scholarly or creative engagement, although it does not require any one type of accomplishment for either tenure or promotion but rather looks holistically at a faculty member's record in this category. Publication, performance, and exhibition obviously constitute reliable evidence of a type often privileged by peers and committee members. But conference papers, panel discussions, invited workshop presentations, Web publications, and service as a conference organizer, evaluator of papers or manuscripts, or contest judge can also demonstrate engagement with an appropriate community outside of Ohio Wesleyan, and are seen as activities that complement the above activities. It is not uncommon for peer evaluators and committee members to look for this latter type of activity as evidence that projects described in a Self-Report are actually underway. These activities are typically given less weight than scholarly endeavors that are refereed or juried (as appropriate to the faculty member's field), and it is unlikely that a scholarly resume consisting of only those sorts of unreviewed activities would be seen as sufficient scholarly activity when evaluated for tenure or promotion.

2. In many fields, a faculty member's first publications, exhibitions, or performances are related to graduate work, and often, to a thesis or dissertation. Eventually, though, the committee hopes to see evidence of ongoing work done at Ohio Wesleyan or during a faculty member's time here. A dissertation or other culminating demonstration of a

degree candidate's progress is intended to launch a career, not end it, and the committee is looking for evidence that a faculty member continues to be engaged in scholarship or creative production and has brought some of her or his work to fruition.

3. The committee harbors no prejudices against co-authorship or collaboration in disciplines where this is the common practice. The committee relies upon Self-Reports to clarify a faculty member's contribution to collaborative work, and upon peer evaluators to assess the relative merits of co-authored or collaborative work. In some fields, the appearance of a name first among co-authors or collaborators signifies the greatest contribution to the final product, while in others it does not.

4. Other things being equal, the committee favors quality over quantity. For example, peer-reviewed publication is favored over other kinds of publication, since peer-reviewed publication often entails a lengthier process of review, revision, and resubmission. In many fields, the typical venue for peer-reviewed publication is an academic journal. Peer evaluators are expected to provide comments to help the committee judge the quality of Category II work.

6. The committee tends to look favorably on scholarly publications or creative work that involves students as co-investigators, co-creators, or co-authors, in fields where this is feasible.

7. It is the practice of the committee to rely upon peer evaluators on campus to help it assess the Category II work of faculty. The committee does not require external reviews of Category II work for any evaluation, but does have a process in place for those who wish to utilize it (information available on the FPC web page). The committee has used information from external reviewers to gain perspective on the quality of scholarly contributions, especially in situations where typical Peer Evaluations from OWU faculty might be inadequate.

8. In evaluating faculty members for tenure and promotion to Full Professor, the committee has recognized the usefulness of looking at a candidate's overall record, or, in the case of promotion to Full Professor, that part of the record that has accumulated since the previous promotion. To that end an updated CV is now requested for all reviews.

9. At times, the lines between Category II work and work in the other categories may not be clear. The committee reserves the right to decide where a given contribution belongs, but is open to persuasive arguments made in the Self-Report or by peer

evaluators. A faculty member who is undecided should make a judgment call, and be assured that the committee may categorize the work more advantageously than she or he does.

10. The committee recognizes that a faculty member's scholarly and creative interests can shift over time. In the interest of promoting sustained intellectual and artistic engagement in our faculty, the committee maintains a certain amount of flexibility regarding what constitutes appropriate Category II activity. If a significant shift in direction of research occurs, it is to the faculty member's interest to explain the rationale for the progression of the research direction.

### ***III. Service to the University and community based on professional qualifications.***

Service activities are an important component of a faculty member's responsibilities. Service activities support the faculty governance system, enhance the co-curriculum, and contribute to the university's role in the wider community. Service has traditionally been weighted as 10% in the overall evaluation, and in personnel decisions requiring comparison (i.e., promotion and merit), committee members are asked to assign points up to a maximum of 10 to each faculty member eligible in that category. (As with the other categories, these scores serve only to initiate discussion, not to conclude it.) The following considerations guide FPC's evaluation in Category III.

1. In general, the committee favors campus service over off-campus service. While both kinds are valuable, the first supports most directly the administration of the university and the enhancement of the co-curriculum. In particular, FPC favors service on standing committees because our system of faculty governance relies heavily on the work that these committees do. FPC recognizes, however, that the elective process results in a limited number of successful candidates, and welcomes evidence of willingness to serve. The committee also recognizes that there are many ways to serve the campus community without serving on an elected committee, and values those kinds of service as well.

2. In terms of community service, the committee makes an attempt to evaluate the extent and quality of work involved. Charitable contributions that are strictly monetary do not count as service. It is beneficial if faculty can highlight how their service work is related to their academic discipline or broader intellectual engagement.

3. With regard to any activity for which a faculty member is compensated, the committee prefers to know whether the service is compensated with money or workload credit. The exact quantity of compensation does not need to be mentioned. Some faculty members feel that any compensated service “does not count”. FPC would prefer to receive the full picture of a faculty member’s service contributions, while taking into account whether the service was compensated or not.

4. While committee members adhere to the 10% weighting in their initial assessments, in the final analysis this category may weigh more heavily in the making of merit decisions. The committee recognizes that individuals may shift their priorities over time, and that these shifts most frequently affect the relative amounts of time devoted to Categories II and III. Someone who has demonstrated strength in teaching and engaged in exceptional institutional service may well be rewarded with merit, especially given there are now three tiers of merit.

### **B. Policies and Practices with Regard to Communication of the Committee’s Evaluation**

The Provost serves as the spokesperson to individual faculty members for the Faculty Personnel Committee. The Provost communicates personnel decisions to faculty members by two means.

1. Counseling Letters: For tenure-track faculty on probationary appointment, the Provost conveys in writing a summary of the findings of the FPC. This summary letter is crafted by committee members in consultation with the Provost. A copy is sent to the faculty member as well as the department chair. These letters cover the committee’s evaluations in each of the three categories. Counseling letters are also now provided to candidates who are not recommended for promotion from Associate to Full Professor. The goal for these letters is to clarify expectations and to make suggestions on an area(s) to strengthen prior to the next promotion review.

2. Counseling Sessions: After the tenure-track faculty member on probationary appointment has received the written summary of the FPC’s findings, the Provost meets with that faculty member, accompanied by the chair of his or her department, to discuss the findings of the committee as presented in the counseling letter. During the counseling session the probationary faculty member has the opportunity to ask for clarification, offer comments or observations, ask for advice, and seek further information that might be relevant.

During the counseling session the Provost and the chair might make comments that interpret, supplement, or go beyond the written summary of the FPC's findings. All involved should clearly differentiate any administrative or personal observations or suggestions from those representing the committee's views. Probationary faculty should keep in mind that only the FPC findings as explicitly stated in the written account of those findings are directly and ineluctably relevant to future personnel committee recommendations regarding retention, merit, promotion, and tenure.

The Provost may bring back to the committee questions raised and information gleaned during the counseling sessions, for the committee's cognizance or response.

Additionally, while the formal counseling sessions are limited to untenured faculty, any faculty member is free to schedule a meeting with the Provost to discuss any personnel decision made by FPC at any time.

### **C. Policies and Practices with regard to Selection of Peer Evaluators:**

A collection of Peer Evaluators reads each faculty member's self-report, syllabi, CV and any supplemental materials, such as papers, that the candidate has made available to evaluators. They do not see course evaluations, or PTOR submissions. For untenured faculty in their first and second year, and all tenured faculty, the peer evaluators consist of the department or program chair, plus four additional faculty members. For untenured faculty in their third through sixth year, the peer evaluators consist of all members of the faculty member's department or program, with a minimum of 5 reviewers.

Within the limits described above, FPC invites all faculty members to be reviewed in an academic year to submit a list of preferences as to who would be good or bad evaluators for a faculty member, along with the reasons for these preferences. This invitation comes out at the start of the academic year. While all candidates may avail themselves of this system, FPC especially hopes that it is used in situations where a faculty member may have a connection with someone outside of their department whom they want FPC to be made aware of, or in situations where the candidate is in a small department, and must look outside of that department for the five necessary peer reviews.

Faculty requests for peer evaluators will be kept confidential. Despite candidate preferences, FPC is bound by the rules stated previously, and so may not be able to grant the request. Additionally, FPC may deem it important to hear from a different set of faculty than the candidate's desired preferences. Even so, foreknowledge of a peer evaluator's potential bias may help FPC to put the peer evaluation within a proper context.