Preparing for Your Fourth-Year Review
Advice for Tenure-Track Faculty Members in Their Third Year at Peabody College

Assuming you have been appointed without credit for prior service (i.e., following the standard “3-2-3” appointment sequence), your fourth-year review will occur in the fall of your fourth year on the tenure track at Vanderbilt University. This review is a very important step on the road to tenure. This document is intended to summarize the review process and provide some advice that you may find helpful.

The fourth-year review is intended to produce recommendations for allocation of your effort in preparation for your tenure review and is expected to lead to your final (and three-year) pre-tenure appointment. The review will be guided by the following general questions:

• Is your research program productive, programmatic, and of the highest quality?
• Are you on track for achieving a national reputation for excellence and impactfulness of your research?
• Are you emerging as a highly effective teacher?
• Given your apparent trajectory, does a positive recommendation for tenure seem likely three years hence?
• What should you do to strengthen your record of scholarship prior to the tenure review?
• What should you do to improve your teaching performance?
• Is your service satisfactory?
• What adjustments (if any) in your service activities are advisable?

In the fall of your fourth year at Vanderbilt, you will need to provide a personal statement, your current CV with annotations regarding your role in any coauthored papers, copies of your course syllabi, and copies of publications and manuscripts you have completed since your second-year review.

The information regarding your role in any coauthored papers should be provided in a sentence or two, perhaps including percentages, for each paper with multiple authors. For example, if you produced a particular paper with two coauthors, the annotation might be something like the following: "I conceived this study, collected and analyzed the data, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript (80%). Smith (15%) helped refine the design of the study and commented on drafts, while Jones (5%) assisted with the data analysis and read the final draft." The use of percentages is optional, and you will not be disadvantaged if you choose not to include them.

Your personal statement affords you an opportunity to provide a summary of your professional accomplishments and plans in the context established by the personal statement you submitted.
for your second-year review and the counseling letter you received after that review was completed. As you think about your statement for your fourth-year review, you should revisit your earlier (second-year review) statement so you can be sure to relate your more recent work to the directions you set for yourself two years ago. Also, you should note how you have responded to specific suggestions that may have been included in your second-year counseling letter.

The content and organization of your statement are at your discretion, but you may wish to include

- A description of the major themes of your research
- A discussion of linkages among various research projects you have under way
- Your future research plans
- A description of your teaching philosophy and objectives, including past and planned course and curriculum development

In summary, your statement should detail what you have done to place yourself on a trajectory that eventually will make you a successful tenure candidate. As you develop your statement, you should feel free to consult with faculty colleagues in your department. The length of your statement must not exceed 10 double-spaced pages.

In the fall of your fourth year, two of your faculty colleagues will ask to observe your teaching on at least two occasions. Their reports will supplement student evaluations of your teaching. You are welcome to provide any other information you wish regarding your teaching.

In January of your fourth year, you will have an opportunity to review your fall teaching ratings and, if you wish, comment on them in writing. Also, you should make sure you have supplied any relevant materials (e.g., a new manuscript just completed) that were not ready or available in the fall.

Late in the spring semester of the same year, your department chair will meet with you to discuss the results of the review and will follow up your meeting with a fourth-year counseling letter. The purpose of the counseling letter is to provide realistic and detailed guidance, in an encouraging and supportive framework, to you regarding your progress and any actions that you may need to take to help achieve a trajectory likely to result in a positive tenure review. In other words, the letter will contain important career development suggestions that you should carefully follow.

It is anticipated that your official reappointment letter (from the Dean of Peabody College) will be sent late in the spring semester, depending upon the timing of approval from the Provost’s Office.