Appendix A: Voting Eligibility and Procedures for Faculty Appointments, Reappointments, and Promotions

Peabody College of Vanderbilt University

Few, if any, actions shape the future of Peabody College more than decisions about faculty appointments, reappointments, and promotions. The composition of our community of scholars defines our capabilities, strongly influences collective priorities, and ultimately determines our trajectory. Accordingly, it is essential to make these decisions as carefully as possible, basing them upon the judgment of faculty members who are in a position to evaluate the professional accomplishments of colleagues under consideration. Several principles guide the determination of eligibility to vote and procedures for voting:

1. In general, eligibility to vote is vested in faculty members above the rank that is the subject of the vote. For example, only associate professors and professors are eligible to vote on reappointment of an assistant professor.

2. If there is no rank above the rank that is the subject of the vote, then those at the subject rank are eligible to vote. Thus, for example, tenured (full) professors vote on the promotion of a tenured associate professor, and (full) professors of the practice are eligible to vote on the reappointment of a (full) professor of the practice.

3. The predominant professional activities of those who vote should correspond to the predominant professional activities of the colleague whose appointment, reappointment, or promotion is the subject of the vote. For example, research associate professors (who, in general, are not involved in the College’s instructional programs) are not asked to judge the performance of a colleague whose primary responsibilities involve teaching.

4. Because personnel decisions have long-term ramifications, those who vote should have a long-range perspective by virtue of the type of faculty position they occupy. Accordingly, persons with faculty titles limited to one-year or temporary appointments (e.g., Lecturer, Visiting Professor) or with part-time appointments do not vote on faculty appointments, reappointments, and promotions. This restriction does not apply to persons with full-status partial-load appointments, as defined in the Vanderbilt Faculty Manual.

5. If a positive reappointment vote would imply satisfactory progress toward the accumulation of a record that is likely to lead to a successful tenure review, then only those who will be eligible to vote on tenure are eligible to vote on the reappointment. Thus, only tenured faculty members are eligible to vote on the reappointment of a non-tenured tenure-track Assistant Professor.
6. As specified in Peabody’s *Procedural Guidelines for Appointment, Renewal, Promotion and Tenure*, single-year appointments (e.g., Lecturer) may be recommended to the dean without a faculty vote.

7. Faculty members must be free to cast their independent votes without fear of retribution.

The titles Research Associate and Senior Research Associate have been excluded from this document because these are staff, rather than faculty, positions.

**Position Offers (Appointments)**

All multi-year position offers require the approval of a simple majority of the voting faculty of the department(s) in which the prospective faculty member will be appointed. Voting members of the Peabody College faculty are those persons holding at least half-time appointments in Peabody College with the titles of Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, and Distinguished Professor; Instructor in the Practice, Assistant Professor of the Practice, Associate Professor of the Practice, and Professor of the Practice; Clinical Instructor, Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, and Clinical Professor; Research Instructor; Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Professor; and Senior Lecturer and Principal Senior Lecturer; but without the prefixes Adjoint, Adjunct, or Visiting.

Depending upon the rank and tenure status of the offer to be recommended to the dean, one or two additional votes may be required.

*Tenure-track and tenured positions.* Approval by a simple majority of the voting faculty (see above) is required to recommend appointment to the dean. Depending upon the rank to be recommended, the following additional votes are required:

1. An offer at the rank of instructor or assistant (tenure-track, without tenure) requires approval by a simple majority of the tenured faculty following approval by a simple majority of the voting faculty.

2. An offer at the rank of associate with tenure requires approval by a simple majority of the tenured faculty following approval by a simple majority of the voting faculty.

3. An offer at the rank of professor with tenure requires approval by a simple majority of two additional groups following approval by a simple majority of the voting faculty:
   a. The tenured faculty (including associate professors)
   b. The tenured professors
Non-tenure-track positions. Approval by a simple majority of the voting faculty (see above) is required to recommend appointment to the dean. Depending upon the rank to be recommended, an additional vote may be required.

Figure 1 summarizes which faculty members, by title, are eligible to participate in the additional votes required for various position offers. As noted above, single-year appointments (e.g., Lecturer, Visiting Professor for one year only) may be recommended to the dean without a faculty vote.

Reappointments

Approval by a simple majority of eligible voters is required for reappointment. Figure 2 summarizes voting eligibility for reappointment decisions.
Promotions

Approval by a simple majority of eligible voters is required for candidacy for promotion to go forward to the dean. Figure 3 indicates which titles are eligible to vote on various promotions. Promotions from instructor have been excluded because they usually are automatic upon completion of the doctorate by those few individuals appointed to tenure-track, clinical, practice, or research faculty positions prior to completion of their doctoral programs.

Figure 3. Voting Eligibility for Promotion Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promotion (Subject of Vote)</th>
<th>Tenure-Track</th>
<th>Practice/Clinical</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Senior Lect</th>
<th>Prin Sr Lect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T-T Assistant to Associate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenured Associate to Professor</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ten Prof to Distinguished Prof</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/C Assistant to Associate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/C Associate to Professor</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Res Assistant to Associate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Res Associate to Professor</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer to Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr Lect to Principal Senior Lect</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voting Procedures

Decisions regarding faculty appointments, reappointments, and promotions should be informed by the independent judgment of eligible voters expressed without fear of retribution. Faculty members should feel free to vote on a particular case as dictated by their best judgment rather than concerns about how others may react. Accordingly, voting by secret ballot is required.

Because academic tenure at Vanderbilt carries with it the University’s commitment to continuous employment until the faulty member voluntarily terminates the employment or until retirement or permanent disability, or dismissal for cause, decisions on tenure can affect both the tenure candidate and the University for decades. Indeed, any vote on reappointment or promotion, whether on the tenure track on not, has great impact on the faculty member’s career. Thus, votes on these high-stakes decisions must be conducted with double-blind balloting to ensure preservation of anonymity.

An example of an acceptable double-blind balloting procedure is the following:

1. Ballots are printed and inserted in small, blank envelopes.
2. Each small envelope containing the ballot is inserted in a larger envelope on which the faculty member’s name and a signature line appear.
3. The envelopes are distributed at the end of the meeting in which the tenure case is discussed or are placed in faculty boxes.
4. Each faculty member marks his or her ballot in privacy, seals it in the smaller envelope, seals the smaller envelope in the outer envelope, signs the outer
envelope, and returns the set to the departmental office. A submission deadline at
the close of business on the day following the meeting allows time for reflection
on the discussion.
5. A staff person logs in the set, opens the outer envelope, and places the sealed
inner envelope in a box.
6. A second staff person opens the inner envelopes and tallies the ballots.

Each department is asked to develop and consistently apply its own rules regarding the
permissibility of absentee voting. Some departments may conclude that it is essential for
each voter to be present for the discussion of a particular case in order to be eligible to
vote. Others may choose to allow voting on the basis of a careful reading of the case
documentation without hearing the discussion at the meeting.