Between October 2012 and December 2012 the Faculty Senate Tenure and Promotion Committee reviewed 55 tenure and promotion applications. Thirty-one of those applications were for both tenure and promotion and 24 applications were for promotion alone. Applications for promotion alone included 1 application for promotion to the rank of Full Professor faculty–in–residence, 2 applications for promotion to Associate Professor faculty–in–residence and 21 applications for promotion to Full Professor.

The committee membership included 11 voting members, one from each college or unit, and myself as Past Chair of the Faculty Senate as well as the current Vice Chair of the Faculty Senate. Members were:

John Filler (Chair)
Paul Werth (Vice Chair)
John Zimmerman BUS
Jian Wang EDU
Angelo Yfantis ENGR
Mykola Suk FA
Edward Herschaft HS
Yen-soon Kim HOA
Bret Birdsong LAW
Maria Casas LA
David Schwartz LIB
Bala Naduvalath SCI
Terry Miethe UA

The Chair of the committee as well as the Vice Chair of the Faculty Senate served as ex-officio. Members of the committee who had voted on an applicant at the department or college level recused themselves from voting on that applicant again.

The committee met on October 26 (Nevada Day), November 2, November 9, November 12 (Veteran’s Day), November 16, November 30 and December 7. Applications for tenure and promotion were completed first, followed by applications for promotion. A committee recommendation for each candidate was provided only where the vote of the committee provided a solid and unequivocal foundation for doing so. Members of the committee who had not voted at an earlier level (department or college) were allowed to vote Yea, Nay or Abstain. A summary of the recommendations that were forwarded to the EVPP and an indication of the final decision rendered by the President is provided below.
Applications for both Tenure and Promotion

- Of the 31 applicants for both Tenure & Promotion the committee rendered a recommendation for 29 (28 to grant both & 1 to deny both). The President agreed with each of these recommendations.

- Of the 31 applicants for both Tenure and Promotion there was no recommendation tendered by our committee for 2. The President’s decision was to grant both tenure and promotion to one of these and to deny both tenure and promotion to the other.

Applications for Promotion

- Of the 24 applicants for Promotion alone (3 of which were FIR requesting promotion) 22 were recommended promotion and 1 received a negative recommendation for promotion to Full Professor. The President agreed with the committee on each of these 23 recommendations

- Of the 24 applicants for Promotion alone no recommendation was tendered for 1, a request for promotion to Full Professor. The President granted promotion to this individual.

To summarize, in every case where a recommendation was offered by the committee, the president ultimately agreed with that recommendation.

In addition to the above recommendations regarding the specific set of 2012 applications an extensive list of recommendations for improvements to the process was offered as a separate document. These are attached.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Filler, Ph.D.
Professor, Chair 2012-2013 Faculty Senate Tenure and Promotion Committee
Overall Recommendations
University Promotion & Tenure Committee
Fall 2012

In order to enhance the quality of its deliberations and ensure the application of comparable rigor to all candidates under consideration, the University Promotion & Tenure Committee offers the recommendations outlined below.

I. Enhanced Standardization & General Improvement of Applications. The committee frequently found it difficult to apply standards of comparable rigor because of inconsistencies in the materials submitted. It calls attention to the following specifically:

1) External letters represented the largest single problem, for several reasons:
   • The numbers of letters varied widely, leaving the committee uncertain as to how to assess them.
   • In several cases letters came from within UNLV instead of being solicited externally.
   • In some cases letters were submitted without having been requested.
   • It is not always clear a) what was asked of external referees, or b) what materials they were given to review (in some cases they seem to have reviewed only the application, rather than any accompanying materials)

   The committee therefore strongly recommends the following:
   • Consideration of whether the number of external letters should be standardized across all units
   • The exclusion from the application of any unsolicited letters, as well as any letters composed by anyone employed at UNLV
   • Inclusion of a copy of the letter sent out to reviewers with an indication as to which materials they were asked to review
   • Consideration of whether greater standardization should be introduced into the instructions sent out to reviewers

2) The committee sensed the need for better opening statements by applicants themselves. It therefore proposes:
   • That such statements be genuinely limited to one page. Chairs should ensure that such statements are not longer.
   • That applicants specify more clearly the quantity of scholarship produced in the period under review and briefly recount its significance for laypeople

3) The committee furthermore felt that several smaller issues required clarification:
   • Departmental averages on teaching evaluations should be included in all instances in which they are available and/or can be calculated.
   • Grants below a certain dollar amount (e.g. $2000) should be excluded.
• The term “accepted for publication” should be applied only to those works that have been accepted without any conditions.
• No item merely “submitted” or “under review” should be included or addressed in any application.
• Chairs should ensure compliance with these standards.

4) The committee in general finds the current application form frustrating and cumbersome. Recognizing that it is mandated by NSHE, the committee proposes that a revision of the form might be undertaken in order to make it more useful to all instances. In the meantime, smaller adjustments might include:
• Submission of materials pertaining to different levels (departmental P&T committee, chair, college P&T committee, and dean) on paper of different colors
• Inclusion of a single-page checklist at the head of each application, to be signed by each relevant instance, in order to ensure that all materials have been properly assembled and presented. Such a checklist might also include the date on which each committee or administrator deliberated or reviewed the application; and the result of that deliberation (as permitted by UNLV by-laws)
• Verification upon receipt by the provost’s office that each application is complete.

5) For cases of promotion alone (not tenure), the committee requests that applicants include in their applications all achievements relevant to their entire career, but that they also clearly designate those items representing accomplishments since tenure.

II. Greater Guidance from Applicants & Administrators. In some instances the committee felt that either the applicants themselves or administrators and P&T committees were abdicating their responsibility of explaining the significance of the work and ensuring that the claims being made were accurate. The committee sees this kind of guidance as critical to establishing comparable rigor. It therefore proposes:
• That chairs or other instances give the committee some general guidance concerning the requirements for tenure and/or promotion in each field.
• That the applicant specify his or her contribution to each publication in the case of multi-authored pieces, or at least indicate by which standard the committee might determine who is “lead author” for his or her discipline.
• That the chair verify the factual accuracy of the applicant’s claims, for example confirming that there were so many books and so many articles, etc.; and that deans clarify the issue when there are discrepancies in the claims of lower instances.
• That chair or dean do more to clarify the significance of the applicant’s scholarship and perhaps comment on the prestige and importance of the venues or publishers with which it appears
• That unit heads provide more guidance on those applicants whose primary responsibilities are not teaching, for example by specifying in which category (teaching, research, or service) their principal responsibilities should be evaluated.
III. Clarification of Definitions. The committee found that the definitions of certain terms and concepts across disciplines represented a source of much confusion. In this regard it requests greater clarity on the following, presumably from chairs and deans:

- The committee found definitions of “excellent” teaching to be exceedingly elastic and wonders if certain basic hallmarks might not be introduced to clarify this issue.
- More generally, the committee would like to see more consistent application of the central categories of evaluation (excellent/commendable/(un)satisfactory) within each unit. The committee takes these categories very seriously.
- Some applications use the terms “book,” “chapter,” and “article” very loosely (e.g., “books” were sometimes self-published or merely brochures; “articles” were sometimes 2-3 pages in length; etc.). At times this left the committee with the sense that it was comparing proverbial apples and oranges.
- The definition of terms such as “proceedings” and “abstracts”—especially when presented as significant publications—needs to be elucidated as well.
- In some cases it was not clear to the committee what “peer review” consisted of.

The University Promotion & Tenure Committee understands that applications from diverse disciplines are amenable to standardization only to a certain extent. Nor does it wish to create more work for applicants, committees, and administrators. It does, however, assert that ensuring the standard of comparable rigor across all units is among the most important tasks for any university, and that modest adjustments in the preparation of promotion (and tenure) applications will enhance the committee’s ability to perform this task properly.