**Best Practices for Faculty Participating on a Review Committee**

**Introduction to Units and Procedures**

* Departmental tenure and promotion procedures vary according to custom and local preference. In some departments, all tenured faculty of a unit are participating members of the unit-peer committee.
* In others, a committee is appointed to review the candidate’s file, then report to the whole faculty before the vote is taken. And in others, where departments are small and do not have enough tenured faculty, a “unit” may be created by combining two or more departments.
* The procedures that are adopted by the unit must be described in a written document and explained to all tenure-track faculty when they are hired.
* These written procedures must be on file in the dean’s office of the unit and the Provost’s Office, and are posted to: <http://www.uaf.edu/provost/promotion-tenure/unit-peer-criteria/>.
* Senior faculty in the unit should mentor newer faculty to provide information and advice concerning the unit-peer committee.
* This should be addressed in the written procedures, which should also include a discussion of:
	+ a) eligibility for membership on the unit-peer committee and voting eligibility;
	+ b) open or closed meetings, and rules concerning open meetings;
	+ c) operating procedures;
	+ d) voting in relation to membership on both the unit-peer and university-wide committees; and
	+ e) how to create a unit-peer committee if there are not enough eligible faculty in a department.
* Faculty who serve on a university-wide committee may either vote on that level **or** at the peer-unit level. They should be apprised of this early on so they can choose.

How the Unit is Defined

* The dean and/or director, in consultation with the faculty, determines the definition of a unit.
* A unit may be defined as an academic discipline or a department or cluster as determined by the dean and/or director.
* An academic department does not necessarily have to function as the peer unit for promotion and tenure. Especially in the case in which there are few tenured faculty or full professors in a department, a unit for the purposes of promotion and tenure review can be composed of two or more departments.
* If there are not enough tenured faculty within a unit to comprise a committee as defined below, then a new unit needs to be established.
* Practice at UAF has been to augment an existing unit with the necessary faculty from similar or comparable disciplines.
* It should be noted that the term unit is used in two ways in the UNAC CBA:
	+ 1) unit means the entire group of UNAC-represented faculty members (i.e., bargaining unit); and
	+ 2) unit means department/cluster/unit, i.e. an academic organization (or combination of organizations).

Composition of the Unit-Peer Review Committee

* The unit-peer review committee must include all tenured faculty members from the discipline in which the candidate is being evaluated.
* For the purposes of identifying the members of a unit-peer review committee, the dean and relevant faculty must agree upon a working definition of “discipline.”
* The unit-peer review committee shall be composed of at least five (5) tenured faculty at the same or higher rank as the unit member being reviewed, with at least three (3) at the rank of full professor (UAF Regulations Chapter IV.5.b.) .
* In addition, unit-peer committees reviewing represented faculty must comply with the provision of the relevant CBA.
* CBA 9.2.7 Non-Tenure Item:
	+ The unit peer review and MAU peer review committees for review of non-tenure track UNAC members for promotion will be constituted as described in Article 9.2.6 with the addition of a non-tenure track UNAC member at equal or higher rank. The non-tenure track UNAC member on the unit peer-review committee will be appointment by the Dean/Director or Designee with the consent of the UNAC members of the department/cluster/academic unit in accordance with procedures established at each MAU. Absent such consent, the provost shall resolve issues over the composition of the unit peer review committee.
	+ The non-tenure track UNAC member on the MAU peer review committee will be appointed by the provost per MAU faculty evaluation guidelines.

Chair of the Unit-Peer Review Committee

* The chair of the unit-peer review committee is chosen by the committee members at least annually. It is preferable to make this selection during the spring semester.
* The chair is responsible for convening the review meetings, developing written operating procedures or overseeing revision of the procedures, overseeing the writing of the recommendation letters, and other matters related to the promotion/tenure review process.
* In the event that the chair has submitted a file for promotion or post-tenure review, the chair must recuse himself/herself from action regarding his or her file, and the committee will choose an acting chair who will administer the process for that file.
* In the event that the chair participates in sabbatical or other type of leave during the same year he or she was selected to act as the committee chair that person should decline the duties as unit-peer chair and a new chair selected. The faculty member may participate as a member of the committee.
* The chair or the designee of the chair is responsible for presenting the candidates’ files to the university-wide review committee.

Unit-Peer Operating Procedures

* Each unit-peer review committee is responsible for developing written operating procedures in advance of any review of files. A copy of these procedures shall be submitted to the provost prior to review of any files (UAF Regulations Chapter IV.5.b).
* They should also be on file at the respective dean’s office for that college or school. These procedures may be revised annually.
* Revisions should be submitted to the Office of the Provost and the respective dean’s office.
* The operating procedures may include, but not be limited to: an outline of specific chair duties; procedures of maintenance of the files and methods for access to review the files; criteria that will be used in the review; and general instruction about meetings and dates, voting, and the writing of recommendations.

*Be sure to keep track of attendance at meetings and document who voted.*

The University-Wide Review Committee

* Members of the university-wide committees that will review UNAC-represented faculty are elected by peers through a Faculty Senate process and appointed by the provost to one of three university-wide committees: tenure and promotion review, fourth year comprehensive and diagnostic review, and comprehensive post-tenure review. Committee members serve a two-year term.
* The UNAC university-wide tenure and promotion review committee is also responsible for annually reviewing nominations for emeritus status and forwarding a recommendation to the provost.
* CBA 9.2.7 Non-Tenure Item:
	+ The non-tenure track UNAC member on the MAU peer review committee will be appointed by the provost per MAU faculty evaluation guidelines.

Chair of the University-Wide Review Committee

* The chair of each university-wide review committee is chosen by the committee members annually.
* The chair is responsible for convening the review meetings, the oversight of the revision of the operating procedures, oversight of the writing of the recommendation letters, and other matters related to the promotion/tenure review process.
* In the case of the university-wide committee for UNAC tenure and promotion, it is also the chair’s responsibility to conduct the review of nominations for emeritus status of retired faculty.

University-Wide Committee Operating Procedures

* Operating procedures for each university-wide review committee are kept on file with the Office of the Provost. These may be revised annually.
* The Faculty Services Manager provides clerical support for these review committees.

**Review Meeting Conduct in General**

*Open or Closed Meetings*

* Faculty evaluation committees are exempt from the state open meetings act, so open meetings are not required. Committees may declare all meetings closed without exception, or, committees may declare all meetings are closed unless the candidate requests an open meeting.
* In the case of the latter, if the candidate requests an open meeting, that request will be honored. Neither the candidate, nor friends, family, or members of the community may attend a closed meeting.
* The candidate, friends, and members of the community may attend an open meeting, but they are there to listen and may not contribute to the discussion unless requested to do so. Even at open meetings, the committee’s final discussion and vote must happen in executive session, and all non-committee members will be asked to leave.

*Meeting Notice*

* Notice of open meetings is a good practice.
* The unit is responsible for identifying reasonable places and methods for notice and the notice should provide reasonable advance warning of the meeting (several days, at least).

*Media Use for Meetings*

* Unit-peer and university-wide review committee meetings are conducted face-to-face, with audio and/or video conferencing used in support for members unable to attend in person.

*Discussion of the File*

* Formal discussion of a candidate’s file must take place in a meeting setting appropriate to the importance of the event.
* In the cases where spouses, domestic partners, or other family members hold positions in the same department, they cannot participate in formal discussions or decisions about the other’s tenure or promotion.
* However, this does not preclude their presence at an open meeting.

*Union Representation and Committee Composition*

* It should be noted that committees must be comprised entirely of -represented faculty.

*Presenters of the File*

* A faculty member may present the candidate’s file to the unit-peer committee.
* The chair (or designee) of the unit-peer committee will present the file to the university-wide committee.
* The presenter’s role is to discuss the points of the file in light of the unit’s recommendation and to answer any questions the members of the university-wide committee may have.

*Emeriti, Adjunct or Retired Faculty Involvement in Meetings*

* Adjunct faculty, emeriti faculty, or retired faculty who return to the workplace are not eligible to participate in or vote on any promotion or tenure cases.
* Tenure is the status of holding a faculty appointment on a continuing basis following evaluation and award with an appointment of 51% full time or greater and is considered to be ended upon retirement or termination. (UAF Policy Chapter II; UNAC Article 9.1.2; BOR Policy 04.04.04).
* In addition, the UNAC CBA stipulates that only bargaining unit members may serve on peer review committees for candidates represented by UNAC.

**Voting on a File**

* Practices may vary from unit to unit, but generally, faculty must be present to vote and must have participated in the process by either reading the file, discussing the file at the meeting, or both.

* The vote of the unit-peer review committee shall be closed to the public and the candidate, regardless as to whether the review meeting was open or closed.
* Votes/ballots do not need to be secret at this level. However, votes should be recorded in the recommendation without individual attribution.
* **A faculty member serving on a university-wide committee and the unit-peer review committee may participate in the review of a unit-peer faculty member’s file at both levels of review, but he or she shall vote at only one level (UAF Regulation Chapter IV.5.b).**
* A faculty member with a joint appointment is reviewed in the college or school in which their tenure resides. Jointly-appointed faculty may participate and vote in two separate committees in two separate units.
* If there is an abstention, it is recommended that the reason for abstention be stated, e.g., that the abstainer voted at another level or was ill.

**Ratings, Recommendations and Signatures**

*Rating for Promotion to Professor*

* The rating standard for promotion to the rank of professor for UNAC-represented faculty should be uniformly applied within UAF at the unit-peer level as well as the university-wide level.
* UAF Policy states that “A promotion/tenure committee (unit or university-wide) shall recommend promotion to the rank of professor only if a majority of the committee rates the faculty member’s tripartite (or bipartite) areas of activity as ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ (ratings, in order of improved performance, being ‘unsatisfactory,’ ‘satisfactory, ‘good,’ ‘very good,’ and ‘excellent)” (UAF Policy Chapter IV.D.3.).

*Rating for Promotion to Associate Professor and/or Tenure*

* The rating standard for recommendation of promotion to the rank of associate professor and/or the award of tenure only when a majority of the committee rates the faculty member’s tripartite (or bipartite) areas of activity as ‘good’ or better (ratings, in order of improved performance, being ‘unsatisfactory,’ ‘satisfactory, ‘good,’ ‘very good,’ and ‘excellent).”

*Recommendations*

* Once the meetings have concluded, the unit-peer and university-wide review committees shall each prepare a single written recommendation for each candidate under review that includes substantive rationale that is in conformance with the provisions of UAF Faculty Policy (see especially Chapter IV.D.) and Regulation (see especially Chapter IV.B.5.b.).
* The vote, without attribution, shall be recorded in the recommendation. The dean and/or director and the provost will also prepare recommendations at their level of review.

*Minority or Dissenting Opinions*

* Opinions that differ from the majority opinion of a promotion and tenure committee are to be incorporated into the committee’s recommendation. This is to be done without attribution.

*Committee Signatures*

* Normally all active (participating) members of the unit-peer or university-wide review committee should sign the recommendation, signifying that it accurately reflects the final vote and the substantive issues.
* If obtaining individual signatures is impractical, the chair may sign for the committee and indicate which members of the committee participated in the deliberations and vote.
* The recommendation should include the names of all the committee members, and specifically note the committee chair.