

Conflicts of Interest in P&T process – College of Engineering

This document defines conflict of interest for individuals participating in a candidate's promotion and tenure case in the College of Engineering.

Faculty Handbook 5.2.4.2.3 Promotion and Tenure Committee

Any member of the promotion and tenure review committee who has a conflict of interest with respect to a candidate shall not participate in the consideration of that individual or have access to review materials. The committee chair is responsible for making, and justifying in writing, the final decision regarding conflicts of interest. The chair must inform the candidates in writing of the identity of the members of the department review committee and any other departmental committees that will be involved in the evaluation.

As pertaining to individuals participating in a faculty member's Promotion and/or Tenure case, the Office of the Dean defines conflict of interest to include the situations below.

- Faculty who have served as advisor or co-advisor or post-doctoral mentor for the candidate.
- Faculty with whom the candidate has ongoing appeals, grievances, investigations etc.
- Faculty who have a personal, business or professional relationship with the candidate outside of routine departmental activities
- "Reasonable Person Test" – would a reasonable person with all the relevant facts question the faculty member's impartiality? If so, a conflict of interest likely exists.

It is the responsibility of the department chair to ensure that individuals with a conflict of interest refrain from serving on departmental P&T committee or in any other significant way advocate for or against the candidate.

Faculty Handbook 5.3.3.1.1 Letters of External Peer Evaluation from Professionals in the Field, outside the Institution

A maximum of six (6) letters should be solicited from appropriate professionals in the field and chosen for their ability to evaluate the candidate's activities and accomplishments impartially. They should generally be tenured professors at peer institutions or individuals of equivalent stature outside of academe who are widely recognized in the field. These individuals should be independent of the faculty member being reviewed. Co-authors, co-principal investigators, dissertation/thesis advisors, or others with similarly close association should be excluded.

As pertaining to individuals who may be selected as external letter writers for a candidate as part of the promotion and/or tenure case, the Office of the Dean defines conflict of interest to include the situations below.

- Individuals who have served as advisor or co-advisor or post-doctoral mentor for the candidate.

- Individuals with whom the candidate has a personal, business or professional relationship.
- Co-authors/owners of any works of scholarship with candidate within the last 4 years.
- Co-PIs on any funded proposals within the last 4 years
- Individuals who have been previously identified by the candidate as having a conflict of interest through written communication to the chair of the committee
- "Reasonable Person Test" – would a reasonable person with all the relevant facts question the individual's impartiality? If so, a conflict of interest likely exists.

It is the responsibility of the department chair to ensure that individuals selected for writing letters for a candidate do not have a conflict of interest. Communications to external writers should include a request for the letter writer to confirm that they do not have a conflict of interest with the candidate. CoE will adapt the university template for the log of external evaluators (Tab 5 of dossier), to include a confirmation that each evaluator does not have a conflict of interest.

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