

Office of the Dean

MEMORANDUM

To: Viterbi Chairs
From: Timothy Pinkston, Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs
Date: October 2, 2017
Subject: Mid-Probationary Period Review of Junior Faculty

As a reminder of the guidelines for mid-probationary period reviews, I draw your attention to Section 3.3 of the [UCAPT Manual](#) on pre-tenure reviews, particularly the third paragraph: “In all reviews, it is desirable for department chairs, deans, and faculty committees to include **constructive criticism** rather than conveying unalloyed optimism about a candidate’s prospects for tenure. The Provost, not the department or school, decides on tenure.”

In offering constructive criticism, mid-probationary period review committees should include substantive, though not necessarily lengthy, evaluation of the faculty member’s strengths and weaknesses in research and teaching (service can also be included) based on available evidence—such evidence may optionally include outside letters solicited by the committee. As tenure is decided by the Provost, statements such as “we believe [faculty member] is highly likely to achieve promotion with tenure in a few years” are not appropriate for this review and should never be included as feedback to the faculty member (see the [Three-Year Academic Progress Review](#) guidelines for committees). Please be sure to inform your review committees of this. If the review guidelines are not followed, please have the committee to submit a revised report that takes the above into account. Only reports consistent with the above should be accepted by you and submitted to the Dean’s Office.

The faculty member’s progress to date and areas for further improvement should be communicated orally and in writing to the candidate by the Chair (refer to the attached *Best Practices and Procedures* document). Your letter should include the following statement: “While this letter, which has been reviewed by the Dean, is not meant to predict a specific outcome of the tenure review process, we hope that you find this input valuable in planning your ongoing efforts.” It should also indicate whether the faculty contract will be renewed. If renewal is recommended, please also include this statement in your letter: “As you are making sufficient progress toward tenure, your contract will be renewed.” If the recommendation is not to renew the contract, please notify the Dean’s Office before the review concludes so that the Provost’s Office can be consulted about the process to be followed. Prior to providing your letter to the faculty member, the mid-probationary period review materials (including your letter) needs to be submitted to the Dean’s Office for review and approval.

The mid-probationary review results may be useful as additional input in considering rare cases of a junior faculty member going up for early promotion ([UCAPT Manual](#), Section 3.5). Before initiating the process, the Chair should consult with the Dean’s Office keeping in mind that, in most cases, it is beneficial for junior faculty members to take full advantage of the entire probationary period to meet or exceed promotion standards.