

**Response to  
Report of the Review Committee on the Tenure Review Advisory Committee (TRAC)**

The Review Committee on TRAC reviewed TRAC during the 2017-2018 academic year, at the request of Provost John Coatsworth. The report of the Review Committee recognized the extraordinary service to the University rendered by TRAC and its dedicated members. The Review Committee did however make a number of recommendations for consideration by Provost Coatsworth and TRAC itself. The following summarizes responses to and implementations of these recommendations.

II A1. Reduce the minimum number of yielded referee letters from 12 to 10 on a trial basis.

TRAC has implemented this recommendation for a trial two-year period beginning with letters requested for the 2019-2020 academic year. Going forward, this new minimum will be maintained, with the requirement that these letters must be from unconflicted referees.

II A2. Require that the presence of a letter from a doctoral advisor be explained in the case statement.

Some fields, particularly the natural sciences, routinely request referee letters from doctoral and postdoctoral advisors. Such letters are allowed, but the guidelines are revised so that letters from direct supervisors are not counted in the minimum of 10 letters. The tenure guidelines already require the documentation of prior or current relationships between the nominee and referees and this section of the instructions has been clarified in light of this recommendation.

II B. Eliminate the list of peer departments and replace it with an explanation of how the list of referees was constructed.

TRAC believes the list of peer departments is useful, and not a burden to construct. These are useful especially when they deviate from a list that could be generated online from, for example, the US News list. Although it is possible to add departments/comparison scholars who are not necessarily from peer departments, obscure comparisons are often identified as such given the breadth of expertise within TRAC, and are counterproductive. Furthermore, a thorough review at the Dean's level can make sure that the lists are reasonable.

II C. Continue to explore the value of the comparison list.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the second reviewer on each case provided a short assessment of the usefulness of the comparison list to referees. We found that the comparison list was also very useful in the assessments and will therefore keep these requirements in place.

II D1. Continue discussion on expanding TRAC membership.

The Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs will continue to monitor in particular the number of cases from CUMC to ascertain whether adjustments in the size or composition of TRAC are needed.

Expansion even to 15 or 17 members from 13 carries risks of diluting individual commitment to the TRAC process and rendering the TRAC process less responsive rather than more.

#### II D2. Explore additional relief for TRAC members.

The Vice Provost has discussed this issue with TRAC members of the 2018-2019 academic year and found that at the current time, the work/compensation was adequate.

II E. Although the length of case statements has grown, in our initial response, we have not attempted to address this as it was not felt to be a significant issue for TRAC members. This question will be revisited and if necessary, addressed in the tenure guidelines.

#### III A. Devise a generally expedited process for a defined category of extraordinary recruits

The instructions for preparing tenure dossiers have been revised to emphasize (i) Deans and Vice-Presidents can waive research and teaching statements for extraordinary recruits, (ii) the Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs will evaluate requests in advance for other modifications to required materials for extraordinary recruits, and (iii) TRAC maintains as feasible open slots in its meetings schedule to allow prompt review of extraordinary cases. (iv) During the academic year 2018-2019, TRAC made every effort to be as efficient as possible and processed tenure reviews in an average of 4.3 weeks from receipt of the completed dossier to a final decision from the Provost to the appropriate Dean.

#### III B. Avoid any possible impression in the wording of second hearing questions that the field rather than a specific candidate is being evaluated.

The Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs and the Chair of TRAC edit all questions for second hearings to ensure that principal questions focus on the nominee's research, teaching and service. In some instances, however TRAC require additional information on fields or standards in fields to understand a nominee's qualifications for tenure. Finally, TRAC's review and recommendation is based entirely on the candidate's strengths in research, teaching and service and not on the field being reviewed, or the University's need for a tenured member in a given field.

#### III C1. Extend automatic invitations to appropriate senior leaders to attend a TRAC meeting.

Such invitations are already made, and will continue to be made this coming year. We have had Deans and other Vice Provosts attend TRAC meetings during the 2018-2019 year and will continue to invite others.

#### III C2. Generate fuller template case statement with FAQs.

The Office of the Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs will implement this recommendation.

#### III C3. Give TRAC a central visible presence on Provost's web site.

The web sites are all being re-designed.

III C4. Institute the practice of decanal conversations with TRAC outside of particular hearings.

The Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs has implemented this recommendation and will continue to do so in the future.

III D. Produce internal 'best practices' documents

The Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs will work on updating the Tenure Review Guidelines to provide information on best practices.

III E. Commission a statistical survey of the tenure system.

Currently, decisions relating to outcomes from time of appointment through tenure are not within the scope of the Provost's abilities as schools and departments are not currently under obligation to provide results of internal departmental or school decisions to the Provost. If this is changed, the Office of the Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs (OVPFA) will implement a tracking system that includes statistics from hire to final decision.

OVPFA has analyzed data from the past five years focusing on Tenure success rates and processing times within TRAC. Some of these data are posted online. Based on our analysis, we find that processing time for a completed dossier received by the OVPFA ranges from 4-6 weeks. Over the past five years, we have handled an average of 70 dossiers/year with an average approval rate of 97%. The OVPFA can also analyze any other data based on requests from schools or administrative units.