

Option 3: A Faculty Committee to Advise the Provost

on all Tenure Decisions

(As amended by the Faculty Senate, October 16, 1996)

The Proposal

There will be an elected faculty committee to advise the Provost on all final (negative as well as positive) tenure recommendations by deans.

The composition of the committee will be part of the detailed proposal to be brought to the Senate. One possibility is as follows: The committee will consist of 12 faculty members, elected by the University Faculty; two from each of the four areas of the graduate school, two from the professional schools, and an additional two from the faculty at large. Committee procedures will also be specified in the detailed proposal. They should include a provision that allows the committee, from time to time, to seek advice from a faculty member outside the committee in assessing the depth, breadth or thoroughness of the promotion dossier in a particular case.

The function of the committee will be to determine whether or not the evidence in the file, namely the evaluations by the candidate's peers, students with direct knowledge of the candidate's teaching abilities, the evaluation and the standing of the outside reviewers, and the evaluation by the ad-hoc committee, shows that the candidate has demonstrated scholarship, teaching and University service of sufficient quality (and quantity, where appropriate) to be a tenured faculty member at Cornell. In coming to this conclusion, the committee will limit itself to an evaluation of the breadth, quality and the conclusions of prior substantive reviews.

The Rationale

1. For the foreseeable future, the number of new faculty appointments will be severely limited, and inter-departmental, disciplinary, and college collaborations in teaching and research will become more important. The faculty at large will therefore have a greater stake in the quality of all tenure appointments throughout Cornell. A standing committee elected by the Faculty will provide a faculty perspective on quality that balances a concern for standards with a respect for the judgment of department and college faculties.
2. Oversight of all tenure decisions by a standing faculty committee best ensures fair consideration and uniform application of standards when non-tenured faculty are denied tenure.
3. Cornell, like other publicly assisted research universities, will continue to face severe financial pressures. These pressures should not affect tenure decisions. If the Provost were advised by an elected faculty committee instead of a committee of administrators (as is the current practice), the potential for intermingling financial questions with tenure evaluations would be reduced.