

**UAMS College of Medicine (COM) Promotion and Tenure Committee Process:**  
**How the COM Promotion & Tenure Committee Does Its Work** (updated January 22, 2018)

**Purpose**

The purpose of the College of Medicine Promotion and Tenure Committee is to ensure that all faculty members who have contributed substantially to the mission of the College by fulfilling the criteria for promotion and/or tenure are fairly and favorably recommended to the COM Dean, the UAMS Provost, the UAMS Chancellor, and the University of Arkansas President and Board of Trustees to receive these academic honors. The Committee also serves to ensure that *newly hired* faculty members are fairly recommended to be appointed at the rank their credentials and accomplishments warrant, on the basis of the College's Guidelines.

**Composition and Leadership**

The Committee is composed of 16 members, all of whom are tenured professors, appointed by the Dean. Each professor typically serves a four-year term - four professors are appointed annually to fill the vacancies created as four professors complete their service on the Committee. When appointing new committee members, the Dean considers the current distribution of faculty appointments across all academic pathways and across all departments of the College as well as the genders, races, and ethnicities of current committee members, attempting to assure balanced representation of faculty interests.

The Chair of the P&T Committee is among the cohort of committee members beginning their fourth year of service on the Committee. The Chair conducts the annual P&T Committee Retreat. Annually, the Dean appoints the Chair-elect from among the members beginning their third year of service on the Committee. The Chair-elect conducts those portions of the annual P&T Committee Retreat during which the Chair must leave the retreat room (see below). The Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs serves as the Executive Secretary to the Committee. The Chair, Chair-elect, and Executive Secretary are responsible for writing, on behalf of the Committee, any letters of the "intent to deny a request" for promotion and/or tenure resulting from the Committee's decisions (see below).

**Process**

Throughout the year, the Committee reviews information about newly hired faculty members for whom department chairs request academic appointments at the ranks of Associate Professor and Professor. The information includes credentials, professional accomplishments, letters of recommendation from experts within the individual's field(s) of expertise, and the chair's letter of request. The Committee members vote to approve or reject appointment at the requested rank, based on whether the individual has fulfilled the College's criteria for appointment at that rank. The results of the voting form the Committee's positive or negative recommendation which is forwarded to the Dean. This document review and voting process is handled within a confidential electronic database.

Throughout the year, the Committee also considers requests for:

- Sabbatical leave (off-duty work assignment)
- Suspension of the tenure clock
- Awarding of Emeritus status
- Awarding of the title of Distinguished Professor

Requests for promotion and/or tenure from existing COM faculty members are acted upon by the P&T Committee once a year during a meeting that typically takes place over a weekend in early November. This meeting is often referred to as the “P&T Committee Retreat.”

### **Preparation for the P&T Committee Retreat; Electronic P&T Database**

- The process of the P&T Committee Retreat is modeled after meetings of National Institutes of Health (NIH) study sections.
- An individual faculty member’s electronically created P&T packet is submitted to the Faculty Center by a “date certain,” which is typically a Monday in late September or early October. Each year’s “packet due date” is announced during the annual P&T workshop series and is posted on the P&T website each spring.
- The Committee’s Executive Secretary together with the appropriate Faculty Center Staff assign each faculty member’s packet to two P&T Committee members for detailed study. One of these Committee members serves as the primary reviewer; the other serves as the secondary reviewer. The Faculty Center Staff members make every effort to match the candidate’s academic pathway and the primary reviewer’s academic pathway, while also balancing the review workload for all members of the Committee. Traditionally, Clinical Educators on the P&T Committee are the primary reviewers for Clinical Attendings.
- Once assignments of primary and secondary reviewer roles are completed, Faculty Center Staff members provide each P&T Committee member with electronic access to their assigned P&T packets. This allows Committee members approximately one month to complete their reviews.
- The Dean of the College of Medicine formally charges the Committee with its responsibilities in early September prior to the Committee members’ receipt of access to electronic P&T packets. This meeting allows for dialogue among the Dean and P&T Committee members about interpretation of the P&T criteria in the current academic environment.

### **P&T Committee Retreat**

- The P&T Committee Retreat is an important and confidential meeting, attended by the 16 P&T Committee members, the Executive Secretary of the Committee, and two Faculty Center Staff members.
- It is critically important to ensure equity and fairness in the review of the accomplishments of each faculty member who requests promotion and/or tenure and to avoid conflict of interests or unconscious bias. Therefore, individual P&T Committee members excuse themselves from the retreat room for the following reasons:
  - During the review of a faculty member whose primary academic appointment is in the same department as a Committee member’s.
  - During the review of a faculty member for whom a Committee member has served as an important mentor or collaborator.
  - During the review of a faculty member for whom the Committee member has written a letter of recommendation for promotion and/or tenure.
  - During the review of a faculty member about whom a Committee member feels s/he could not render a fair and unbiased opinion, for any reason.
- The order of review of all the candidates’ requests is by rank and academic pathway. All requests for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor are heard first, arranged by academic pathway (e.g., Basic Scientists, Clinical Scientists, Clinical Educators, and Clinical Attendings). Thereafter, all

requests for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor are heard, arranged by academic pathway.

- How are individual requests presented to the Committee?
  - Electronic access to an individual's P&T packet is available to all Committee members during the Retreat.
  - An oral presentation is made by the individual's primary reviewer. The reviewer expresses his/her opinion as to whether the criteria for promotion and/or tenure have been fulfilled.
  - The secondary reviewer is invited to make additional comments, as s/he feels are appropriate to present the individual's case clearly and fairly. The secondary reviewer also expresses his/her opinion as to whether criteria for promotion and/or tenure have been fulfilled.
- The Chair entertains discussion of the individual's accomplishments in comparison with the P&T Guidelines. At the conclusion of discussion, the Chair calls for the appropriate votes, according to what the individual has requested:
  - Vote to recommend promotion to the rank requested, in the individual's primary academic department
  - Vote to award tenure, if requested
  - Vote to award promotion to the rank requested, in the individual's secondary academic department
  - Committee members vote by carefully counted show of hands. The votes are also recorded within the electronic P&T database. A simple majority of the voting members who are present in the room carries the decision. A Committee member who has been present for the review and discussion may abstain from voting, in which case their presence in the room is counted, thus influencing how many votes constitute the majority.
- The Chair votes only to break "tie votes."
- If the Committee votes its "intention to deny" the request(s) for promotion and/or tenure, the Chair leads a discussion that captures in clear language the rationale for the denial, in accordance with the P&T Guidelines.

### **Notification of the Committee's Decisions**

- An individual whose request(s) has been approved by the P&T Committee will receive a letter, by Tuesday after the retreat. Delivery of the letter is arranged by the Faculty Center Staff members and departmental administrators. The letter is signed by the P&T Committee Chair, and states that the P&T Committee has voted to recommend that the Dean approve the request(s). The individual's department chair receives a copy of the letter.
- An individual whose request(s) has been denied by the P&T Committee will receive a letter, delivered by his/her department chair (or the chair's designee if the chair is out of town), on Monday after the retreat. The letter is signed by the P&T Committee Chair, and states that the Committee has voted its "intention to deny" the request(s). The letter states the explicit rationale as to why the Committee judged that the individual's P&T packet did not demonstrate the fulfillment of the criteria for promotion and/or tenure. The letter further states that the individual and his/her department chair have 10 business days within which to decide whether to appeal the Committee's intention to deny the request(s). In view of the rationale provided by the Committee, if the individual and the chair feel that additional information can be promptly provided to demonstrate that the criteria have been fulfilled, then an appeal should be made. If an appeal is not requested, then the Committee's recommendation to deny the request is forwarded to the Dean.

## Appeals Process

- The individual candidate or the candidate's department chair informs the Executive Secretary of the P&T Committee, in writing (e-mail is acceptable), that an appeal is requested.
- The Faculty Center Staff informs the individual and the department chair of the dates and times when the appeal can be heard by the College P&T Committee. A specific date and time is confirmed. Appeals hearings are typically held within the month of December.
- It is the shared responsibility of the individual candidate and the department chair to compile the information on which the appeal will be based. It is the responsibility of the chair to present the oral appeal. The chair may present written documents in addition to what was initially presented in the individual's P&T packet if there is new material that helps support the request and demonstration that promotion and/or tenure criteria have been fulfilled. The individual's electronic P&T packet is available to the Committee during the appeal. The department chair may invite additional faculty members to assist in making the oral appeal. The individual candidate does not take part in the appeals hearing (except in the rare instance when a candidate has requested promotion and/or tenure without departmental support). The department chair is invited to make the oral appeal to the Committee in approximately 20 minutes time, after which the P&T Committee members may ask questions of the department chair and any other participating faculty members for another 10 minutes. At that point, the department chair and any accompanying faculty members are thanked, and excused from the room. The Committee Chair then entertains discussion, and calls for a vote on each of the requests. The same voting process is followed in an appeals hearing as is followed in the P&T retreat.
- The individual candidate and the department chair are informed about the Committee's decision(s) by the Executive Secretary of the Committee the following day, by phone, and thereafter by letter, from the Chair of the P&T Committee.
- The results of the Committee's vote(s) are forwarded to the Dean.
- If the P&T Committee again votes to deny the individual's request(s), the individual and the chair may elect to appeal the decision to the Dean. This decision must be made within 10 working days and any request for an appeal to the Dean must be made during that time, in writing, to the Executive Secretary of the P&T Committee.
- If this option is elected, the Faculty Center Staff provide the Dean with electronic access to the appropriate faculty members' electronic P&T packets, and also forwards to the Dean any additional materials presented during the appeal to the P&T Committee. In the course of the Dean's review, s/he may contact the department chair and any other faculty members s/he wishes if further clarification of the written materials is required. The Dean has the authority to accept or reverse the recommendation of the P&T Committee on each of a candidate's requests. It is, however, unusual for the Dean to reverse the carefully considered recommendation(s) of the Committee.
- At the conclusion of the Dean's review of the appeal, his/her decision and recommendation to the Chancellor is conveyed to the candidate in writing. A copy of the Dean's letter is also provided to the department chair and the Executive Secretary of the College P&T Committee.
- The decision of the Dean is typically final. However, according to University of Arkansas policy, an individual may appeal the Dean's decision to the Provost and to the Chancellor. The decision of the Chancellor is final.
- If the Dean recommends to the Chancellor a denial of the candidate's request, the candidate and his/her department chair have 10 working days by which to inform the Executive Secretary of the P&T Committee of their intent to appeal the decision to the Provost and the Chancellor.

## **Final Approval Steps**

- Following the completion of any requested appeals to the P&T Committee and any subsequent appeals to the Dean, the Executive Secretary of the P&T Committee forwards to the Dean for his/her review the Committee's final recommendations regarding all approvals and any "un-appealed" denials of requests, as well as electronic access to all of the P&T packets reviewed by the P&T Committee during the specific year under review.
- The Dean typically completes his/her review of each candidate's written materials in January. Should the Dean reverse a recommendation made by the Committee, the candidate and the candidate's department chair will receive a letter from the Dean stating his/her recommendation to the Provost and the Chancellor. Such a letter is typically delivered by the end of the month of January.
- The Dean's recommendations about all requests are submitted to the Provost and to the Chancellor for review along with access to the P&T database containing all the packets reviewed that year and any additional materials presented during any appeals hearings.
- The Chancellor (or his/her designee) subsequently submits to the University of Arkansas (UA) President all approved requests for promotion, tenure, and special honorific titles. The UA President submits these requests to the UA Board of Trustees at the Board's annual meeting in April. Approvals by the President and the Board become effective on July 1 of the year following the November P&T Retreat when the request(s) were first considered by the College P&T Committee.