Example Process for Peer Evaluation of Teaching

# Background

OSU provides formal guidance on the peer review of teaching in its Promotion and Tenure Guidelines (<http://oregonstate.edu/facultystaff/handbook/dosguide.html>). The most notable statements are pasted below (emphasis added).

When teaching is part of the faculty assignment, effectiveness in teaching is an essential criterion for appointment or advancement. ***Faculty with responsibilities in instruction can be promoted and tenured only when there is clear documentation of effective performance in the teaching role.***

Faculty must demonstrate command of their subject matter, continuous growth in the subject field, and ability to organize material and convey it effectively to students. Other activities that provide evidence of a faculty member's particular commitment to effective teaching include:

* contribution in curricular development, including collaborative courses and programs;
* innovation in teaching strategies, including the incorporation of new technologies and approaches to learning; and
* documented study of curricular and pedagogical issues, and incorporation of this information into the classroom.

***Evaluation of instruction is based on a combination of systematic and on-going peer evaluations, following unit guidelines for peer review of teaching; tabulated responses from learners or participants of courses taught by the candidate; and evaluation, by student representatives, of materials that pertain to teaching. Peer teaching evaluations should be based both on classroom observations and on review of course syllabi, texts, assigned reading, examinations, and class materials. Where possible, evaluation is enhanced by evidence of student learning.***

It is important that processes used by COE units for peer review of teaching be in obvious compliance with OSU P&T guidelines. Units should familiarize themselves with the OSU requirements, and develop a formal method for peer evaluation.

An example process is provided next. The following practices should be kept in mind when planning and conducting the peer evaluations:

* The procedure must not solely include last-minute selection of faculty members to conduct the evaluation. Multiple peer teaching evaluations need to be conducted. Therefore, peer teaching evaluations must be planned ahead of time and occur well-before submitting a dossier for promotion and/or tenure. The evaluations are to be conducted on a regular basis, throughout the period of performance under review.
* As indicated in the example process provided, a committee approach should be used to conduct the evaluations. The evaluations should not be based solely on a single faculty member’s evaluation.
* As indicated in the OSU P&T guidelines, peer teaching evaluations include more than simply observing the candidate’s performance in the classroom. Evaluations should be based on both classroom observations and review of course syllabi, texts, assigned reading, examinations, and class materials.
* When a classroom observation is conducted, the observation should take place in a typical teaching environment and course. An evaluation of a special class session is not an appropriate venue for conducting a peer evaluation of teaching.

# Example Process

1. Faculty with responsibilities in instruction will receive at least two peer teaching evaluations within the five years preceding any decision on promotion and/or tenure.

2. Each peer teaching review will be conducted according to steps 6 and 7 below.

3. Each peer teaching review will be conducted by a committee appointed by the unit Head.

4. One peer teaching review will be completed during the academic year preceding consideration for promotion and/or tenure.

5. If the candidate has a teaching assignment during fall term of the year he/she is being considered for promotion and/or tenure, one of the peer teaching reviews may be completed at that time.

6. The committee responsible for conducting any peer teaching review will meet with the candidate as early in the process as possible, in order to:

* gain awareness of the candidate’s (i) background in relation to teaching in general as well as teaching the particular course associated with the review, (ii) approach to organization and delivery of the material (e.g., use of teaching and learning strategies, incorporation of new and existing technologies, etc.), (iii) approach to assessment of student learning, and (iv) contribution to development of the course, among others;
* make a plan for adequate access to course syllabi, text(s), assigned reading, examinations, class materials, etc. for committee review; and
* identify (i) two dates for visiting the class, (ii) who will visit on each date, and (iii) what elements will be evaluated during each visit (discussion of an evaluation form for this purpose is recommended).

7. The committee responsible for conducting any peer teaching review will write a peer teaching evaluation. The peer teaching evaluation will consist of a letter to the unit Head, containing a summary evaluation of course materials and observations made during classroom visits. This letter should, at a minimum, relate directly to intellectual content, course delivery, and approach used for assessment of student learning.

8. During the academic year that a candidate is being considered for promotion and/or tenure, the unit P&T committee chair appoints a subcommittee to review all of the candidate’s prior peer teaching evaluations, archived while a faculty member in COE, and to write a letter to the unit P&T committee that summarizes all peer teaching reviews over the relevant evaluation timeframe for inclusion in the dossier.