By Laws for the Vice Chancellor’s Advisory Committee

University of Colorado Denver

September 2011

The Committee

The Committee is composed of ten members, one member from each school and college, and the Library, and three members from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, each of whom must be from a different Primary Unit. Members must have attained the rank of Associate Professor, and typically there are a significant number of Professors. The processes by which members are appointed to the Committee may vary from school to school, college to college. Members are appointed to staggered three-year terms, and the Committee aspires to a diversity of race and gender that reflects the rich diversity of the institution it serves.

Chairs of Primary Units are not permitted to serve on the VCAC because they are required to participate in the review process at the lower level, and University policy stipulates that no faculty member may serve twice in the same review.

The Committee is convened officially in late November or early December to review its charge and any changes in policy. Review of cases begins in late January and continues throughout the Spring Semester or until all cases have been decided.

The deliberations of the Committee are confidential. Although the vote records and the details of the discussion as represented in the Chair’s letter to the Provost are officially part of the record, members of the VCAC may not share any information, positive or negative, with faculty members or administrators outside the Committee.

The Chair

The Chair of the VCAC is appointed by the Provost, and unlike Committee members, who serve an AY appointment of December through May, the Chair of Committee is appointed for 12-month terms, the exact number of which is determined by the Provost.

Responsibilities of the Committee

The VCAC is responsible for reviewing the dossiers of all candidates for reappointment, all candidates for tenure, all candidates for promotion to Associate Professor, and all candidates for promotion to Professor on the Denver campus, and for making recommendations as to whether or not those candidates have satisfied University and Primary Unit Criteria. The Committee reviews both the record of the candidate (as
represented by the candidate’s dossier) and the adjudication of that record by the Primary Unit and the First Level Review. The Committee also reviews the dossiers of any new hires who wish to arrive on campus with tenure or with a promotion from their current rank.

For each and every case, the Committee follows a four-part process:

1) the Committee reviews the dossier (tenure and promotion cases and promotion to Professor cases are reviewed by the entire Committee; reappointment cases are reviewed by a VCAC sub-group);
2) the Committee discusses the case in detail;
3) the Committee members vote – “yes,” “no,” or “abstain”; and
4) the Committee revisits the case if any member of the Committee, or the Provost, requests that it be revisited.

Members do not vote on the case if they have participated in a lower-level review or if there is a conflict of interest with the candidate.

The VCAC is advisory to the Provost – which is to say that the Committee makes recommendations that the Provost may or may not uphold.

Because it is the responsibility of the Committee to provide consistent, high-quality work, members are required to prepare for and attend meetings every Friday afternoon throughout the spring semester.

The deliberations of the Committee are confidential.

**Responsibilities of the Chair**

The Chair of the VCAC is non-voting and does not participate in any discussion of whether an individual candidate has or has not met the specified criteria. The Chair’s responsibilities are as follows:

1) the Chair confirms the membership of the Committee and divides it into balanced sub-groups (usually, two or three members per sub-group)
2) the Chair provides members of the Committee with the documents that govern its actions and updates the Committee about recent policy changes;
3) the Chair reviews the dossiers prior to assigning them to the Committee to see if they are complete and properly organized;
4) the Chair selects the dossiers to be reviewed and assigns a member of the Committee to present the case to the group;
5) the Chair runs the meeting during which the case is discussed and assists the Committee if questions of policy or procedure arise;
6) the Chair administers the voting sheets and records the vote;
7) the Chair writes a letter to the Provost (in consultation with the member of the VCAC who presented the case) that summarizes the discussion and the Committee’s recommendation; and finally
8) the Chair serves as the campus representative of the Committee and meets with any and all interested parties about procedures, processes, and policy.

The Chair’s responsibilities are exclusively administrative. The Chair inspects the dossiers, schedules the meetings, coordinates the sub-groups, runs the meetings, and writes the letter. The Chair does not participate in the discussions of individual cases.

If the Chair is unable to fulfill the duties outlined above for any reason, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs will substitute for the Chair for that case.

**Review of Cases**

After a Committee member has been assigned to present the case, the Committee members individually review it in preparation for the discussion and vote. Reappointment cases are assigned to a sub-group, and all members of that sub-group are required to read the dossier. Unless the case is controversial, the entire Committee is not required to read reappointment dossiers. The Chair of the VCAC, the member assigned to present the case, or any member of the Committee who feels that the case requires the scrutiny of the entire Committee, can make such a request.

Tenure and promotion cases and promotion to professor cases are also assigned to a single Committee member and a sub-group, but the entire Committee is required to read the dossiers. In the rare instance that a Committee member is present who has not read the dossier, that member is asked to abstain from both discussion and voting.

When cases are returned to the Committee from the Dean for reconsideration (after a negative VCAC vote, for example), members are required to reread the dossier paying special attention to any new documents.

It should be understood that reading a dossier is a painstaking process and one that requires care and concentration. Although members may have very different strategies for how best to approach a dossier, it is assumed that the result is a thorough knowledge of all levels of information: members must know the candidate’s record, the evaluation of the external reviewers, the opinion of the Primary Unit, the vote count at the First Level Review, the concerns of the Dean, etc. Participation in the meetings of the Committee requires detailed knowledge of the cases being discussed.

All deliberations are to remain confidential and are not to be shared with faculty members or administrators outside the Committee.
Presentations of Cases

Committee members are routinely asked to present cases before the entire Committee. That presentation consists of an objective summary of the record and its evaluation by the Primary Unit, the external reviewers, the First Level Review, and the Dean. Members presenting cases are careful to summarize the quantity and quality of publications, average FCQ scores for “Overall Instructor and Course Ratings,” number of service contributions, opinions of external reviewers, vote count at Primary Unit and First Level Review, etc. Crucial to the presentation is a description of the evaluation of the record in the terms specified by the Regents: e.g., the research record is “clearly excellent,” or “on track for excellence”; the teaching record is “clearly meritorious” or “not meritorious”; and the service record is “excellent” or “barely meritorious.”

The presentation of the dossier concludes with a motion and a second. Prior to voting on the motion, there is an open discussion of the record. Members may call for a vote, but that vote occurs only when all members agree that the discussion has concluded.

Discussion

Discussion of the case is limited to information presented in the dossier. Members of the Committee are not permitted to introduce information about the candidate or the candidate’s record, either positive or negative, from their personal experience. Such information is hearsay and is inherently damaging to the integrity of the review.

Voting

Voting can occur only when a quorum is present, and a quorum for the VCAC is defined as a simple majority, or six members.

If a case is controversial, the Chair of the Committee or any member may request a delay in voting until the entire Committee is present. Votes are taken by a show of hands and recorded on a voting sheet prepared by the Chair. Minority votes can be explained in writing by a volunteer from the dissenting group or summarized by the Chair.

If a member participated in the adjudication of the case at the lower level, then he or she is not allowed to be present for the deliberations or to vote on the case. The Chair is charged with explaining that absence in the final letter.

Members may abstain from voting, but only if there is a conflict of interest. Abstentions typically occur, in other words, if a member has a relationship with (or information about) the candidate that compromises objectivity. Conflict of interest may result from history with the candidate that is either positive (a close personal friendship) or negative (substantial and prolonged disagreement). Members abstain when they feel their objectivity has been compromised, and they are not required to explain themselves.
Members should not abstain when they are confused by or in conflict about the outcome of an individual case. The dossier is charged with making the case for reappointment, tenure, or promotion, and if that case is not made, the result should be a negative vote not an abstention.

If there is a tie vote, the motion does not carry.

Letters

The Chair of the Committee drafts a letter from the Committee to the Provost. That letter summarizes the Committee’s deliberations and its recommendation. Typically, that letter details the points on which the Committee agreed with the lower level committees and those on which they disagreed. The letter also summarizes the votes at all levels of the review and tries to provide the Provost with all of the information that he or she might need to make a responsible and informed decision.

After the Chair drafts a letter, that letter is submitted to the Committee member who presented the case. If necessary, changes are made and then the letter is submitted to the Provost. The Chair of the VCAC is charged with representing the views of the Committee, not with providing an independent judgment.

In cases where there is a minority opinion, the Chair may include a separate summary, written by the dissenting members, or may, as the members see fit, summarize the minority view.