

# Promotion, Tenure and Evaluation

An initiative of the Forward  
Promotion to Professor Taskforce

# Overview

## 1. Introduction

- PTE committee service and the workshop

## 2. Policy overview

- Three documents – three levels of review

## 3. Important considerations

- A topical outline

## 4. Case studies

## 5. Resources

# The importance of PTE committee service

- Tenure:
  - Long-term job security guaranteeing academic freedom and integrity to advance & evaluate & share knowledge
  - Long-term institutional commitment by NDSU
- The meaning of tenure to a faculty member:
  - Recognition of one's contributions and potential
  - Reflection of professional standing
  - Significant transition in one's academic career and personal life
- PTE committee:
  - Service that impacts the future of individuals and families, colleagues and NDSU

Full and fair review respecting candidate, institution, and process.

# Why a PTE workshop?

Benz study (2010) and Faculty survey (2008-10):

According to 35- 45% of departing faculty (unrelated to tenure decisions):

- PTE Policy and procedures are disregarded/inconsistently applied;
- Process and procedures lack clarity;
- Unstated rules and criteria affect process.

Aiming for

- Clarity, consistency, transparency, and accountability
- Trust in the process

# Potential benefits

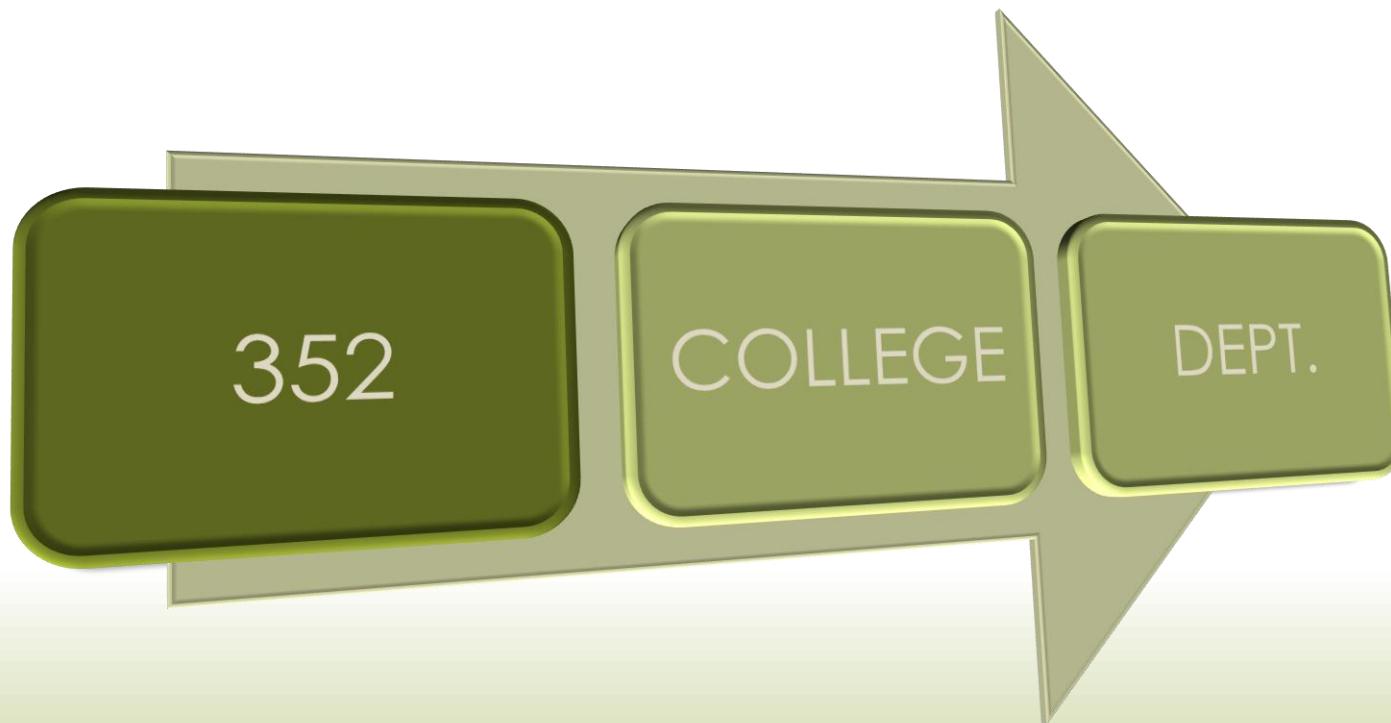
## PTE committee members:

- Collegiality
- Productivity
- Fewer appeals, legal challenges, negative publicity

## Faculty:

- Confidence in process
- Better dept. work environment
- Positive impact on retention
- Improved campus climate

# PTE policy





## The policy documents

- **Policy 352:** Umbrella document
  - SBHE policies, 600 index, personnel
- **College PTE:** Framework for department documents
  - Shared definitions and expectations
  - Outline of departmental responsibilities
  - Process and procedures incl. third-year review, non-renewals
- **Department PTE:** Discipline-specific document

# Important considerations: an outline

- Legal considerations in PTE process
  - Discrimination
  - Implicit or unconscious bias
- Best practices: reading the portfolio
- Policy and procedural considerations
  - Committee service and conflict of interest
  - Voting Issues: Is it ethical to discuss and vote on different levels?
  - Inappropriate influence
  - Miscellaneous P & P matters
- Research/creative activity
- Teaching
- Service
- Collegiality



# Discrimination



NDSU policy protects against discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or status as a U.S. veteran (Policy 100).

\*Policy covers intentional discrimination as well as practices that appear neutral but have the effect of discriminating against individuals.

\*Disparate treatment or impact = legal challenge

Some considerations for PTE committees:

1. Consistent application of policy and procedures
2. Use of facilities – for instance, think “labs”
3. Disabilities (ADA and FMLA)
4. Employment decisions based on stereotypes and assumptions about the abilities, traits, or performance of individuals or on myths or assumptions about an individual’s genetic information

\*Importance of equitable and fair treatment of candidates over time (and across disciplines).

# Discrimination and implicit bias

Under **pressure**, we **unconsciously** value and categorize persons based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, wealth, etc.

- Result of longtime cultural exposure
- Affects judgment and behavior

Distinct from **explicit** bias – a conscious bias which is “directly expressed or publicly stated.”

Examples and documentation in “Reviewing Applicants: Research on Bias and Assumptions” at [http://www.ndsu.edu/forward/resources/resources\\_for\\_faculty\\_recruitment/](http://www.ndsu.edu/forward/resources/resources_for_faculty_recruitment/)

# Implicit bias and evaluation

**Pressure** increases the “opportunity” for implicit bias to affect the process:

- Lack of time
- Stress from competing tasks
- Ambiguity (incl. lack of information)
- Group association and lack of critical mass
  - e.g. solo status and tokenism

# Mitigating implicit bias in evaluation

- AWARENESS of potential of implicit bias
- MOTIVATION to control implicit bias
  - Remind oneself and others of potential for implicit bias (constant self-correction)
- PAUSE: take the time
- FOCUS on the evidence

# B.P.: Reading the portfolio (handouts)

## Half full or half empty?

- Evaluate generously yet critically (“Reading” handout)
- Maintain impartiality – guard against prejudgment
- Focus on the evidence (rubrics)
- Use material in section II to verify your assessment
- Comply with policies and procedures (P & P checklist)



# Focus on the evidence

Teaching Effectiveness	
Below Expectations	Problematic classroom or other teaching performance; unreliable advising and frequent unavailability; indifference toward or unreasonable resistance to meeting teaching standards
Fair	Fulfills all teaching responsibilities; meets minimal qualitative expectations in the classroom. Some unreliable availability or mistakes in advising; little or no curricular development; minimal efforts at improvement; one or more problematic elements in the area of teaching.
Good	Fulfills all teaching responsibilities. Evidence of solid work in the classroom; some successful effort to improve; good reliable student mentoring and academic advising.
Excellent	Fulfills all teaching responsibilities well. Evidence of overall excellence in teaching, advising, mentoring; curriculum or program development.
Extraordinary	Fulfills all teaching responsibilities very well. Demonstrable overall excellence in teaching, advising, and mentoring; leadership in curricular improvement, sharing of expertise.

**Other options:**

Unsatisfactory

Satisfactory

Highly Satisfactory

Excellent

Evaluation rubrics also help committees to focus on the evidence.

# Ways to derail the train

## Policy and procedural considerations

- Committee service and conflict of interest situations
  - Personal relationships (NDSU Policy 162.1)
  - Professional relationships: transparency (declare, discuss, disclose)
  - Departmental conflict
- Vote on different levels?
  - Vote, recuse, abstain?
- Inappropriate influence:
  - Private communications
  - Rumors
- Miscellaneous matters:
  - Incomplete procedures
  - Unwritten rules
  - Tenure credit
  - Tenure-clock extensions
  - Deadlines



# Keeping the train on the track



- Research & creative activity:
  - ISI journals and impact factor
  - Absolute criteria and numbers
  - Resources
  - Funding
  - Independence
  - Collaboration
- Teaching
  - Gender and Evaluation
- Service
  - Vulnerability
- Collegiality



# Cases

- Clemens
- Perez
- Richards
- Shen
- Stevens

# Some resources

- “Good Practice in Tenure Evaluation, Advice for Tenured Faculty, Department Chairs, and Academic Administrators,” a free publication at <http://www.acenet.edu/bookstore/pdf/tenure-evaluation.pdf>
- “On Collegiality as a Criterion for Faculty Evaluation,” at <http://www.aaup.org/aaup/pubsres/policydocs/contents/collegiality.htm>

# Some local best practices

- Letters of appointment with clearly stated responsibilities and expectations.
- Realistic position descriptions and allocation of time.
- Use of “early warning systems” and appropriate documentation: annual evaluations, third-year reviews, warnings, letters of reprimand.
- Standardized format of CVs for the portfolio.
- Have some ground rules for the process: “our discussions are confidential”; “we will not have email discussions”; “this is the role of the chair;” “we will guard against the influence of unconscious bias,” etc.
- With a split vote at dept. level, record separate votes for teaching, research, and service. Provides useful information to next level of evaluation.

Suggestions from former committee members

# The department document: an ounce of prevention

Equitable and fair treatment starts with a well conceived department document and the consistent observance and application of its standards, criteria, and procedures.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF

- Clear definitions and unambiguous language
- Comprehensive and clear procedures
- Clear standards and criteria for all levels of appointment

## AND

- Consistent application over time
  - Establish ground rules for the process
  - Use a checklist for the process (P &P checklist)
  - Use rubrics to focus on the evidence (rubrics handout)
    - Shows consistency with previous years' evaluations
    - Shows trajectory (tenure plan)
    - Allows for continuing feedback and relevant advice