Guidelines for the Student Evaluation Letter for Inclusion in the Promotion and Tenure Dossier

The purpose of the student evaluation letter is to document the student perspective of the candidate’s effectiveness as a teacher and advisor. In order to provide the university with a consistent source of information for the process, the unit P&T committee and the unit supervisor should endeavor to organize student committees for faculty evaluation using the following process.

1) The unit chair or head or designee requests a list of names of current and recent students, including advisees from the candidate.

2) The unit P&T committee and the supervisor (normally unit chair or head) jointly generate an additional list of student names.

3) The unit chair or head or designee requests letters of reference from that combined list. An attempt should be made to request input from students whose collective experience represents the profile of the teaching and advising duties of the faculty member. For example, if a faculty member teaches all undergraduate courses, it is appropriate for all letters to come from undergraduates. If the faculty member teaches a combination of courses, the students should have a combination of backgrounds that will provide sufficient information to evaluate the candidate’s performance.

4) Letters to the students requesting the evaluative reference must inform the student as to who will see their review letters. Access to those letters will be determined by whether the candidate has signed a waiver of access. Students must also be informed that only signed letters will be used as part of the process.

5) As a rule ½ of the letters should be from the list generated by the candidate and ½ from the list generated by the unit. There is no specific minimum number of letters required. The total number of letters should be on the order of 4-12, depending on the complexity of the candidate’s teaching duties.

6) Units that use a series of standardized questions to help guide student input are strongly encouraged to work with Academic Affairs and OSU Legal Counsel prior to asking for information from students.

7) Letters received from student referees are kept on file in the unit office. Consult the OSU records retention schedule for the required period the letters must be kept on file. (http://osulibrary.oregonstate.edu/archives/schedule/admin.html) The names of the students and the content of the letters are kept confidential if the candidate has signed a waiver of access.

8) The unit chair or head or designee will form a student committee, whose task it is to write a letter summarizing the input from student referees. Members of this committee:
   • Should be current students.
   • As a rule, ½ should be from a list provided by the candidate and ½ from a list generated by the unit.
   • May be individuals from whom letters were solicited.
   • Should not be a current advisee of the candidate (letters from current advisees may be part of the student input).

9) The student committee is provided with the student referee letters, student oriented teaching and advising portion of the dossier (e.g. excluding faculty peer review), plus any additional available information pertinent to their review.

10) The student chair of the student committee is selected by the P&T committee or unit supervisor. The only duty of this committee is to write a summary letter that includes information from the student referee letters and the teaching and advising portion of the dossier.

11) The student committee should be instructed to include in its summary the perspectives represented by all the student referee letters (e.g. not to integrate opinions into an intermediate position).
12) All members of the committee sign the summary letter and present it to the unit P&T committee and unit supervisor. The summary letter and the names of the individuals on the student committee will be known to the candidate and P&T committee even if the candidate has signed a waiver of access.

The student committee section of the dossier must include:

- A description of the process used in the unit for the selection of the student committee;
- A copy of the instructions given to the students;
- A short description of the group of students that provided letters, the nature of their relationship to the faculty member and whether the candidate or the P&T committee nominated the student to be a member of the committee; and
- The summary letter from the student committee, signed by the members of the committee.