

Suggestions for Assembling Material for Tenure and Promotion

Canisius College Committee on Faculty Status

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“What should my application for tenure and/or promotion look like?” and “How should I arrange my tenure and promotion application?” are two of the most common questions fielded by members of the Committee on Faculty Status. The simple answer is that you should organize your dossier in a way that best illustrates your material and your case for tenure and promotion. There is no single way or format required by Canisius College or by the CFS regarding how your T&P (or promotion to Professor) application needs to be organized.

We do, however, provide some guidelines and suggestions. These are only suggestions; the Canisius College *Faculty Handbook* gives the individual faculty member wide latitude regarding submission of T&P documents, regarding both format and documentation. It is also important to note, however, that in order to achieve tenure and/or promotion, a faculty member *must* provide proof of accomplishment worthy of tenure and/or promotion in the fields of teaching, scholarship, and service, as elucidated by the *Faculty Handbook* and your department tenure and promotion document.

Some important things to note:

- Faculty need to make their case for tenure and promotion in their application. It is the faculty member’s responsibility to present both a convincing narrative, and appropriate evidence, to support the application for tenure and/or promotion.
- Organization matters. Committees may be more positively inclined to render a favorable decision if the information is presented in an organized and logical manner and reviewers can locate easily what they need to make decisions.
- One of the best ways to get an idea about how to present your material is to ask a recently tenured or promoted colleague if you can look over their recent successful application. It is wise to look at several, if possible, because there are many ways to present a case for tenure and/or promotion.
- It’s not directly related to how to assemble a tenure and/or promotion application, but still important: know your rights and responsibilities, and understand the process. Read in particular Chapter 2 of the *Faculty Handbook*, which deals with expectations for tenure and/or promotion, and Chapter 6, which deals with faculty evaluation. Know your department expectations. Tenure-track faculty should pay attention to the comments in annual evaluations from their department, Dean, and the CFS. Attend the Faculty Forum on Tenure and Promotion. Feel free to contact the Chair or another member of the CFS, or the Assistant Vice President for Faculty Development, to ask questions. (The Chair and current CFS membership should be listed on the Faculty Senate webpage, and the AVP for Faculty Development on the Academic Affairs page).

- For tenure-track faculty: start thinking about your tenure dossier early. It is wise to write your annual reports with your tenure and promotion dossier in mind. Don't expect to remember things you did four or five years from now, and if you plan ahead, it makes assembling your evidence much easier.
- Before submitting your application for tenure and/or promotion, it's a very good idea to have your dossier read by one or more friendly colleagues for content, clarity, and proofreading.

Organization

The CFS strongly recommends that applications for tenure and promotion be submitted in digital format. There are a variety of reasons for this:

- Sustainability (T&P binders can run to hundreds or even thousands of pages);
- Organization (T&P binders pass through many hands and several locations, and organization can be changed, and paper pages moved, misplaced or lost)
- Accessibility (digital copies can be easily enlarged if necessary for accessibility, and also allow for multiple people on evaluation committees to access and read the document at the same time).

Please use some form of indexing, such as tabs, for ease of moving around your digital document. (Imagine trying to find a particular document in a digital file a thousand pages long, and you will understand why we're asking for this). Assistance for organizing a digital file can be presented by the Center for Online Learning & Innovation.

Primary documents should be in a 'static' digital form (like a pdf) rather than an 'active' form (that is, one that can be altered) like a Google Doc. (This is so the document may not be unintentionally or maliciously altered, and to ensure that all reviewers at different stages of evaluation see the same document). If necessary, supporting documents may be submitted in 'active' formats.

In the old days of hard copies and binders, it was recommended that faculty have at least two binders: one for primary documents, like your narrative and essential documents, and another one (or several) for secondary documents (like copies of course evaluations, syllabi, publications, etc.). Now that we are working with digital files, which are less cumbersome, we have more options – but the motivating ideas, of primary and secondary documents, of making the argument for your case easy to read, and the secondary documentation easy to access, remain true.

Per the Canisius College *Faculty Handbook*, tenure and promotion committees evaluate faculty based on three areas of faculty responsibility: teaching, scholarship, and service. While most faculty choose to use these three areas as distinct sections (along with an introduction and a narrative section linking them all), organization of a tenure and promotion application should follow the argument being made by that faculty member for tenure and/or promotion. The suggestions that follow focus on the typical arrangement (introduction, narrative, teaching, and scholarship).

Introduction

The introduction typically contains:

- A table of contents (typically indexed or hotlinked in a digital file)
- An up-to-date detailed Curriculum Vita (strongly recommended)
- Documents related to your annual reviews and tenure and/or promotion case produced by your department, dean, or the CFS
 - (The department T&P committee, and the dean's evaluation on promotion and/or tenure will be added).
 - The faculty member's annual (in the case of tenure track faculty) or periodic (in the case of faculty applying for promotion to Full) evaluations, including the self-evaluation, department, dean, and (if applicable) the CFS. For promotion to Professor, all annual reviews since the last promotion should be included.
- Some faculty choose to include their narrative in this section; others choose to weave it through the various parts of their application. Either is fine.
- If you are unable to locate any documents, you can make an appointment with Academic Affairs or your dean to view your evaluative file, and obtain these documents.

Narrative

A narrative is the faculty member's argument that they are deserving of tenure and/or promotion. It weaves together the supporting documents, effectively making the case for tenure and/or promotion, and explains to evaluators (many of whom will be from outside the faculty member's discipline) how and why the evidence provided supports their case. Evaluators use the narrative to guide their way through and to understand the provided supporting material. It is probably the single most important aspect of a tenure or promotion dossier.

Narratives may be a standalone document (generally placed in the introduction section) or woven through the sections of the document. Hypertext links (in a digital document) to key supporting documents are generally very useful.

Teaching

A faculty member applying for tenure and promotion is required to show evidence of 'teaching effectiveness.' There are a variety of ways to illustrate this, including a statement of teaching philosophy and quantitative and qualitative student course evaluations for all classes taught. Faculty who provide student evaluations should provide all evaluations, not a few 'cherry picked' ones, which may appear suspicious to evaluators. Providing student evaluations is not required – but it is important to note that if course evaluations are not provided, the burden of proof remains on the faculty member, so the faculty member must provide other conclusive evidence of teaching effectiveness.

The 2019 *Faculty Handbook* requires that faculty include peer evaluations of their teaching in their annual or periodic reports (p. 33, 6.C.2.a); these should be included in a tenure or application file. Such peer evaluations usually take the form of a report of a classroom visit by a peer faculty member or dean, but may also include departmental reviews of syllabi, class materials, or grading practices. Peer evaluation of classroom teaching is strongly recommended for those applying for tenure and promotion.

It is common to include a list of classes taught, with syllabi and sample assignments. It is also useful for evaluators when faculty include narrative explanations or reflections upon successes and failures, lessons learned, responses to student evaluations, and explanations of changes made based upon student and peer feedback (or for other reasons).

Scholarship

It is usual, as part of a faculty member's narrative, to describe the nature of one's scholarship, and how that has progressed since one joined Canisius (or since one's last promotion). It is often very useful for evaluators to have a description of a faculty member's research and scholarship that would be comprehensible to non-specialists (as most who will be evaluating your application will not be specialists in your field).

Sufficient examples of scholarship to support your case should be included, organized logically; e.g., refereed articles, book chapters, proceedings, posters, other publications (e.g., newsletters, editorial papers or introductions to special issues of journals) etc. In some areas of the college, recognition of scholarship that is appropriate also includes juried shows, judged competitions, performance-related events, special shows, and public readings of work.

It is the responsibility of the faculty member to appropriately present, categorize, and explain their scholarship and its importance within their field. Faculty who do non-traditional scholarship are encouraged to include a statement from the appropriate professional organization about the typical expectations of tenure and/or promotion and the nature of work in that field, etc. It is often useful to include information you want your evaluators to understand about your field, and your accomplishments in scholarship, so they can evaluate your work fairly. This may include peer evaluation (from outside the college), self-requested outside review, etc. Canisius College does not seek outside review of dossiers for tenure and promotion, so this can sometimes be very useful for evaluators seeking to understand a faculty member's work and its place in their larger discipline or field.

Scholarship documents should be included in a supplementary section, but in the main section faculty should include or indicate:

- Whether the publication was peer-reviewed, invited, etc.
- The nature and extent of your contribution to each multi-authored publication (in different fields and even journals, the first author is not always the primary author of the document)
- Some evaluative index (acceptance rates, H-Index, etc.) of journals in which scholarship was published.
- It is useful to include hyperlinks to scholarship documents for ease of access.

Whatever the nature of a faculty member's scholarship, it is important for a faculty member to provide evaluators the information they need so they may fairly evaluate and understand your work and its place in the discipline.

Service

This section should contain reflections on a faculty member's service over the course of the period of evaluation. It is sometimes useful to group activities into various categories of service, such as department, school, college, profession, community, etc. Service to the college carries particular importance in decisions regarding promotion to full professor.

Notes for those seeking promotion to Professor

- For those seeking promotion to Professor, a frank discussion with one's dean before submitting your application is strongly recommended. The deans sit on the Committee on Faculty Status, and will have a good idea of how strong your case is, and can point out any areas that may need to be strengthened before submission.
- As noted above, service is particularly important for the promotion to Professor. In most cases, this means a history of substantial service, usually meaning committee work at the college level, contributions to the life of the college, leadership roles, etc. – but it can also be substantial service to the field [editing journal, etc.] and/or to the community.