

Giving Feedback at the Triennial Review: Promotion Plans

This guide is for department chairs, though the principles are also applicable to a special committee chair or others designated to lead the triennial review. *The triennial process is spelled out in R&P 2.2.4.2. For faculty with special committees, see R&P 2.2.3.1.8.*

The purpose of the triennial is to evaluate one's "progress toward promotion to Professor." With this in mind, the triennial review process was modified to focus less on reviewing extensive supporting documentation and more on collegial guidance for strategically planning one's career progression toward Professor. Associate Professors create and discuss with their chairs a Promotion Plan as part of this review. The key concepts of a Promotion Plan and the guidance given to associate professors are [here](#).

Below, there are some tips and questions for each stage in preparing for and holding the triennial review discussions. The approach for giving feedback should take the form of a developmental and constructive conversation. Retain a focus on this being a collaborative meeting to help your colleague move towards the goal of promotion to full professor.

Before the Department/Committee Meeting

Full Professors Participating in the Review should:

- Read the information carefully and practice perspective taking
- Prepare some notes for the meeting
- Consider the collective strengths, weaknesses and priorities of the department
- **Reflect on THIS Faculty member**
 - Read all the materials with a developmental approach in mind, rather than a deficit approach.
 - What three things are you most proud of, excited by, in this person's accomplishments? Don't overlook service leadership or other roles like being a strong mentor.
 - Why is this work important to the faculty member? To the department? To Lehigh? To the discipline?
 - What areas need more attention? What advice would you give your colleague?

For the Chair Running the Meeting

This meeting sets the tone for discussions and shared understanding of the review process.

- Remind colleagues that the goal is to provide constructive feedback on the faculty member's progress and plans for their career progression
- Run the meeting in an organized fashion as you would a tenure or promotion meeting
- Be sure to address research, teaching, and service
- Directly address the content of the Promotion Plan
- How can the department or college create opportunities and also support the faculty member to strengthen areas they identify for improvement?
- How can the department or college support the faculty member to strengthen areas they identify for improvement?
- What collective advice can you give your colleague?

Written Feedback to the Faculty Member

- Be sure to address all three areas: research/creative work, teaching, and service
- Note strengths as well as areas for improvement
- Provide an assessment of their Promotion Plan
- Note the collective advice provided by their colleagues

Have the Meeting with Faculty Member

Remember that although this is not a tenure or promotion decision, it is a personnel matter and confidentiality should be maintained just as in other personnel matters. In addition to reviewing the past performance and providing feedback, the ultimate goal for a review conversation is to ask the questions that focus on what to do moving forward – how to develop strengths, skills, new techniques, etc. Ultimately, your review conversation with faculty will culminate with setting mutual goals for future successes. Useful approaches to generate open dialogue include questions such as: “How do you see this?” “What are your thoughts about this?” “What are you thinking about that situation?”

Frame this review and offer feedback in the context of the department and university goals. Be honest about constraints on resources. Can you position your focus on how best to support this person to be successful?

- Restate the purpose and expectations for the meeting
- When reviewing and considering the portfolio, be specific in your constructive feedback on teaching, research, and service. Be open to hearing about hidden work; be curious about leadership showing up in less formal ways.
- Review Accomplishments and challenges. Ask about “Big Goals or Dream Projects”
- Co-Create ideas for development, mentoring, support, opportunities, connections, etc. Brainstorm options for new behaviors and skills development that focus on the impact of future work
- Also consider asking:
 - **What is going well for you right now?**
 - **Are there areas in which you feel you are spending too much time?**
 - **How can the department help you succeed?**
- Remind the faculty member that they have the opportunity to respond in writing to the triennial review summary letter.