

*Welcome*

Department Chair Workshop  
Spring 14-15AY

Ameae M. Walker

Vice Provost for Academic Personnel

Thursday, May 21, 2015

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

# Agenda

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 8:30am – 9:00am   | Registration and Breakfast  |
| 9:00am – 9:10am   | Welcome & Explanation of Workshop Structure<br><i>Vice Provost Ameae Walker</i> |
| 9:15am – 10:00am  | Working Sessions  |
| 10:00am – 10:15am | Break   |
| 10:15am – 10:30am | Academic Personnel Updates<br><i>Vice Provost Ameae Walker et alia</i>          |
| 10:30am – 12:00pm | Review & Discuss Results of Working Sessions                                    |

# Workshop Purpose

To discuss items in the academic review process with a focus on the Department Chair's responsibility. The goal is to have everyone benefit from the collective wisdom of the group.

# Main Themes

TABLE #	TOPIC OF DISCUSSION
1	Solicitation Letters/Solicitation Packets
2	Department Meeting
3	The Candidate's Self Statement
4	Department Letter
5	Appointment/Initial Complement Letters
6	Evaluation of Chairs
7	Role of Academic Personnel Staff Versus Candidate in the Preparation/Update of the Review File
8	How to Speed Up Appointments/all file reviews

# Outcome of Table Discussions

## Table 1 Solicitation Letters/Packet

## Table 1: Solicitation letters/packets

- **How best to come up with the letter writer list from dept. and candidate**
- 4-8 from candidate, 4-8 from department in hopes we get 8
- Chair solicits names from faculty, especially from those in same field (may solicit names from others outside of department or other UC's in same field)

## Table 1: Solicitation letters/packets

- **Who shouldn't be asked for letters?**
  - Do not solicit from those below proposed rank
  - A preponderance of those not closely affiliated with candidate (i.e., advisor, Co-PI) – **see VPAP comment on slide 16.**
  - No more than 2 from same University
  - Do not solicit from those excluded by candidate

## Table 1: Solicitation letters/packets

- **What is an acceptable way to contact potential letter writers?**
  - Pre-solicitation from Chair via email or phone call – **see VPAP comment on slide 18 about potential for abuse**
  - Formal solicitation sent by email and/or U.S. mail



## Table 1: Solicitation letters/packets

- **How best to stay on top of how many have been received so that a second set of requests can go out if necessary**
  - Make a list and track, ultimately Chair's responsibility
  - If still non-responsive, solicit from additional reviewers
  - Balance of letter writers should be based on solicitations rather than letters received

## Table 1: Solicitation letters/packets

- **What can/should be included in the packet sent to reviewers?**
  - **CV, self-statement, select publications**
  - **Chair's may review and suggest additional materials to include, however, ultimate decision lies with the candidate**

## Table 1: Solicitation letters/packets

- **What are appropriate/desirable additions to the letter template?**
  - Start with specific requirements for proposed rank/step and then follow with description of difference between lower ranks/steps
  - Templates should identify what must remain in the letter
  - Style errors in current templates

## Table 1: Solicitation letters/packets

- **What is the timeline for the solicitation of letters for M/P files?**
  - Can letters be solicited before September 30?
  - Can submitted or planned creative work be included?
  - Current review timeline is problematic because referees are seeing something different than faculty

# VPAP COMMENTS



## How best to come up with letter-writer list

- › Depends on rank: If a tenure decision, make sure most letter writers were not previous mentors. Later on, they may be the best evaluators
- › Look for people within UC, especially for step VI, career reviews and Distinguished Professor – few other universities understand our terminology (even with the provided definitions)!
- › If the dept. cannot come up with suggestions of who is appropriately qualified and known to be of “suitable personality”, use the internet.

## Who shouldn't be asked for letters?

- › Limit the number from any one institution
- › Remember to ask candidate about exclusions
- › Discuss the appropriateness of the candidate's choices with the candidate –

Appropriateness of rank,

Appropriateness of relationship

# What is an acceptable way to contact potential letter writers?

- › Tricky balance between the advantages of personal contact and potential abuses by the Chair
- › Cold request
- › Initial email request from chair with copy in the file
- › Initial email request from a staff person with copy in the file
- › Chair should not phone except when absolutely crucial to obtain a letter -e.g. I have been phoned and asked whether I would write a supportive letter- i.e. I was being pre-screened to achieve a particular outcome!



How best to stay on top of how many have been received so that a second set of requests can go out if necessary?

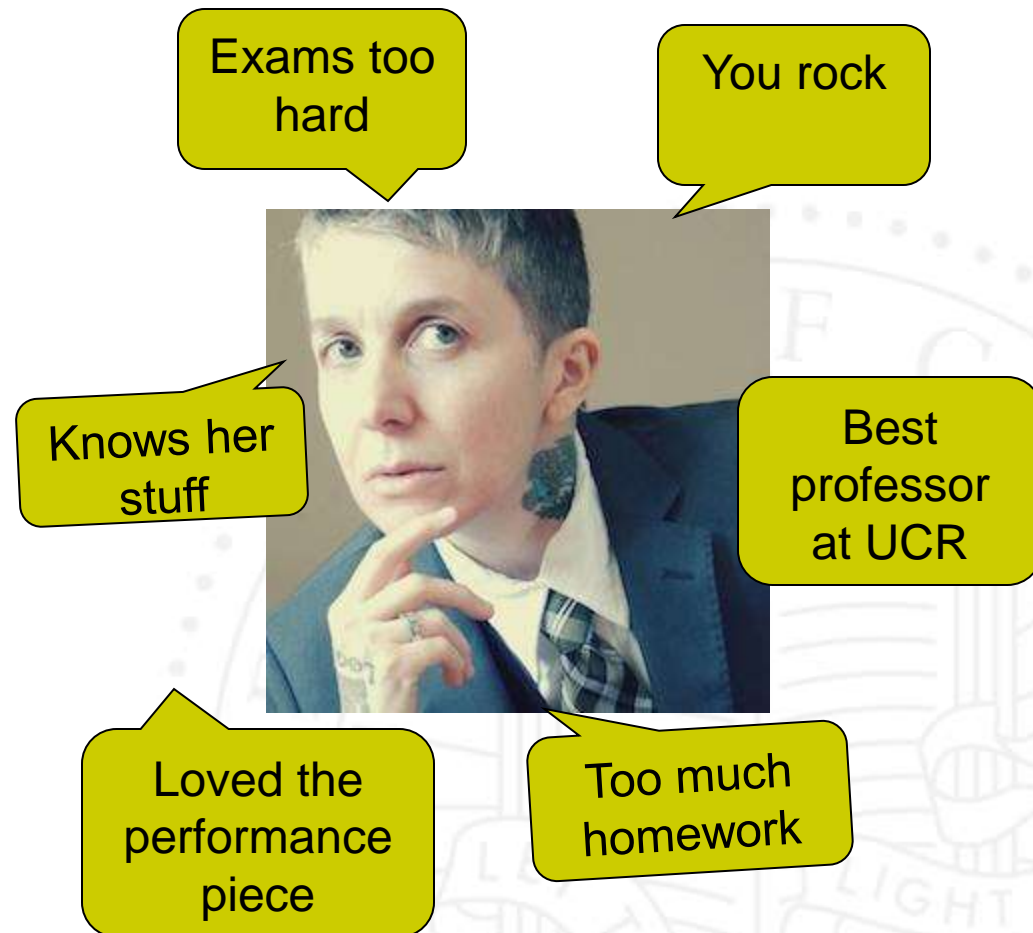
- Automated system probably in pilot this coming year.

Others:

- Use fake deadlines
- Use reminders by staff over the summer-  
“just to keep this on your radar.....”

# What can/should be included in Packet?

- › CV **plus-** e.g. add hours etc. to explain teaching or organizational or service obligations
- › Teaching evaluations
- › Personal statement aimed at those in the same field
- › Publications/gallery brochure etc.
- › **ALL MUST BE INCLUDED IN EFILE**



## What are appropriate/desirable additions to the letter template?

- Can include requests for specific things that need to be addressed – e.g. if person is still publishing with postdoc mentor, can ask about independent role of the candidate. i.e. is it now a collaboration rather than a mentor-mentee situation? Some VPAPs at other campuses look very poorly on this, but we have had several very well-regarded faculty who have done this their whole career BUT it needs to be carefully addressed.

# Outcome of Table Discussions

## Table 2 Departmental Meeting

## Table 2: Departmental meeting

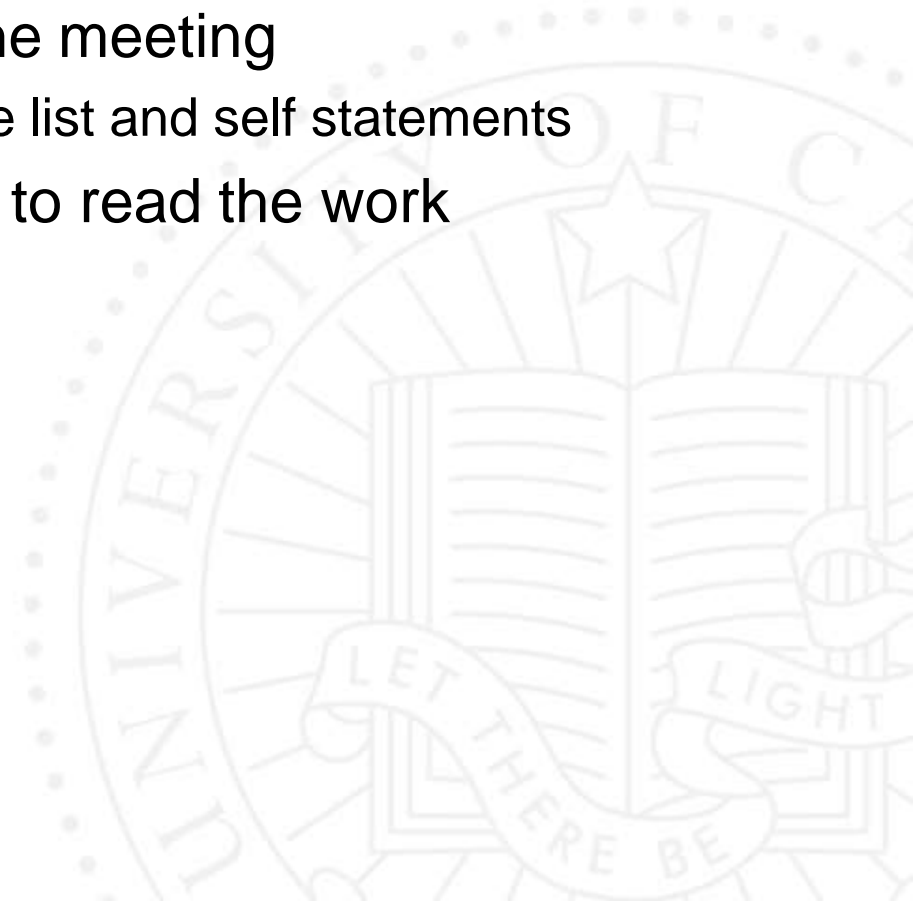
- **How far ahead to schedule to ensure attendance**
- Attendance
  - Look at the teaching schedule
  - Schedule in advance
  - Standing meetings at the beginning of the year/quarter
  - Look at the teaching schedule

## Table 2: Departmental meeting

- **How best to include those away on university business**
  - Bylaw 55 – absentee vote – deliver before the meeting
  - Skype – under exceptional circumstances – **see VPAP comment slide 31**
  - Share materials before the meeting
  - Tell them of their obligation – try not to schedule conferences, meetings during peak M/P times

## Table 2: Departmental meeting

- **How best to get everyone to read the file ahead of time**
  - Share materials before the meeting
    - All faculty read difference list and self statements
  - Have ad hoc committees to read the work



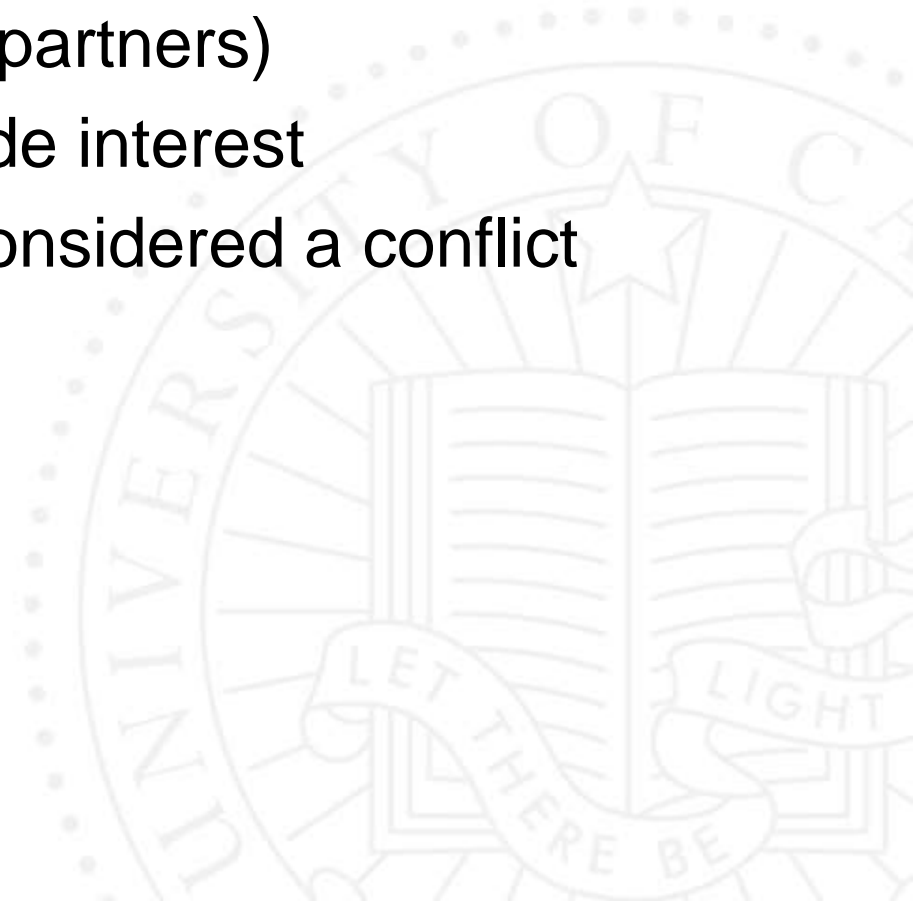
## Table 2: Departmental meeting

- **How best to ensure free exchange of views, but keep control to prevent inappropriate comments.**
  - Time control by the Chair
  - Diplomatically call out inappropriate comments
  - Set the expectation ahead of time
  - Remind them of rules/guidelines (APM and The Call)
  - Have an independent observer – AP Administrator



## Table 2: Departmental meeting

- What is considered a conflict of interest in participation or voting?
  - Related (i.e., spouse, partners)
  - Any business or outside interest
  - co-authorship is not considered a conflict



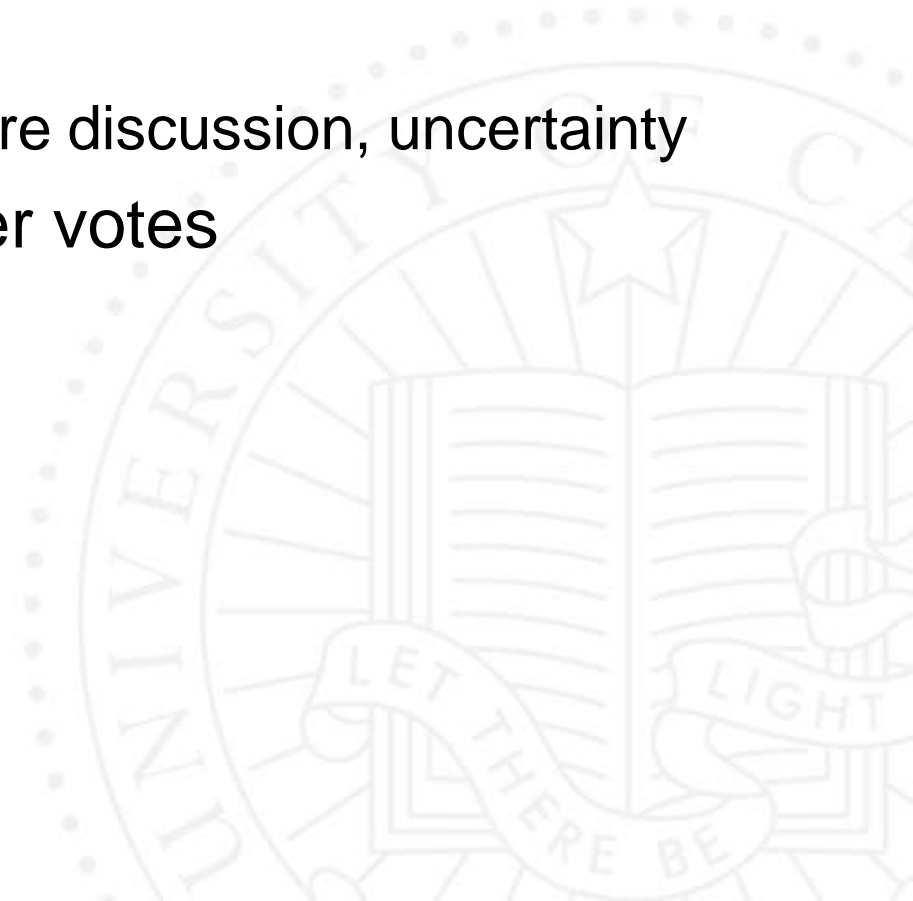
## Table 2: Departmental meeting

- **Extension of voting rights – pros and cons. Participation in discussion without voting. Advisory voting**
  - Allow jr. faculty to vote
    - Pros – more involved; learn the process; sr. faculty behave better; more votes
    - Cons – putting them on the spot; more meetings to attend—need to focus on research

# Table 2: Departmental meeting

## › **Best methods of voting**

- › Secret ballot
  - › Pros – protects jr. faculty
  - › Cons – increases insincere discussion, uncertainty
- › Include rationale in paper votes
- › Promote charitable tone
- › Confidentiality



# VPAP COMMENTS



# Departmental Meeting

Plan ahead so as many as possible can attend. These **MUST BE** face-to-face meetings. Attendance is considered part of a faculty member's duties and therefore "not usually on campus that day" is not an excuse for lack of attendance, whereas being in China giving a talk or in the hospital is. Something in between would make Skyping acceptable

If any absentee voting, it **MUST OCCUR** before the department meeting. If this is contrary to your department bylaws, then your bylaws need to be changed

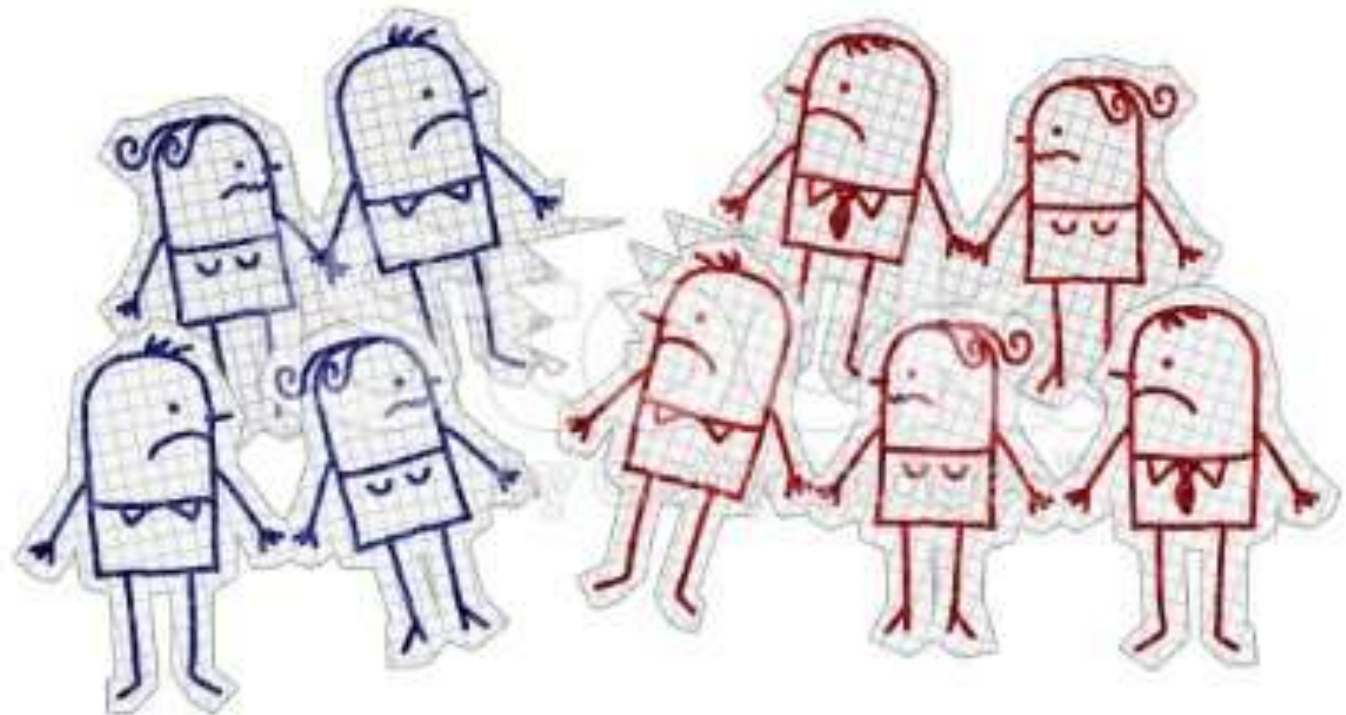


# Departmental Meeting

Ensure free exchange of views

Ensure discussion is limited to research, teaching and service

Ensure inappropriate comments are not tolerated





# Departmental Meeting

Bylaw 55 and extension of voting rights – pros: increases sense of involvement, reduces appearance of discrimination, increases anonymity and fairness, very best way to learn what is expected of you as a junior faculty member

Participation in discussion without voting.

Advisory voting

What other campuses have done with only a few at senior rank because, for example,

3 voting on each other is neither anonymous nor likely very fair. Other campuses have used senior faculty from related disciplines to add to numbers – appointed by VPAPs



# Outcome of Table Discussions

Table 3

The Candidate's Self Statement



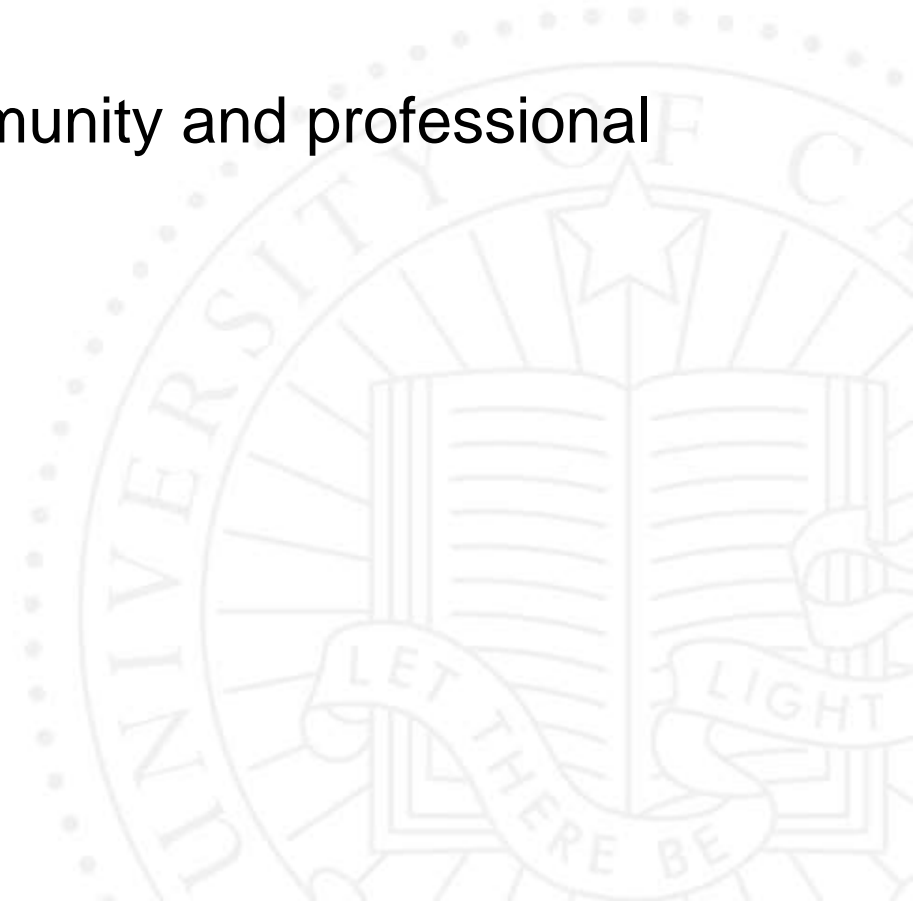
## Table 3: The candidate's personal statement

- ▶ **How should it/they be pitched? i.e. to whom are they speaking?**
  - ▶ Need to introduce themselves, not everyone who reads it will know them
  - ▶ Accuracy, simplicity, impact! Write to your audience – be accurate for the aficionado, but be clear so that someone who is outside the field can understand

## Table 3: The candidate's personal statement

### › **What can be included?**

- › Everything that speaks to professional identity
- › Research
- › Service – campus, community and professional
- › Community outreach
- › Teaching
- › Grad/undergrad training
- › Mentorship, Advising

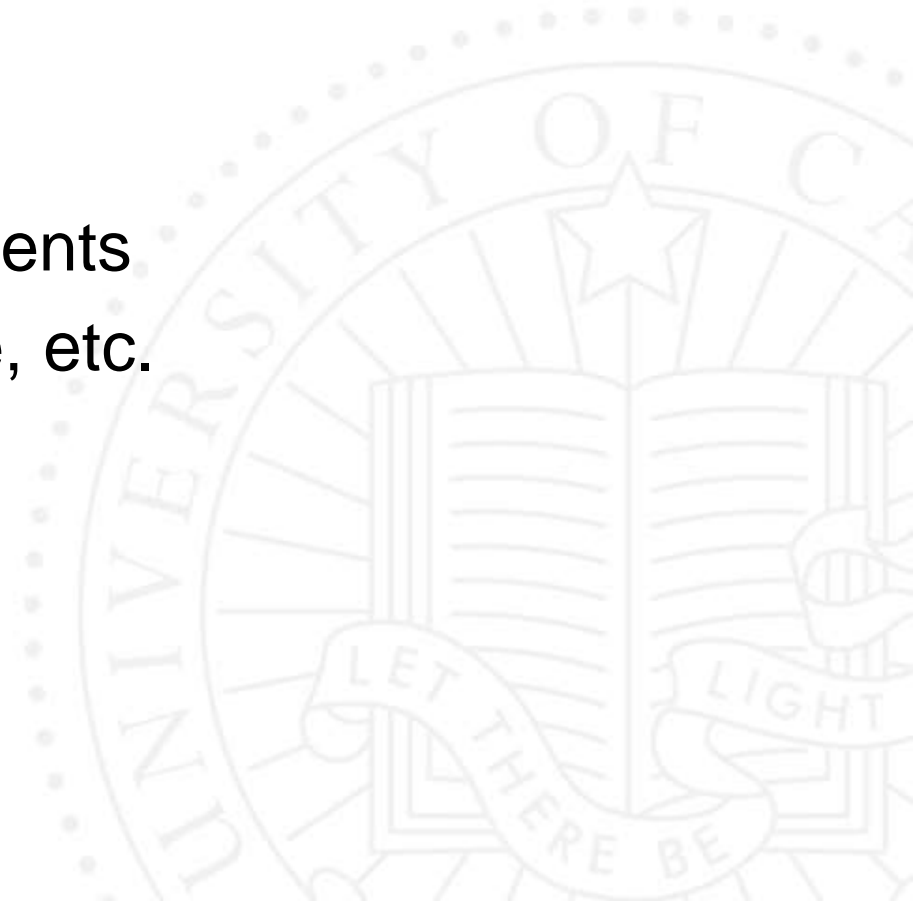


## Table 3: The candidate's personal statement

- **What should be included/addressed?**
  - Tell the story and give the exact context of the story so that anyone can relate.
  - Control your story – address things that may be perceived as “weaknesses”
  - Toot your own horn – tell explain you are fabulous!
  - Explain the importance of everything: don't assume that reader will know how important an award/journal/conference/grant, etc. is
  - Explain why your research is important
  - Don't short teaching and service

## Table 3: The candidate's personal statement

- **What shouldn't be included?**
  - Don't blame others or make excuses
  - Don't be negative
  - Personality conflicts
  - Complaints about students
  - Personal issues, leave, etc.



## Table 3: The candidate's personal statement

- **What is the best advice a chair can give?**
  - Talk with each candidate in advance of the review and give them advice about how to write the statement
  - Proactive involvement: with enough time, problems can be addressed and opportunities can be seized
  - Read statement before file opens and help the candidate to improve it
  - Chair should be the lead promoter and cheerleader of the faculty
  - Chair should be a mentor: know the professional goals of faculty and help them to achieve them

# VPAP COMMENTS

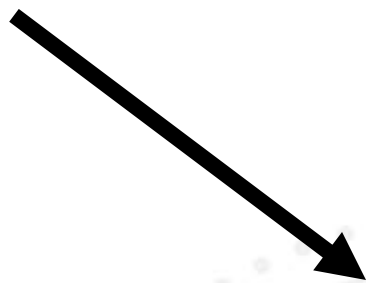
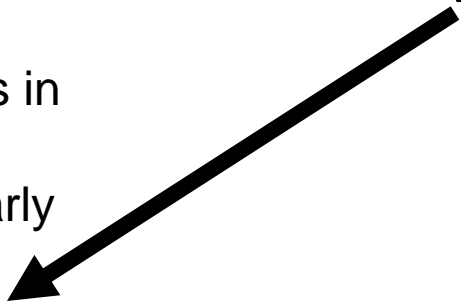


# Candidate's Self Statement

How should it/they be pitched? i.e. to whom are they speaking?

Others in  
their  
scholarly  
field

To CAP,  
VPAP,  
PEVC,  
Chancellor





## Candidate's Self Statement

What can be included?

Research, teaching, service that is in the file

What should be included/addressed?

**Significance** of accomplishments in all areas – don't assume others know what the XYZ award is

What shouldn't be included?





# Outcome of Table Discussions

Table 4  
Department Letter

# Table 4: Departmental letter

- **How should it be pitched given those who will read it?**
  - Remember that people at different review levels will be less familiar with the research than department faculty. At the same time realize the department letter is the only place to highlight the strength of the research.
  - Explain the impact of the research
  - Point out the individual contributions.
  - Highlight if/how the faculty get students (both undergraduate and graduate) involved in their research.
  - Point out the strength of teaching contributions, including volunteer efforts
  - Speak to how candidate service at all levels (department, college, campus, professional)

# Table 4: Departmental letter

- ▶ **How best to discuss collaborative research/creative activity**
  - ▶ Point out specific contributions to collaborative work and explain the difference in the publication venues and their role in the intellectual advancement.
  - ▶ Resist myopic view that collaborative research is diluted/weak compared to sole-authorship research. This idea drives unwanted behaviors.
  - ▶ Explain how your discipline values the role of collaborative research.

## Table 4: Departmental letter

- **How best to ensure advocacy while maintaining a consistent and balanced evaluation**
- Give guidance to candidates throughout the process on what matters in the T/P process so that the chances of strong advocacy are better when the department letter time comes.
- Enthusiasm is great, and desirable, but ensure it can be backed up by the file.
- Take a balanced view when necessary so that credibility in your department process is not jeopardized.

# Table 4: Departmental letter

- **How best to talk about impact of the work**
  - Highlight if the research builds upon and enables other related research.
  - Discuss if the research opens up new areas of that have great potential.
  - If possible and useful, include objective information about citation metrics, but also include subjective assessments on the merit of the work and the possible future it has.
  - Does the work change the way people think? Within own field or in other fields?

## Table 4: Departmental letter

- **How best to discuss less-than-optimal aspects of the record**
  - Don't ignore the problem. Comment on it and try to illuminate the reason for the difficulty.
  - Talk about prognosis for improvement.
  - Factor in how much the department values the overall contribution of the candidate to the department's mission.
  - Relate the performance to department norms.

## Table 4: Departmental letter

- **How best to ensure that it is a department letter and not a chair's letter**
  - Write the first draft from the notes taken during the department meeting.
  - Circulate the draft letters, ask for comments, be responsive, and never send a draft letter up the line that hasn't been reviewed and approved by the department.

# Table 4: Departmental letter

- **How best to discuss teaching**
  - Be cautious that the system may overly count student evaluations. So make it a point to include discussion on degree of difficulty, type of students, size of class, level of experience with the material.
  - Include classroom visits in the file.



# Table 4: Departmental letter

## › **How best to discuss service**

- › Evaluate contributions at every level of service.
- › Talk about level of volunteerism and ‘good citizenship.’
- › Comment on the quality of the service to distinguish value-added versus ‘going through the motions.’
- › Compare to department norms and trade-off service contributions with the rank of the candidate.

# Table 4: Departmental letter

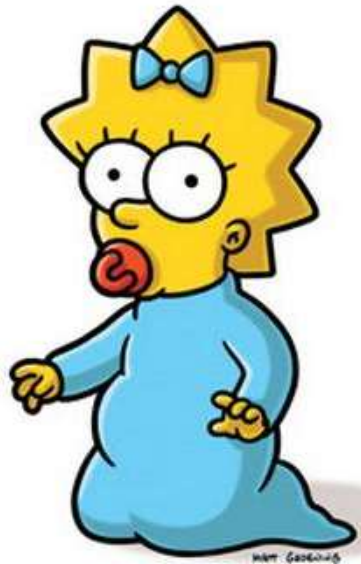
- ▶ **Never do, always do .....**
  - ▶ Make evidence-based comments
  - ▶ Don't compare candidates too much with your own personal experiences
  - ▶ Ensure you are summarizing in an all-encompassing way the faculty opinion.
  - ▶ Stick to department criteria in making decisions rather than backing into an A/B comparison with other faculty members.

# VPAP COMMENTS



# Departmental Letter

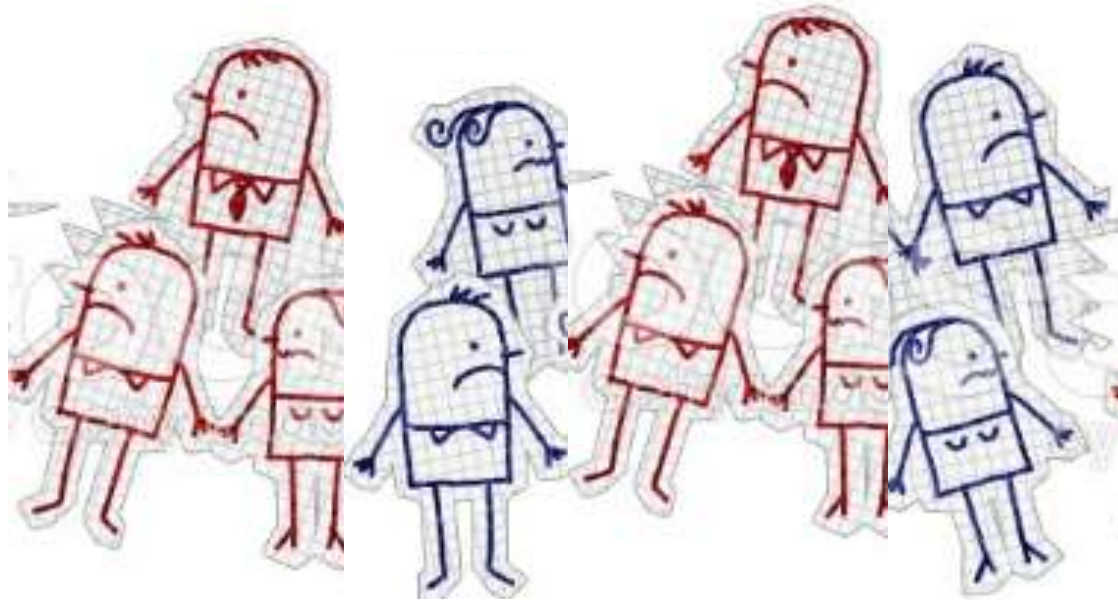
We need evaluative comments such as “important breakthrough”, “first to show”, “only one to tackle such a difficult problem”, “technically very challenging”, “controversial and therefore more difficult to publish”, “years to accumulate data”, “chosen by faculty of 1000”, “will feed the world”, most important prize in modern art”, “seminar presented at best-ranked philosophy dept. in US”, “curation at most important gallery in New York” etc. priority score on unfunded grant could be useful



**A paper by Maggie Simpson and Edna Krabappel was accepted by two scientific journals.** "Fuzzy, Homogeneous Configurations." A nonsensical text, submitted by engineer [Alex Smolyanitsky](#) in an effort to expose a pair of scientific journals — the [Journal of Computational Intelligence and Electronic Systems](#) and [Aperito Journal of NanoScience Technology](#)<sup>52</sup>

# Departmental Letter

The departmental letter should represent the balanced and integrated opinions of the group. It should not be a Chair's letter. It should not be copied and pasted from a candidate's personal statement. It should not be composed by a staff person.





# Departmental Letter

If a new paper/exhibit etc. was not listed when the requests for outside letters went out, make sure to say this in dept. letter.

Evaluate collaborative research -does it show dependence, does it result in research that could not otherwise be done, does it result in synergy, does it attract new kinds of funding etc.?

This is particularly important for promotion files. I don't like percentages

Be balanced in the evaluation.

Advocacy is a good trait, but if all faculty in the department all deserve an acceleration year after year, then the letter becomes useless



Less than optimal aspects of the file have to be addressed, but keep matters proportional

Explain all negative votes

# Departmental Letter

- While student teaching evaluations are useful, they do not always tell the whole story. Students may evaluate on criteria other than those we would hope. Therefore, whether the evaluations are great or not so great, there should be commentary by fellow faculty. If applicable, evaluate all levels of teaching and place in the context of department norms in terms of load. If evaluations are less than one would hope, what has candidate/department done to try to improve? Has improvement occurred? Also, CAP is seeing files where only 1 of 9 students has evaluated the course. As Chairs, please spread the word about the importance of student evaluations.
- Evaluate service contributions in terms of quality and time commitment and in terms of dept. and stage of career norms. The senate now keeps records of attendance at senate committees. You may request this information, but as in all things, this must be done for all candidates in the dept. if done for one.

# Outcome of Table Discussions

## Table 5 Appointment Letters



# Table 5: Appointment letters

- **What to say about the duration of appointment**
  - Assistant level: initial appointment and reappointment of Assistant Professors are officially made for a maximum term of two years. Tenure track appointments are normally renewed until the mandatory review for tenure, which must occur during the seventh-year service.
  - Associate and Full level: appointed with tenure

# VPAP COMMENTS



# Appointment /Initial Complement Letter

- › Everything that applies to departmental letter
- › Please explain negative votes. Arrange voting such that a negative vote does not just mean a vote for an alternate candidate on the short list



- › Do not write in such a way as to sound as if particular teaching load, graduate student support, or space etc. is forever.
- › Do not commit to anything over which you have no control e.g. level of appointment or likelihood of promotion next year etc.
- › Do make it clear that years as acting, adjunct, in residence, assistant researcher etc. at any UC count towards tenure clock

# Outcome of Table Discussions

## Table 6 Evaluation of Chairs

## Table 6: Evaluation of Chairs re academic personnel process

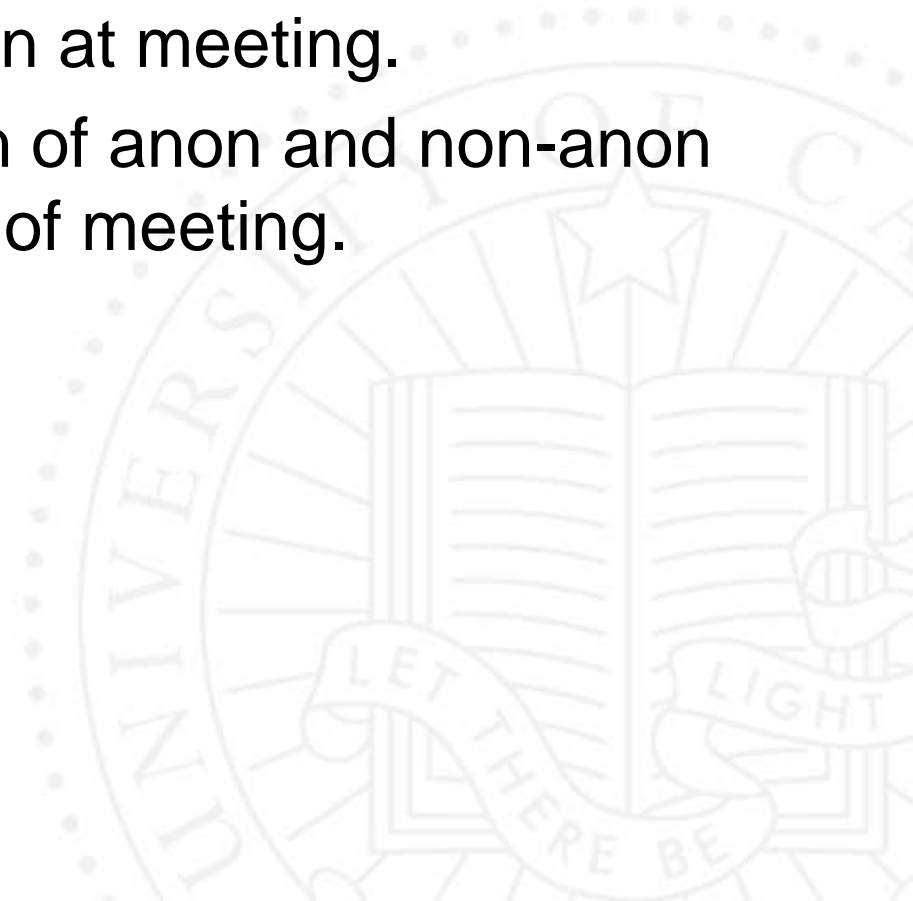
- **How does a chair ensure that faculty have done their homework prior to the dept meeting?**
  - Proper advertising of dept. meetings early and often.
  - Proper notification of who is up for what and when.

## Table 6: Evaluation of Chairs re academic personnel process

- **How does a chair ensure adequate attendance at the meeting?**
  - Proper advertising of dept. meetings early and often.
  - Proper notification of who is up for what and when.
  - Attendance is taken and if necessary attendance at these meetings is noted in Dept and Chair's letter

## Table 6: Evaluation of Chairs re academic personnel process

- **How does a chair support open contribution of opinions?**
  - Encourage participation at meeting.
  - Encourage submission of anon and non-anon comments in advance of meeting.



## Table 6: Evaluation of Chairs re academic personnel process

- **How does a chair encourage participation so that the conversation is not dominated by a few?**
  - Call on those who want to speak
  - Encourage productive discussion
  - Follow rules of order.
  - Prevent interruptions





## Table 6: Evaluation of Chairs re academic personnel process

- **How does a chair put a stop to inappropriate discussion?**
  - Enforce rules of order
  - Point out (strongly) what is appropriate and inappropriate. Use policy.
  - Ask disruptive people to leave



## Table 6: Evaluation of Chairs re academic personnel process

- **How should the ability of a chair to do the above be evaluated?**
  - Typically done by Dean (3 years). Suggest it be done annually. Correct problems as they occur—don't wait 3 years.
  - Presumably in the file when Chair comes up for M&P
  - ????? Perhaps CAP. Can CAP help Chairs write better letters. Annual eval from Dean? Eval by peers if done correctly—focus on the process.

# VPAP COMMENTS



# Evaluation of Chairs

- ▶ Chairs are so important to the personnel process
- ▶ They are responsible for arranging for outside letters, for advising faculty when to put their file forward and how to present material in the file. They set the tone of the departmental meeting and often the departmental letter. They have the right to write a separate letter
- ▶ We will be developing a mechanism to evaluate this role of chairs, so all input welcome

# Outcome of Table Discussions

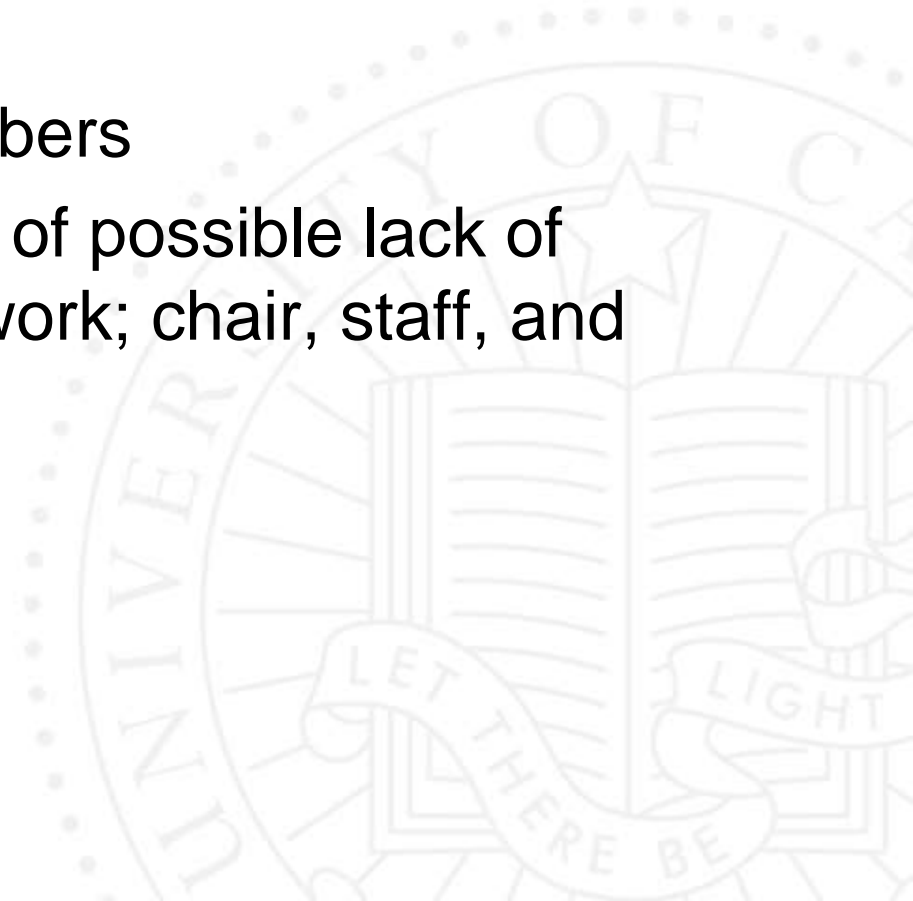
## Table 7 Role of Faculty and Staff

## Table 7: Role of academic personnel staff versus candidate in preparation/update of the file

- Who is responsible for entering data into e file? Is it different for different items?
  - Some people say academic personnel staff and others say individual faculty member; we need well trained staff support; e-file should be standardized but open to individual disciplines; who should enter books?

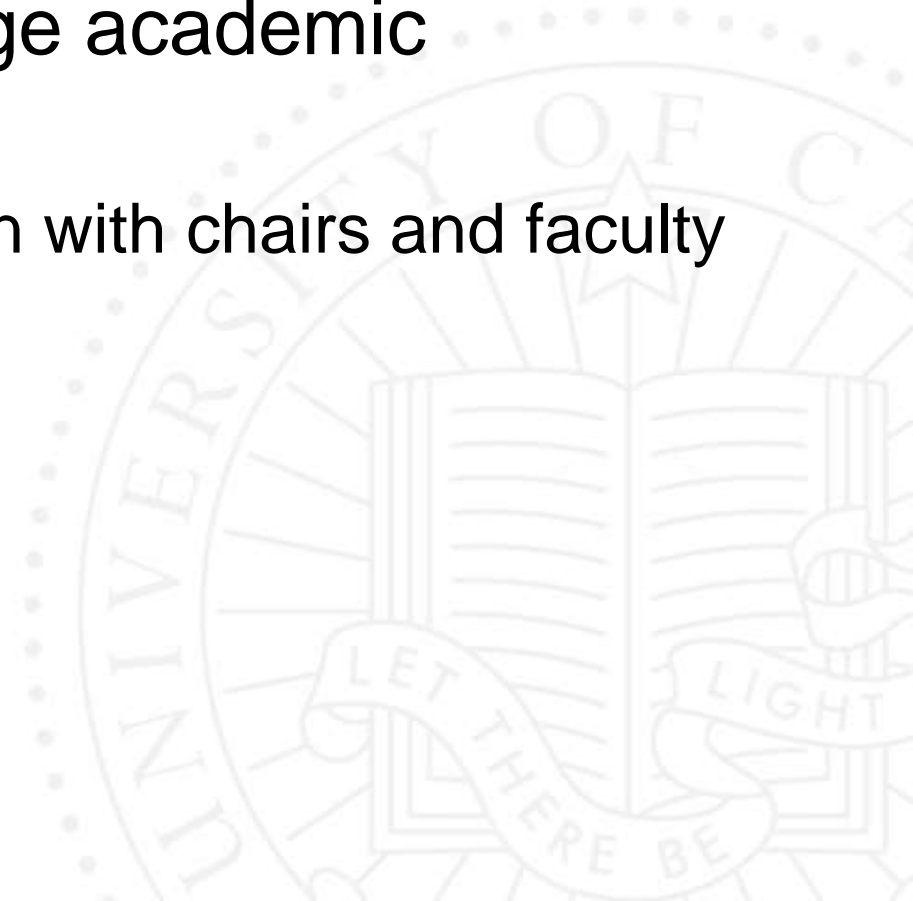
## Table 7: Role of academic personnel staff versus candidate in preparation/update of the file

- Who is responsible for the accuracy of what is in e file?
  - Individual faculty members
  - With some awareness of possible lack of representation of the work; chair, staff, and colleagues guidance



## Table 7: Role of academic personnel staff versus candidate in preparation/update of the file

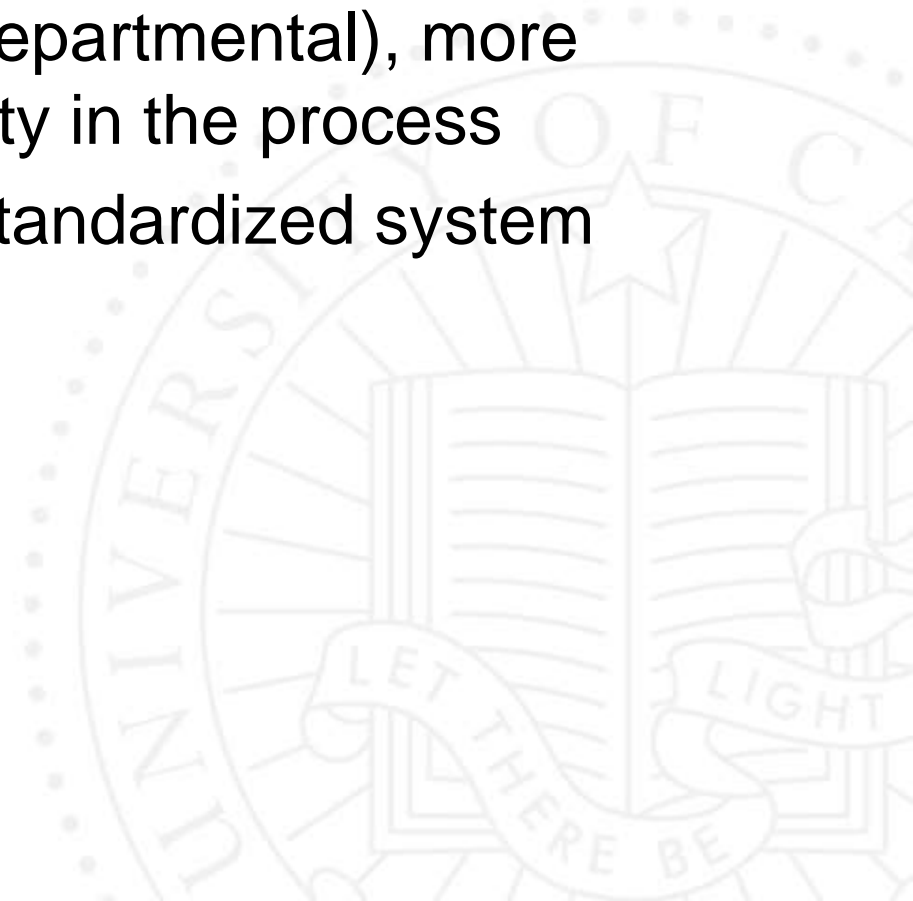
- What level of policy compliance is the responsibility of college academic personnel staff?
  - The staff in conjunction with chairs and faculty members





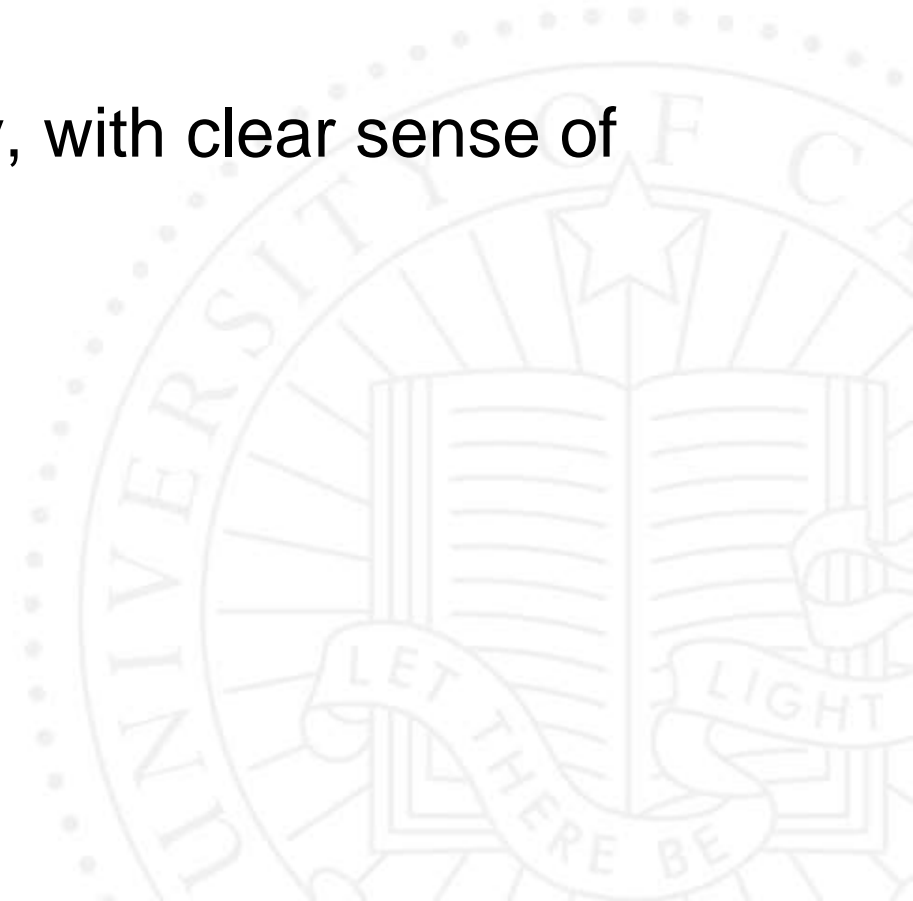
## Table 7: Role of academic personnel staff versus candidate in preparation/update of the file

- How can the process be improved?
  - More staff (including departmental), more training and more clarity in the process
  - More flexibility in the standardized system



## Table 7: Role of academic personnel staff versus candidate in preparation/update of the file

- How do we get files to CAP before the Winter break?
  - Start the process early, with clear sense of when to update



## Table 7: Role of academic personnel staff versus candidate in preparation/update of the file

- Should the approval times for updated/220 files be the same as for files the first time around?
  - In case of 'preliminary negative', for example and candidates can update (publications, grants), the times could be shortened

# VPAP COMMENTS



# Role of Staff and Faculty

- It is the faculty member's responsibility to complete the file and ensure it's accuracy
- Staff can be helpful, especially with automatic download items such as teaching and evaluations, but it is not their responsibility

# Outcome of Table Discussions

Table 8

How to Speed Up Appointments and  
All Files

## Table 8: How to speed up appointments and all file processing

- **For appointments, why is eFile not used by most? Do you know the two options available?**
  - Did not know uploading PDFs in segments into e-file was the preferred method
  - DMS (one big PDF)
  - Efile (documents uploaded separately)

## Table 8: How to speed up appointments and all file processing

- **If eFile is not used, do you know what happens during review to the paper file and decisions by the VPAP, PEVC, and Chancellor?**
  - Appointment files and pre-reads are given priority by CAP
  - And then...????



## Table 8: How to speed up appointments and all file processing

- **What steps in the process do you think could be eliminated/streamlined?**
  - What are all the steps in the process?
  - External letters are the problem
    - Reduce number of letters required from 8 to 6
    - No letters for step 6 (merit)—over fish the pool
    - Reduce number of UC letters required
    - Accelerate process of asking for external letters
    - Identify and reduce lags in timeframe (monitor routing)

## Table 8: How to speed up appointments and all file processing

- **Are there time frames that seem too long in this day of electronic communication?**
  - Yes, much too long



# Concluding Remarks

Topics for Chairs' lunchbunch  
starting in the Fall?