

The slide features a dark blue background with a lighter blue wavy graphic at the top. The text is centered and reads "ASPT Letter Writing Session".

# ASPT Letter Writing Session

# Some Basic Considerations and Policies

- Two sets of procedures developed by each department:
  - appointment, reappointment, performance-evaluation, promotion, tenure, and post-tenure reviews; and
  - For the allocation of monies devoted to salary equity adjustments and performance-evaluated salary increments.XII B. 1.
- “Each DFSC/SFSC shall notify each faculty member annually in writing of the faculty member’s performance evaluation, and of any recommended change in rank and/or tenure status. *This letter* shall provide an assessment of the faculty member’s strengths and weaknesses and , when applicable, progress toward achievement of promotion and/or tenure.”(XII B.5.)



# More Policy Basics....

- Each DFSC/SFSC shall conduct annual performance evaluations of each faculty member subject to the ASPT system.
  - During the annual performance review, the DFSC/SFSC shall consider activities performed (or reaching completion) **during the calendar year being evaluated but give due attention to long-term contributions made by particular faculty.**
  - Each faculty member shall be assigned a performance-evaluated increment based upon activities completed **during the evaluation year but also on long-term faculty contributions.** (XII B.3.)



# And Even More Policy Basics....

- “In the performance evaluation of faculty members, the DFSC /SFSC shall recognize that individual efforts and activities elicit different types of productivity and that the quality and thoroughness of work done by a faculty member *in completing an individual assignment* constitute the criteria on which performance evaluation decisions and summative reviews may be based. (VII C. p. 25)
- Faculty Activities reports are **required**. (VII.D. p. 25)
- “The materials upon which faculty members are evaluated shall include student reactions to teaching performance.” (XII B. 2.)
- BUT, “departments/schools **must use two or more types of factors** to evaluate teaching performance, one of which shall be student reactions to teaching performance.” (Appendix 2, p. 58)



# Some Basic Suggestions About Annual Performance Letters

- CONFIDENTIALITY THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS!
- Things to Include or Consider:
  - Tell what the letter contains: Annual Performance Review, Assessment of Progress Toward Tenure and/or Promotion
  - Materials received and relied upon
  - Description of Assignment during evaluation period
  - One Letter or Two? Your Choice...
  - OVERALL assessment as “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory/Insufficient”
  - Appeals Process and next procedures



# Letter Basics: Assessment of Progress Toward Tenure and Promotion

- MUST include a clear statement, in as much detail as possible, of the current progress toward T & P. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IF THERE ARE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS!
- Provide dates regarding tenure year and evaluation year.
- Teaching: make specific reference to student evaluations, peer evaluations, etc.
  - Do NOT isolate individual student comments. Generalize, and generalize fairly.
  - Look at trends, if such exist – not just one bad year or one bad class
  - Use **more** than student reactions. Look at Appendix 2.

# Progress Toward T & P: Research and Service

- Research

- Make specific reference to Department requirements
- Be specific: if numbers are an issue, say so; if quality is an issue, say so.

- Service

- Make specific reference to Department requirements
- Be specific: if lack of involvement, say so; if involvement is a numbers game, without real participation, say so.

# Issues of Collegiality and Citizenship

- Collegiality is NOT a separate category of evaluation
  - NOTE “The Faculty Evaluation Categories,” p. 2
  - AAUP stance
- BUT, Collegiality MUST BE considered *as it affects performance in the other three categories.*
  - *Is the candidates’ performance in teaching, research, or service affected by his/her lack (or presence) of collegial behavior(s)?*
- AND, collegial behavior MUST BE considered *as it affects the goals of the department.*
  - *Tenure Policies, IX C.3.: “The candidates competencies must be in keeping with the long-range goals of the Department/School and the University if tenure is to be recommended.”*
  - *Tenure Policies, IX C.4.: “The candidate must have demonstrated the capability to work responsibly and knowledgeably toward the goals of the Department/School and the University.”*

# What May be Considered – and How to Handle it in the Letter

- Cite the specific behaviors and the effect of the behavior on:
  - Teaching, research, and/or service
  - Department or University goals (Note: it doesn't say College...)
- Cite/quote the University tenure policies, above, by number
- “Eyeball” proof is not necessary, but evidence should be reliable (e.g., no anonymous accusations, triple hearsay, etc.)



# Sample Language: the Nexus between Collegiality and Performance

“University ASPT Guidelines provide that a candidate for tenure “must have demonstrated the capability to work responsibly and knowledgably toward the goals of the Department/School and the University.” [IX.C.4.] Your behavior has been such that your rudeness and lack of civility [or uncommunicativeness, arrogance, lack of respect for colleagues/students/authority, failure to take part in faculty governance, refusal of assignments, etc.....] has made it substantially more difficult for colleagues to work with you on committees, research projects and/or faculty development processes, thus impeding not only your progress toward tenure and promotion, but also potentially impeding the work of your colleagues, and the mission of the department/school, college and university. If such behavior continues, it is not likely that you will achieve tenure or promotion.”



# Watchwords....

- SPECIFICITY
- HONESTY
- FAIRNESS TO ALL CONCERNED
- COURAGE, CANDOR AND FRANKNESS
- CONFIDENTIALITY, CONFIDENTIALITY,  
CONFIDENTIALITY



# Letter Writing

Questions?  
Discussion?