



**Amherst College**  
Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty

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Professor **XXXX**, chair  
Department of **XXXX**

Dear **XXXX**,

I write about the procedures that the department will follow to assemble the tenure dossier for Professor **XXXX**, which will be due to my office **by noon on Tuesday, October 1, 2024**. I remind you that only the tenured members of the department participate in tenure deliberations and vote on the departmental recommendation. Tenure dossiers are prepared under the guidelines voted by the faculty, as articulated fully in the [Faculty Handbook](#). Links to relevant sections are included in this note. Please review carefully the language about [the meaning, criteria, and procedures for tenure](#). As an overall matter, please note that unsolicited materials (e.g., unsolicited colleague letters and reviews not provided by the external reviewers selected to review the case) cannot be considered, or included in tenure dossiers.

**Electronic Submission of All Materials for Fall 2024 Tenure Cases**

Tenure materials will be submitted to my office in an electronic format only this summer and fall. The exception is published books and unpublished book manuscripts, which must be shared in hard copy with my office for the Tenure and Promotion Committee, as well as with the external reviewers and the tenured members of the department. (Please share unpublished manuscripts with my office in hard copy, and electronically, as well, if possible.) Reviewers may wish to receive all of the candidate's scholarship in hard copy, and you should grant this request if it is made. If the candidate's work includes creative or other non-print materials, please **contact Janet Tobin** at [jstobin@amherst.edu](mailto:jstobin@amherst.edu) about the candidate's desired mode of submission. My office will create (from the electronic files) the archival hard-copy binders that were submitted previously by departments in the summer and fall. Google templates for electronic submission and related instructions will be provided, and colleagues in my office will meet with all candidates and, separately, with chairs and their academic department coordinators (ADC)s to review the tenure process this spring.

\*Please note that my letter to the candidate about the tenure process, attached here, provides additional details about the documents that the candidate will submit to the department. References to those documents have an asterisk in this letter.

**The dossier that the department will submit comprises the following materials:**

**1. \*Candidate's CV**

The candidate will submit a provisional CV to the department by noon on **Monday, March 25, 2024**, and a final CV to the department, to be submitted by the department to the provost's office, by **June 28, 2024**. If there is a change in publication status, an updated CV can be submitted with the dossier in October, with updates noted in red; otherwise the CV should not change. **The chair will discuss with the candidate the dates by which the department needs the CV in order to meet**

**departmental deadlines in June and October. Summer materials are due to my office on June 28, 2024, and the full tenure dossier is due on October 1, 2024.** Please refer to my letter to the candidate for more details.

2. **\*Ranked List of Potential External Reviewers from the Candidate (this is not part of the tenure dossier)**

The department will ask the candidate to provide a list of potential external reviewers (normally no more than eight, or ten in the case of joint appointments) in rank order, from which the department will make a selection of names. See below for more information about the process that the department will follow to choose the reviewers.

3. **\*The Candidate's Letter to the External Reviewers (optional)**

This letter provides an opportunity for candidates to contextualize their research and outline their research plans. If the candidate chooses to write this letter, it will become part of the tenure dossier and will be shared with the department and the Tenure and Promotion Committee, as well as with the reviewers. The letter must be completed in time for the department to send to the reviewers with the required materials. **The chair will discuss with the candidate the deadline for the letter. See my letter to the candidate for more details.**

4. **Information Relating to the External Reviewers**

**Selecting the Reviewers**

The department will solicit the judgments of leading scholars or practitioners in the candidate's field; these letters are a crucial element in any tenure case. \*As noted above, the department will ask the candidate to provide a single ranked list of suggested external reviewers (normally no more than eight, or ten in the case of joint appointments), from which the department makes a selection of names. In addition to those names, the department will develop a list of external reviewers not named by the candidate for review of the scholarship and will select an equal number of names from this list. After reviewing the external letters in the early fall, the Tenure and Promotion Committee may ask that additional letters be solicited to give candidates' cases the fullest possible consideration, and to address any concerns raised by any member(s) of the committee.

**Instructions to the Reviewers**

The provost's office will provide a sample letter of solicitation to reviewers. Departments are urged to use it, in the interest of equity and consistency. The reviewers should be informed that their assessment will be treated as confidential. You should advise the reviewers that the college is interested in learning what they think of the quality of the candidate's work. Does it address important questions in the field, and has the candidate made significant contributions toward answering, refining, or extending these questions? In writing the evaluation, it would be helpful if reviewers would compare the candidate's work to that of others at the same stage in their careers. We would like to know reviewers' opinions (and the criteria and metrics by which they made their judgment) of the candidate's scholarly contribution thus far and potential for future growth. It would also be useful for reviewers to comment on (relative to the standards of the field) expectations for the rate of progress by the time of tenure, typical patterns of scholarly productivity, stages/formats of publication (the role and weight of working papers and/or co- and lead authorship, for example), and the role of peer review. If the candidate's scholarship includes work produced through and/or published in emerging media, or exploring new scholarly methodologies in the field, the department is encouraged to invite reviewers to consult any guidelines for evaluating such scholarship that may have been developed by the discipline's scholarly association or learned society. The department should also comment on these issues. We would also like to know of anything reviewers might like to share with us about service that

the candidate may have provided the profession. Reviewers should be asked to address if and how the pandemic had an impact on the ability to make progress on research in the field. Reviewers should be informed that Amherst faculty typically stand for tenure after completing ten semesters of teaching, excluding any leaves. It may help the reviewers to be informed of the function and composition of the Tenure and Promotion Committee, and particularly of the fact that they are addressing two sets of readers: colleagues in the candidate's department who have some expertise in the candidate's field and members of the committee who in the context of tenure discussions may constitute a lay audience. The quality and depth of these letters is critical. Reviewers should engage the candidate's work in some detail. A letter of generalized praise lacking in specificity is likely to be discounted no matter how distinguished the reviewer. Reviewers' letters will be most helpful and persuasive if they can point to strengths and weaknesses in the work and relate these in nontechnical language that may be understood by scholars not expert in their particular field. Where appropriate and relevant, reviewers also may take into account possible differences among institutions. Letters from expert colleagues from the Five Colleges may be included in this group if the colleague is an authority in the candidate's field.

### Important Points about External Reviews

- All evaluators—department members, external reviewers, and Tenure and Promotion Committee members—must review exactly the same scholarly and/or creative material in the same format.
- Letters should be provided from no fewer than six and normally no more than eight reviewers, or in the case of joint appointments ten, chosen equally from \*lists compiled by the candidate and department.
- Reviewers should be actively engaged in or near the candidate's field of research, though not all confined to the candidate's area of specialization. At least one of the reviewers should be outside the candidate's area of scholarly specialization. The hope is that this reviewer, as well as others, will situate the candidate's research and/or creative work within the candidate's subfield and the discipline more broadly.
- It is valuable to have at least one letter from a reviewer at a liberal arts college.
- The candidate's dissertation and/or postdoctoral advisors may serve as reviewers.
- At least six reviewers should not have a close personal or professional relationship with the candidate. In addition, at least half of the reviewers should not have a close personal or professional relationship with any member of the department. If a close professional or personal relationship exists between a department member and an external reviewer, that relationship must be disclosed. Candidates will be asked to disclose any relationship that they may have with the reviewers whom they propose. The reviewers will also be asked to disclose any relationship that they may have with the department and/or the candidate.

### Documents Related to External Reviewers that are Submitted in the Dossier

- The letters from the reviewers
- The CVs of the reviewers
- A characterization (a short biographical sketch) of each reviewer. Each reviewer's association with the candidate, if any, and with any tenured members of the department, and the process by which each reviewer was chosen must be included. Indicate which reviewers were chosen

from the candidate's list and which reviewers were chosen from the department's list and discuss each reviewer's qualifications.

- A sample of the department's letter of solicitation to external reviewers

#### Compensation for External Reviewers

Reviewers receive \$250.00 per review. Please let reviewers know that, if they would prefer not to receive the honorarium, they should let you know prior to starting their review. We are required to report the honorarium to the IRS once the reviewer has begun reviewing the tenure file, even if the person later declines payment or requests that the honorarium be used for another purpose.

### 5. **Copies of the Candidate's Scholarly/Creative Work with, When Applicable, a Characterization of the Journals in Which, and/or the Press by Which the Work Was Published, and/or Venues in Which the Work Was Performed or Exhibited—and Other Materials for Summer Submission**

#### Materials Submitted to the Reviewers and Tenure and Promotion Committee in the Summer

The following materials are due to my office by noon on **June 28, 2024**: the candidate's CV; the candidate's letter to the reviewers (if the candidate has chosen to do one); the master list of scholarly and/or creative work being included in the dossier; and electronic copies of that work. See below for instructions about providing hard copies of books and unpublished manuscripts. My office will contact departments **by July 3, 2024**, to inform chairs that they may move forward with submitting these materials to the reviewers. There is also a summer submission to the provost's office for the Tenure and Promotion Committee. All of the previously mentioned materials are provided. In addition, if departments choose, the characterization described below may also be submitted at this time.

#### Characterization of Journals and Presses

The department must provide as full a characterization as possible of journals, presses, and other modes of publication or venues in which the candidate's work is performed or exhibited. The candidate must **not** be asked to provide this characterization; it is the department's responsibility. The department should include discussion of the standards for publication within the candidate's field (e.g., How old is the journal? Is it refereed?). Departments should be aware that, although this document can be included with the materials submitted by **June 28** to the provost's office, it is **not** sent to the reviewers. If it is not provided in the summer, it must be submitted as part of the final dossier on October 1. Materials submitted by June 28 (with the exception of the candidate's CV) are not submitted again in the fall.

#### Logistics Regarding Reviewer Materials

In the case of published books, the ADC is responsible for ordering (with enough lead time to have the books by June 28) eight copies for the Tenure and Promotion Committee, one copy for the provost's office for the archival binder, and however many are needed for the department and the reviewers. The ADC also prints unpublished manuscripts for the same individuals. My office will provide the mailing addresses for the Tenure and Promotion Committee (including the president, provost, and associate provost) and for Pam Korenewsky, who will prepare the archival binder. The ADC is responsible for mailing books and manuscripts to the members of the Tenure and Promotion Committee, the reviewers, and department members.

My office will pay for the Tenure and Promotion Committee's eight copies and for the archival copy, and for the cost of providing books and manuscripts to the Tenure and Promotion Committee and the reviewers. Departments are responsible for the cost of providing books and unpublished book manuscripts to the department members. \*I have informed candidates that they should provide the

department with electronic versions of books or manuscripts if they are available; these should be submitted with the other electronic materials to my office. These electronic copies may not replace hard copies.

The October submission of materials should include the acceptance letter or contract for any unpublished manuscripts that are under contract. (The candidate should provide these to the department). Please note that contracts and acceptance letters are **not** sent to the reviewers. **The chair is asked to discuss with the candidate the date by which the department needs the scholarship and creative work, as well as the contracts.** No scholarly work may be added to the tenure dossier after June 28.

### Dossier Documents Related to Scholarly and Creative Work

- \*The candidate creates the master list of scholarly and creative work (see below and in the candidate's letter).
- \*The candidate provides the scholarship in an electronic form to the department, and the ADC orders books and prints unpublished manuscripts.
- The department's characterization of journals, presses, and other modes of publication or venues in which the candidate's work is performed or exhibited.

#### 6. \*Master List of Scholarship

The candidate is responsible for submitting a master list of all of the scholarly and creative work included in the dossier, along with the scholarly and creative work itself, to the department chair. Once submitted, this document cannot change; if the publication status of one or more works changes, however, an updated CV may be included in the candidate's final dossier. See my letter to the candidate for more details.

#### 7. \*The Candidate's Letter to the Tenure and Promotion Committee (required), if Provided to the Department

The candidate is required to write a letter to the Tenure and Promotion Committee and may choose whether or not to share the document with the department. If the letter is shared, it must be included in the tenure dossier. The chair will discuss with the candidate the deadline by which the letter must be submitted to the department to ensure that there is enough time to consider it fully. If the letter is not shared with the department, the candidate must submit it directly to the provost's office by **October 1, 2024**. Candidates are encouraged to seek feedback on draft letters from mentors and former members of the Committee of Six or Tenure and Promotion Committee. The provost's office will organize a session during which former Committee of Six or Tenure and Promotion Committee members will discuss the goals of the letter with candidates.

#### 8. The Departmental Letter of Recommendation

The departmental letter of recommendation contains a judgment about the candidate's teaching effectiveness, scholarship and/or creative work and growth, and contributions to the general life of the college community and to the profession. This letter should make clear the bases of the department's judgment about the areas noted above, including how the department evaluated and weighed the accumulated evidence. The letter is most useful when it is balanced and engages fully with questions and concerns that emerge from evaluations by external reviewers and students.

The departmental evaluation of scholarly or creative growth addresses the materials that the candidate includes in the tenure dossier, which may be any or all of the following: published work, publicly presented work, projects currently under way, and plans for future projects. See the [Faculty Handbook III. E., 4., a. and \(1\)](#). It would be helpful to the committee if the department provides a succinct explanation of how the candidate's discipline conceptualizes "forthcoming" (e.g., does this mean that work is under contract, though it might not be complete? Or does this term mean work is actually complete and in press?) and any other terms that might vary by field. If the work is co-authored, the candidate's contributions should be described.

In regard to the departmental evaluation of the candidate's teaching, I remind you of the following faculty vote: "The departmental evaluation of teaching effectiveness should draw upon a representative range of teaching activities in addition to evidence described in [6] below [student letters]. Evaluation should derive from, but need not be limited to, conversations about courses with some members of the department; attendance by some members of the department at a number of class meetings at mutually agreed upon times; and assessment, by the candidate with at least one senior member of the department, of the accomplishments of at least one of the candidate's courses at the end of a semester. Evaluations of teaching effectiveness should also be informed by the discussions of the tenured members of the department, the substance of which is conveyed during annual conversations." Note that "some members" refers to more than one but not necessarily all tenured members of your department. "A representative range" of teaching activities refers to more than one type of class, a seminar and a lecture class, for example. In keeping [with the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Academic Structures During COVID-19](#), please address if and how the pandemic had an impact on the candidate's research and teaching.

Please note the requirements regarding evaluations by honors students and research students, which are described in the attached document about the solicitation process, in relation to the departmental recommendation.

#### Some Details about the Departmental Recommendation

- The departmental letter must include the number of positive and negative votes and abstentions and must be signed. The chair may sign on the tenured members' behalf.
- The substance of any reservations expressed in tenured members' individual letters must be reflected in the department's letter of recommendation.
- If quotations from student evaluations and/or retrospective letters are included in the departmental recommendation, it may be helpful for the department not to refer to students by name, as these names will later need to be redacted in the version of the departmental recommendation that is provided to the candidate.

You must provide the candidate with a copy of the department's letter of recommendation that has been edited to protect confidentiality, and review that letter with the candidate. Written confirmation from the chair and the candidate that this review has taken place must be included along with the candidate's other materials, in the dossier submitted by noon on **October 1, 2024** (note this deadline when crafting the letter and scheduling your meeting with the candidate).

**9. A Separately Submitted, Confidential Letter from Each Tenured Member of the Department (This Letter is Submitted by the Faculty Member Directly to the Provost's Office.)**

Each tenured member of the department, including those on leave, must send to the provost's office directly (**by October 1, at noon**), in confidence, a letter assessing the candidate's qualifications. A reminder that the substance of any reservations expressed in these letters must be reflected in the departmental recommendation. It is most useful to the Tenure and Promotion Committee when faculty describe the arguments that they have used to reach their recommendation, addressing both scholarly and/or creative work and teaching effectiveness. It is acceptable, however, for faculty to say simply that having helped draft the department recommendation, they agree fully with that recommendation. See [Faculty Handbook III., E., 4.,\(2\)](#).

**10. Optional Letters from Tenure-Track Members of the Department**

The chair will inform departmental tenure-track faculty that they may submit a confidential letter assessing the candidate's qualifications, but that doing so is optional and not expected. Such letters must be sent directly to the provost's office. (Lecturers and visiting faculty may be asked to write colleague letters, but may not write confidential letters.)

**11. Letters from Colleagues in Other Departments, Including Those Who Have Served on Committees or Taught with the Candidate, as well as Departmental Lecturers, Visiting Faculty and Visiting Lecturers. Five-College Colleagues Can Be Solicited (if appropriate). The Letters are known informally as "Colleague Letters."**

Whether colleague letters offer evidence chiefly on the candidate's contribution to the general life of the college and Five-College community, teaching effectiveness, or scholarly promise, or some combination thereof, will depend on the relationship of the writer to the candidate (as a fellow committee member, teaching collaborator, fellow member of a Five-College seminar, etc.). It is important that the department, in its solicitation of colleague letters, as well as in its compilation of the dossier, make every effort to ensure an unbiased collection of data. The process is aided when the department's recommendation reflects, insofar as possible, the range of voices and views of individual department members. Polyphony is generally preferable to a forced homogeneity, however well intentioned.

**Some Details about Colleague Letters**

- This category includes departmental lecturers and visiting faculty and colleagues from other departments, including staff members, if desired.
- All letter-writers must have received a letter from the department inviting their feedback on the case, and a sample of this letter must be included in the dossier.
- A list of those who have provided letters must be submitted as part of the dossier.
- Candidates should be asked for a list of potential letter-writers; others may also be solicited.
- Unsolicited letters cannot be considered or included in the dossier.

**12. Evidence Used to Evaluate Teaching Effectiveness**

Included in the dossier is all written evidence used to evaluate teaching effectiveness, including the semester-end evaluations solicited from students in all courses, the retrospective letters solicited at the time of reappointment review, and the retrospective letters solicited at the time of tenure review from all current and former students taught since the time of reappointment, Both retrospective letters and end-of-semester evaluations must be submitted.



The Tenure and Promotion Committee requests that departments demonstrate what they have done to increase the overall return of student retrospective letters. **One copy of each iteration** of the department's solicitation of retrospective letters, both at the time of reappointment and tenure, must be included in the dossier. The solicitation written to students should not include any leading or potentially biased questions. They should communicate the importance of the task at hand and should give students sufficient instruction as to the nature of response desired. Persons who are asked to write an assessment should be informed that their letter will be treated as confidential. It is important that retrospective letters indicate which course(s) students are evaluating and in which year(s) they were taken. Student retrospective letters and end-of-semester evaluations sent via email will be acceptable provided the student's name is clearly shown. All other semester-end evaluations and letters from students must bear the students' signatures. Chairs and ADCs will receive instructions regarding procedures for letters and evaluations sent by email, as well as guidelines for organizing letters and evaluations in the candidate's dossier. Detailed letters from honors and special topics students have proven to be particularly helpful. Unsolicited letters from students cannot be accepted.

A reminder about courses taught in the spring 2020 semester: for that semester, tenure-track faculty were given the option of having teaching evaluations solicited from the students whom they taught. If candidates chose to have evaluations solicited, the department should ask them to decide this spring whether they want these evaluations included in their tenure dossiers. Please discuss this matter with your candidate. Candidates will not be judged on whether or not they choose to include spring 2020 evaluations in their dossiers. If evaluations are included in the dossier, students whom the candidate taught in spring 2020 must be asked to write a retrospective letter about their experience. If the student took a course with the faculty member during another semester, that student will be asked to write a retrospective letter about that course.

*I want to draw your attention once again to changes regarding honors students and research students that were approved by the faculty in May 2022. For a full description, [see the Faculty Handbook \(III., E., 4., \(5\)\)](#). Please see the attached document for details.*

It is helpful to the Tenure and Promotion Committee in reading the student evaluations in a broader context to have in the department letter a paragraph or two based on collegial observation of teaching, formal and informal pedagogical collaboration, and annual conversations. If, during annual conversations or at the time of reappointment, the department shared any concerns with the candidate about teaching and/or scholarly progress, please comment on how the candidate responded. For example, describe whether new approaches were adopted and/or adjustments were made. For co-taught courses, describe the balance of responsibilities of the candidate and the co-teacher(s), including, when relevant, the candidate's and co-teacher's (s') relative contributions to the genesis of the course.

#### Documents Related to the Evaluation of Teaching

- The provost's office will provide the ADC with the materials relating to the evaluation of teaching during the pre-reappointment period, which must be reviewed by the department and included in the dossier. The ADC will **not** need to make any changes to these materials.
- The ADC will submit the teaching materials for the post-reappointment period as part of the dossier, in the same format as the pre-reappointment materials. The following must be provided:

Semester-end evaluations from all students in all courses, including honors (prior to the adoption



of the new procedures for honors students) and special topics courses, organized by semester in chronological order (spring semester in which the candidate stood for reappointment first up to spring semester prior to fall in which candidate stands for tenure). If semester-end evaluations were typed because there were handwritten evaluations, please submit both the typed and handwritten documents to the provost's office.

Class lists of students solicited with appropriate end-of-semester evaluations received from students behind each list. The ADC indicates with a check mark those students who provided evaluations. If a class has more than one section, a separate class list is provided, with evaluations behind it, for each section.

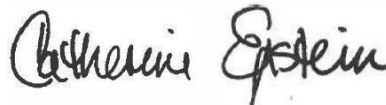
The ADC's letter certifying email evaluations (my office will provide a sample of this document).

Retrospective letters solicited at the time of tenure review from all current and former students taught since the time of reappointment, a sample of all iterations of letters of solicitation, and class lists of students solicited with appropriate letters received from students behind each list, with those who wrote letters indicated with a check mark.

Please note: retrospective letters **must** be solicited from students in courses from the semester immediately preceding the semester in which the candidate is considered for tenure. Students who took classes with the candidate up until the time of reappointment are not re-solicited for retrospective letters. Unsolicited letters from students must not be included in the dossier.

Given the importance of the decision both for the individual and for the college, the preparation of a tenure case must be made with equal care whether the recommendation is positive or negative. I ask that you get in touch with me as soon as possible should any of these procedures present difficulties of any kind. The candidate will receive a copy of this letter. Many thanks for undertaking a process that is so central to all that we do at Amherst.

All best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Epstein". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Catherine Epstein  
Provost and Dean of the Faculty  
Henry Steele Commager Professor of History

cc: Candidate  
Next year's chair  
ADC  
Janet Tobin

CE/pk