

May 2015

Professor NAME, Chair  
Department of NAME

Dear NAME,

I write to encourage your department to begin to prepare now for the recommendation it must make by February 12, 2016, on the reappointment of (CANDIDATE'S NAME). Reappointment guidelines can be found in the *Faculty Handbook*, which are [online](#). I remind you that only tenured members of the department(s) participate in departmental reappointment deliberations. Please note that we require electronic copies (in OCR format) of all of the materials specified below. The dean's office will meet with academic department coordinators to discuss specifics surrounding electronic submission.

In preparation for its recommendation concerning reappointment, the department will gather evidence and conduct a full and rigorous review of the candidate's teaching effectiveness, scholarly or creative growth, and other contributions to the life of the college. The results of the department's review are conveyed to the Committee of Six in the form of a detailed and considered letter, which should be seen by all tenured members of the department before it is sent to the Committee of Six. Although individual letters from tenured members of the department are not required in this process, it is imperative that all views, especially dissenting views, be represented in the letter. We ask that four hard copies and an electronic copy of this letter be submitted as part of the reappointment dossier to the Office of the Dean of the Faculty by February 12, 2016. Those tenured members of the department on leave should, under ordinary circumstances, be offered the opportunity to participate in this review process. The departmental letter may be signed by the chair on behalf of the tenured members of the department. It has been the practice for many years that, at the time of the tenure review, the committee of six has access to the department's letter of recommendation from the time of reappointment.

The departmental letter will be informed by a letter submitted by the candidate for reappointment to his or her department by December 1, 2015. In this letter, candidates are asked to describe their teaching experience at the College, the present state of their scholarship or creative work and their aims and plans for the future, and their engagement in college life. That letter or a modified version addressing non-specialist readers, will be included in the reappointment dossier and forwarded to the Committee of Six. The candidate's letter(s) will not become part of the tenure dossier. The letter/s will serve as the basis for a conversation between the candidate and tenured members of the department/s before the department meets to finalize the reappointment recommendation. Please submit to the Office of the Dean of the Faculty as part of the dossier four paper copies, as well as an electronic version, of the candidate's letter. To reiterate, the candidate may choose to submit the same letter that he or she submitted to the department or a modified version of it that addresses non-specialist readers.

Since scholarship is not reviewed by outside experts at the time of reappointment, it is essential that the promise and progress of the candidate's scholarship or creative work be evaluated fully by senior colleagues. The Committee of Six does not undertake an independent review of candidates' scholarship or creative work at the time of reappointment, so copies of scholarship or evidence of creative work should not be included in the reappointment dossier. That said, the departmental evaluation of scholarly or creative growth takes on great importance in guiding the Committee of Six's review of the reappointment case and provision of feedback to the candidate. The departmental evaluation should take into account any or all of the following: published work, publicly presented work, projects currently under way, and plans for future projects.

Also included in the reappointment dossier is the candidate's up-to-date curriculum vitae. At times, it may be difficult for the Committee of Six, as non-experts, to interpret a candidate's CV. The document should therefore be as complete and informative as possible. It must include a list of all courses taught at Amherst College by year and in chronological order. It must also include a list of special topics courses and senior honors theses supervised. In addition, full citations must be made for all scholarly and creative work that the candidate wishes to be considered. References to published and forthcoming work must include page numbers. The following information is also requested and may be included on the CV or as an addendum: notations about whether work was peer-reviewed or invited should be indicated, as should the candidate's contributions to, and role in, collaborative work; conference presentations and invited seminars should be included when appropriate; and the candidate should explain the status of unpublished work that is included on the CV (e.g., forthcoming, in revision prior to resubmission, or published online and scheduled for print publication, etc.). The candidate may also provide a description of his or her other contributions to the life of the college. The department should review the candidate's CV for conformity with these requirements. Please submit to the Office of the Dean of the Faculty as part of the dossier four paper copies, as well as an electronic version, of the candidate's CV.

I turn now to the procedures governing student evaluations of teaching. The department should abide by all of the guidelines outlined below.

All student evaluations of teaching collected for purposes of reappointment are to be submitted to the Committee of Six as part of the reappointment dossier. The faculty has voted that evaluations of teaching are to be requested of all students from every course, including every honors and special topics course, taught by an untenured faculty member. These evaluations are "signed" (and are normally solicited in essay format in all classes in the final week of each semester on a form to be devised by the instructor in collaboration with the department). After the submission of grades they are made available to the instructor without the names of the respondents. In addition, all departments are required to have solicited from all students in the instructor's courses confidential letters of evaluation at the time of reappointment review. Please include in the dossier copies of the departmental letters soliciting student evaluations. Academic department coordinators have received specific instructions regarding procedures for letters, and evaluations sent by email. All other end-of-semester evaluations and letters from students must bear the students' signatures. Please submit four hard copies of the end-of-semester teaching evaluations and the retrospective letters. If there are handwritten end-of-semester evaluations,

they must be typed. The handwritten originals should be submitted along with the typed copies, and we ask that end-of-semester evaluations and retrospective letters also be submitted electronically.

I remind you that the departmental evaluation of teaching effectiveness at the time of reappointment should draw upon a representative range of teaching activities in addition to student evaluations. 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. Note that "some members" refers to more than one but not necessarily all tenured members of the candidate's department. 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. It is often helpful to the Committee of Six 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 with the candidate about teaching. If, during annual conversations, the department shared any concerns with the candidate about teaching and/or scholarly progress, please comment on how the candidate responded to this feedback. Please describe, for example, new approaches and/or adjustments that he or she may have implemented. In the case of co-taught courses, please describe the balance of responsibilities of the candidate and his or her co-teacher(s), including, when relevant, the candidate's and co-teacher's (s') relative contributions to the genesis of the course.

Reappointment is a time for serious reassessment of teaching and scholarship in preparation for the tenure decision. Whether the recommendation is positive or negative, this is an occasion for candid advice and review. It falls to you, as chair of the department, to discuss with a candidate for reappointment the frank assessment of both strengths and weaknesses of his or her teaching, as evidenced by student retrospective letters and end-of-semester evaluations, and scholarship, as judged by senior colleagues. You should take the opportunity to discuss with the candidate departmental expectations between the time of reappointment and tenure review. The faculty has voted that the chair of the department will provide the candidate with the text of the department's letter, which has been edited to protect confidentiality, and will discuss that letter with the candidate. I ask you to send to the dean of the faculty written confirmation that this discussion has taken place when you forward the departmental recommendation (four hard copies and an electronic copy). If a candidate wishes to comment on the departmental recommendation, he or she may send written commentary, in confidence, to the Committee of Six within two weeks of receiving that recommendation.

Finally, let me remind you of the following statement in the *Faculty Handbook* on the meaning of reappointment:

The decision to reappoint is important, but should not be confused with the decision on tenure. A decision to reappoint is an expression of satisfaction with past performance and of confidence in the faculty member's potential for continuing development. At the time of the department's recommendation concerning reappointment, the chair of the department will discuss the

department's recommendation (whether positive or negative) with the particular faculty member; if the decision is made to reappoint for a second term, the chair will discuss considerations which may enter into a subsequent tenure decision.

Following the reappointment decision, a letter about reappointment will be sent by the president to the individual under review, with a copy to the department chair, indicating the recommendation that the president intends to make to the Board of Trustees. Formal notification of reappointment will follow confirmation by the Board of Trustees. The dean will invite each candidate who is reappointed to meet with her soon after the reappointment process is completed to discuss the Committee of Six's reading of the candidate's case. The dean will also discuss the Committee's view with the department chair.

Sincerely,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty  
Professor of History

Enclosures

cc: Candidate  
ACD