

CU Anschutz Faculty Tenure and Promotion Task Force Recommendations

Executive Summary

The **Faculty Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Task Force**, and was given the following **charge**: “Assess current promotion processes and develop recommendations and best practices regarding campus promotion criteria and processes, with attention to DEI, innovation, and community engagement.”

The task force, with representatives from each school, college, and the library (see list at the end of this document), met over a six-month period, from May to October 2023. It developed a set of recommendations that speak to the specific charge as well as broader recommendations to improve P&T processes and provide more support for faculty. The final report includes 27 specific recommendations, categorized according to three primary objectives:

- A. Prioritize P&T processes that promote inclusive excellence;
- B. Recognize the broad range of faculty contributions and appropriately value DEI work, community engagement, and innovation & entrepreneurship; and
- C. Address gaps in faculty support services to facilitate career progression.

The specific recommendations in each of these areas are briefly presented below. More context, including information about how they might be operationalized, is provided in the full report.

A. Prioritize P&T processes that promote inclusive excellence

Task force recommendations seek to dismantle structural barriers that impede the success of underrepresented faculty to create a fair and impartial tenure and promotion process for all faculty. Recommendations are presented for schools, college, and library faculty to consider implementing. These recommendations focus on review of P&T processes, expanding matrices, and providing training. The task force also recommends a review of data collection practices at the campus level with the aim of better understanding what is working and not working in the P&T process (and for whom).

B. Recognize the broad range of faculty contributions and appropriately value DEI work, community engagement, and innovation & entrepreneurship

The task force divided into three groups to issue recommendations to better recognize DEI work, community engagement, and innovation and entrepreneurship. Within these categories, groups also considered how leadership and service are recognized and valued. Each group identified the need to expand promotion matrices to make it easier for faculty and reviewers to understand, evaluate, and value DEI work, community engagement, and innovation and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, each group stressed the importance of considering the impact of faculty activities and advocated for the creation of guidelines or tools to assist faculty in demonstrating impact.

C. Address gaps in faculty support services to facilitate career progression.

The task force advocates for stronger faculty support services. Currently, faculty development and support to faculty in navigating the tenure and promotion process are provided solely at the school/college level. The task force envisions a more collaborative approach to supporting faculty where the schools, college, and library provide support tailored to the needs of their faculty, but broader support functions are provided at the campus-level. Recommendations in this section focus on areas for campus level involvement.

Next Steps

While the task force issued a number of specific recommendations, it did not explore in-depth how these recommendations should be evaluated and implemented, who should be responsible for implementation, or the resources needed. The next step is to develop an implementation plan.

As noted in the full report, some recommendations require adoption at the school or college level, while others require adoption at the campus level. In many cases, implementation will require coordination across levels. Advancing these recommendations from idea to reality will require ongoing planning and decision-making involving both faculty and administrators. *It should be emphasized that the faculty of the schools, college, and library are responsible for many aspects of the P&T process, including developing and approving evaluation criteria.*

Some recommendations may be more easily adopted because they are largely within the control of school and college faculty or they do not require additional resources. Other recommendations will require new resources to implement. The following grouping is based on potential resource implications and may facilitate early discussions by an implementation team.

- Low Resource Need
 - Expand P&T matrices (II.A.2; II.B.1.2, II.B.2.2, II.B.3.3)
 - Develop better guidance for external reviewers (II.A.3)
 - Broaden the pool of external reviewers (II.A.4)
 - Exclude annual evaluations from the P&T process (II.A.8)
 - Recognize faculty overloads (II.A.9)
 - Assist faculty members in demonstrating impact (II.B.1.3)
 - Recognize the time it takes to see outcomes from DEI work, community engagement, and innovation and entrepreneurship (II.B.1.4, II.B.2.5, II.B.3.5)
 - Ensure P&T documents value and reward leadership and impact related to DEI, community engagement, and innovation & entrepreneurship (II.B.1.3, II.B.2.3, II.B.3.2)
 - Adopt a broad definition of scholarship (II.B.1.5)
 - Develop a campus level statement in support for valuing DEI, community engagement, and innovation & entrepreneurship in the P&T process (II.B.1.1, II.B.2.1, II.B.3.1)
 - Ensure P&T documents give appropriate weight to collaborative work and team science (II.B.2.3, II.B.3.4)
- Medium Resource Need
 - Form policy review teams (II.A.1)
 - Add a P&T consultant to P&T committees (II.A.5)
 - Provide implicit training to those involved in the P&T process (II.A.6)
 - Provide training to P&T committees on evaluating DEI, community engagement, and innovation & entrepreneurship (II.A.7)
 - Implement changes to student evaluations of teaching (II.A.10)
 - Enhance faculty support offered at the school/college level (III.C.2)
- High Resource Need
 - Create a central entity to offer faculty development (III.C.1)
 - Provide funding and other resources to support DEI, community engagement and innovation & entrepreneurship (II.B.1.6, II.B.2.4, II.B.3.6, II.B.3.7)

Issues for Further Consideration

The task force discussed several issues that affect faculty career progression that are not addressed in the final set of recommendations. These issues require further study before specific recommendations can be developed and the task force strongly recommends this work be pursued.

- **Faculty recruitment, hiring, and retention practices.** The task force was charged with evaluating tenure and promotion processes, but the relatively small number of underrepresented faculty at the university suggests a need to examine recruitment, hiring, and retention practices. This should include a review of practices for conducting an external, national search versus an internal search. Concerns were expressed that current non-tenure-track faculty are disadvantaged when applying for national searches for tenure-track or tenure-eligible positions.

- **Faculty tracks.** The task force suggests further consideration of the equity implications of assigning faculty to an instructional, research, or clinical position versus a tenure-track or tenure-eligible position.
- **P&T committee composition.** Consider how faculty at all stages of their careers can be involved in the P&T review process. Current processes prevent junior faculty from learning from others' experience and participating in decision-making. This leads to distrust of the process and also limits the introduction of new perspectives. The net effect becomes perpetuation of current culture and inhibition of change. ("Only members of the club decide who gets in the club.")
- **External evaluation.** Current practice requires external letters for all faculty members seeking promotion to associate and full professor. This should be re-evaluated to determine whether letters add value, especially for clinicians and teachers, and those who are deeply engaged in DEI, service, and community engagement.
- **Tenure and promotion standards.** The task force suggests reconsidering requirements for faculty to demonstrate a national or international reputation.
- **Promotion and/or tenure clock.** The task force suggests further work to assess the advantages and disadvantages of a tenure and promotion clock versus more flexible options.
- **Student evaluations of teaching.** The task force suggests further discussion on the use of student evaluations of teaching in the faculty evaluation process. Task force members had strong opinions about both the pros and cons of including student evaluations of teaching, but no consensus was reached. If evaluations are to be used, redesigning the evaluation instruments could help to reduce inherent bias.
- **Annual performance evaluations.** The task force found variability across the schools and college as to how annual performance evaluations are handled during P&T review. Faculty are concerned about this topic because there is variability across the campus regarding how faculty are annually assessed.
- **Faculty governance.** The task force suggests a review of faculty governance processes with the aim of providing more equitable decision-making authority among all faculty.
- **Faculty dossiers.** The task force suggests a review of dossier components with the goal of reducing the burden on faculty. What documents are currently required, but might not be needed?

Task Force Participants

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School and College Representatives:

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