



TO: Deans of academic colleges
FROM: Provost Patrick Wolfe
RE: Senior faculty appointment process (February 6, 2023)

Senior faculty appointment process

The consideration of a tenured appointment for senior faculty being recruited from elsewhere is of the utmost gravity to Purdue and our academic mission. Recognizing that there has been considerable variation to date in processes used, we will now follow this uniform guidance:

1. Our overarching goal is to be recognized as a top-five U.S. public research university. Immediate tenure cases have the same expectations for scholarly impact and quality, and a demonstrated track record reflecting these expectations, as do internal promotions to the same level.
2. In addition to the letters collected as part of the hiring process, the primary committee in the hiring department must independently seek its own external letters of assessment, as in our internal promotion process. The number of letters obtained by the primary committee should exceed the number supplied by the candidate, for a total of at least 8.
3. Letters of assessment must be sought objectively without fear or favor from demonstrably leading scholars at leading institutions—AAU universities, as per our [annual guidance](#)—with a recommendation from at least one leading university internationally for full professor candidates. Letter-writers must be explicitly asked “to comment on the suitability of the candidate for a tenured appointment at an institution whose goal is to be recognized as a top five U.S. public research university.”
4. After at least 8 letters have been received, the primary committee should review the C.v., letters, and summary provided by any search or evaluation committee, and decide whether to recommend a tenured appointment. If the recommendation is positive, then the head of the department in which tenure would be held must, as chair of the primary committee, decide whether the quality of the proposed hire is sufficient to endorse the primary committee’s recommendation.
5. After approval by both the primary committee and the head, a case must next be considered by the college area committee, whose duty is to assess the overall benefit of the hire to the college, again without fear or favor. If the recommendation is positive, then the dean, as chair of the area committee, must decide whether the quality of the proposed hire is sufficient for them to endorse the college’s area committee recommendation.
6. If duly endorsed, the case passes to the Provost for consideration.
7. As always, offers can be framed, approved, and signed as usual, but with the offer being explicitly contingent upon a successful tenure review.
8. The immediate tenure process will be managed to proceed as rapidly as due consideration allows. The primary committee is recommended to solicit letters of assessment from a wide choice of external referees as early as possible in the review and recruitment of the candidate.