G. The College Deliberations

What the colleges say about the ad hoc committee.
What the colleges say about the Dean’s letter.
Note: The School of ILR and the Law School have special college level procedures because those units do not have departments.

G1. What is an ad hoc committee?

The Ad Hoc Committee is a small committee appointed by the Dean to assist in the evaluation of the dossier that has been forwarded from the Department.

G2. What are the rules associated with the size and make-up of the ad hoc committee?

From the Faculty Handbook: The ad hoc committee must consist of no fewer than three members, either from inside or outside the university. When feasible, the inclusion of external scholars is recommended. Members of the department from which the recommendation for tenure originated are not eligible to serve. If possible, at least one of the members of the committee should be selected from outside the college of the candidate.

G3. Is the Dean obliged to form an ad hoc committee?

From the Faculty Handbook: After the department’s initial review and any reconsideration are completed, the decision is reviewed at the college level by the dean. If the department’s recommendation is positive, the dean must appoint an ad hoc committee of faculty members outside the department to study the evidence and advise him or her in reaching a decision. Even if the department’s recommendation is negative, the candidate may still request that the dean appoint the ad hoc committee.

G4. How might the Dean charge the Ad Hoc Committee?

Modified from CALS:
The charge to the committee should be broadly outlined by the dean. In making their decision, the members of the committee should take into account any criteria for promotion promulgated by the college or provided to the candidate in the original letter of appointment. In accordance with University policy, no consideration or discussion can be given to sex, marital status, race, ethnic background, religion, or age (although the length of time since the degree is a legitimate factor in considering the amount of work that has been accomplished.)

In its evaluation the committee uses the material supplied by the department and the dean. The committee members evaluate the evidence and the candidate’s scholarly work to the degree they are qualified to do so. Expert opinion from scholars in the field outside Cornell may also be sought. The committee should focus on the excellence of the candidate’s scholarship, teaching, and service including the contributions to diversity and equity that are realized through these activities. An assessment of the candidates trajectory and likelihood of making future contributions is also important.
To eliminate any confusion about the basis for its decision, the committee should concern itself only with the qualification of the candidate, not with other factors such as department staffing patterns, tenure ratios, or the future of a particular sub-discipline. If advice on these matters is required, the dean should seek it by another procedure or by giving a separate charge to the committee, requiring a separate report.

**G5. Can the Ad Hoc committee request additional information?**

If it believes that adequate information has not been supplied, it may request that the dean obtain additional information from internal or external sources.

**G6. What happens if the Dean’s decision is positive?**

The Dean forwards the dossier to the Office of Provost that includes (a) the report of the Ad Hoc Committee and (b) a cover letter by the dean that substantiates the positive decision.

**G7. What happens if the Dean’s decision is negative?**

From the Faculty Handbook section on appealing a negative tenure decision. If a dean reaches a preliminary decision to deny tenure to a non-tenured faculty member whose promotion to tenure has been recommended by his or her department, the dean within three weeks of that decision furnishes the candidate and the department with a preliminary written statement of the reasons for that decision and the nature of the evidence within the limits set by the need to preserve confidentiality.

For a two-week period following receipt of the dean’s statement, the candidate and/or department has the opportunity to respond to the dean.

If, following this response, the dean is not persuaded to change the decision to deny tenure, the dean forwards the file, together with an explanation for the decision, to the provost.