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# Santa Rosa Junior College Guide to the Tenure Review Process for Probationary Faculty Members Spring 2015

- Introduction (with DTREC information)
- Tenure Review Process Overview
- Resources
- Questions and Answers

*(Please forward any questions, comments or suggestions for improvement to this handbook to Sean Martin at 527-4607 or [smartin@santarosa.edu](mailto:smartin@santarosa.edu) or Abe Farkas at 524-1508 or [afarkas@santarosa.edu](mailto:afarkas@santarosa.edu).)*

## INTRODUCTION:

The AFA and the District Tenure Review and Evaluations Committee (DTREC) hope this handout will serve as a helpful aid to all persons participating in the tenure review process in our District. While it is not a legal document, it does attempt to accurately portray guidelines set forth in the formal contract between the AFA and the District. That said we encourage all participants in the tenure review process to read Article 30 of the Contract carefully. In the case that anything in this document inadvertently contradicts the language in the Contract, the Contract takes precedent. This handout is proposed as a “work in progress.” AFA and the members of DTREC hope you'll share your comments with us as you read or use these pages so we may develop more useful comments in coming years. Contact Sean Martin at 527-4607 or [smartin@santarosa.edu](mailto:smartin@santarosa.edu) with your comments and suggestions.

The tenure review process can be seen in at least two ways. On one hand, the process assesses and passes judgment on an individual's professionalism, training, and suitability for a long-term academic post. From another point of view, the tenure review process is also an activity wherein an institution and its faculty can mentor and bring forth the very best in professional achievement among its newest faculty.

Some faculty members are new to the roles required of the tenure review process and even senior faculty and administrators may need to confront and overcome new problems in the process as they arise. DTREC serves as a resource for new faculty and their Tenure Review teams as they address questions regarding policy and procedures related to the Tenure Review process. DTREC offers you this handout with questions, answers, and resources in an attempt to outline clear performance standards and to provide for the resolution of problems before they become serious. In addition, the District Staff Development Coordinating Committee may offer a mentoring program for probationary faculty. Your comments and participation in this aspect of staff development work will be welcomed. Abe Farkas, dean of Curriculum and Educational Support Services (524-1508 or [afarkas@santarosa.edu](mailto:afarkas@santarosa.edu)), is the contact person for those comments.

For now, we hope you find this handout useful and we look forward to your suggestions and contributions for future editions.

## DISTRICT TENURE REVIEW AND EVALUATIONS COMMITTEE (DTREC) 2014-15

**(Please contact anyone on this committee if you have questions regarding the process.)**

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Abe Farkas Administrative Co-Chair ( <i>Dean, Curriculum and Educational Support Services</i> )	524-1508
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NOTE: DTREC is a unique committee, since it is specified by the Contract as the body responsible for addressing interpretive questions regarding policy and procedures for faculty evaluations. A basic function of the committee is to help resolve queries on matters not clearly explained or not covered in Articles 14 and 30 of the Contract. The faculty union (AFA), the faculty Academic Senate, and the District management all have a stake in the procedures to be used for tenure review and evaluations. The California Education Code says these processes/procedures are negotiable items requiring consultation with the Senate. All three parties agreed to use DTREC as the vehicle to ensure representation by each affected group, and the work of the committee constitutes AFA consultation with the Senate. DTREC membership reflects the shared interests of the stakeholders. It is comprised of two representatives appointed by AFA; two representatives appointed by the Senate; and three representatives from the District administration. DTREC works out procedures and interprets Contract language at the committee level and forwards its recommendations to the VPAA/AS for final action. In the event the VPAA/AS agrees with a DTREC recommendation, that recommendation constitutes an official interpretation of the Contract.

## **TENURE REVIEW PROCESS OVERVIEW:**

### **Four-Year Process:**

The tenure review process is determined according to the requirements of the California Education Code. The Ed. Code says the process may be up to four years in length. At SRJC we generally require the complete four-year time frame for tenure review. The four-year period of tenure review is divided into three separate contracts.

**The first contract (Contract I)** is for the first year of the process. At the end of that year, the District board of trustees, relying on the recommendations of the tenure review team, the superintendent/president, and the documentation of the tenure review process, makes a decision to offer the next contract, not re-employ, or grant tenure. According to the Ed. Code, no justification is required if a decision is reached to not re-employ at the end of the first contract. In most instances (with the exception of “late hires” and other special cases) evaluation materials pertinent to the final report for year one are gathered during the first fall semester of employment, as the District board makes its final determinations in March of the first year. In typical cases, any evaluative information gathered during the spring semester of the first year of employment is included in the final report for the second year of Tenure Review.

**The second contract (Contract II)** is for the second year of the process. At the end of that year the District board of trustees, relying on the recommendations of the tenure review team, the superintendent/president, and the documentation of the tenure review process, makes a decision to offer the next contract, not re-employ, or grant tenure.

**The third, and final tenure review contract (Contract III – Year 3 and Contract III – Year 4)** is for both of years three and four of the process. At the end of the final two years, the District board of trustees, relying on the recommendations of the tenure review team, the superintendent/president, and the documentation of the tenure review process, makes a decision to grant tenure or not re-employ.

## Tenure Review Team:

The tenure review team is composed of three individuals.

- The probationary faculty member's **department chair** is always a team member. Because department chairs serve a term of three years, it is possible that the department chair may change during the four-year period of tenure review.
- The **department's supervising administrator** (typically a dean) is also a member on the team by position. Again, if there are changes in office, the composition of the team will also change.
- The third member is a faculty member, referred to as the "**discipline peer.**" The discipline peer is selected by the department chair in consultation with the supervising administrator. Ideally, this is a member of the department with expertise in the discipline of the probationary faculty member. However, this is not always possible, and each department has a procedure for assigning discipline peers to the tenure review team.

## Documentation – the Tenure Review Portfolio:

One essential purpose of the tenure review process is to determine suitability for long-term employment as a faculty member. In order to make that decision, each probationary faculty member's job performance is evaluated. The official job description is found in the AFA/District Contract as Article 17. It outlines four categories of faculty duties: college service, professional development, other required duties, and student contact. The evaluation process during tenure review focuses on these four areas. DTREC has prepared official forms to be used to document the experiences of the tenure review team in evaluating job performance. In addition, the probationary faculty member submits a *Self-Assessment/Duties Assessment*, which is a very important document that helps to guide the process. You should have received copies of the following official forms:

- *Self-Assessment/Duties Assessment*
- *Team Member Report* (including *Observation w/Student Evaluations*)
- *Yearly Report* (may also include *Minority Yearly Report* as needed)
- *Vice President's Report* (as needed)
- *Superintendent/President's Recommendation*
- *Written Responses* (as submitted by probationary faculty member)
- *Board of Trustees' Decision*
- *Administrative Sign-off Sheet* (a record of who reviews the portfolio documents)

## Timeline:

The tenure review timeline is determined by the Board's action, which is required at the end of each contract. This decision must be made no later than March 15 of each year. Typically, tenure-related decisions are made at the March board of trustees meeting each year. Working backward from that date, the other deadlines were established. In addition, recommended due dates for completing various aspects of the process have been identified. A calendar that presents this information has been distributed to you.

You are responsible for:

- Submitting your *Self-Assessment/Duties Assessment* on time;
- Cooperating with the team to:
  - Establish observations dates: and
  - Meet with team members and the entire team as requested. Such meetings should be arranged in consultation with you, and should be reasonably responsive to your schedule and duties.

It is the responsibility of the team to meet the other deadlines.

## RESOURCES:

### **Support for Probationary Faculty – Mentoring:**

The Sonoma County Junior College District is a large and historically rich academic community. Arriving here as a new probationary faculty member, you will be involved in an experience filled with hard work, new forms, deadlines, and geographical and scheduling challenges. What can we all do to help minimize frustration and maximize the ease with which a new colleague can take up their professional duties at SRJC?

Certainly we need to share written guidelines. Maps and campus forms are designed to help the new faculty member, but no amount of paperwork can replace the rich benefits of collegial support for newcomers. In addition to interactions with your team and other departmental colleagues, SRJC maintains a mentoring program and the Tenure Review process now entails New Faculty Trainings, including training in Basic Skills pedagogy offered through the Staff Development Program. These trainings are intended to complement the first two years of the Probationary Faculty member's College Service Plan that is developed through consultation between the evaluatee and their evaluation team. You can find more information pertaining to College Service and new faculty trainings in Article 30 of the Contract at 30.03.C. Also, you can contact the directors of this program Ann Foster (phone: 522-2778, or email: [afoster@santarosa.edu](mailto:afoster@santarosa.edu)) or Lauren Servais (phone: 521-6938 or email: [lservais@santarosa.edu](mailto:lservais@santarosa.edu)) for information regarding this program.

### **The All Faculty Association (AFA):**

You may contact the AFA office (527-4731 or [afa@santarosa.edu](mailto:afa@santarosa.edu)) with general questions. Candy Shell or Carol Valencia, AFA Office Coordinators, will direct your query to the proper person. You may contact Karen Frindell Teuscher, AFA Conciliation/Grievance Officer (527-4377 or [kfrindell@santarosa.edu](mailto:kfrindell@santarosa.edu)) directly if you have questions regarding the proper implementation of the tenure review process. If you believe the Contract is not being followed, contact Karen immediately as some such issues are time sensitive.

### **AFA/District Contract:**

The AFA/District Contract is posted on-line at <http://www.santarosa.edu/afa/contract.shtml>. It is strongly advised that all faculty become familiar with the entire Contract. Of particular importance to probationary faculty members are Articles 17 and 30.

- **Article 17: Job Descriptions** defines faculty duties. This is where you will find descriptions of required and optional aspects of the four job performance areas: college service, professional development, other required duties, and student contact.
- **Article 30: Tenure Review** provides a written description of the entire tenure review process. Review this article to find out who does what and when.

## **District Tenure Review and Evaluations Committee (DTREC)**

This committee meets regularly to discuss tenure and evaluation issues. You may direct questions to any member of DTREC, if your team cannot answer them.

### **District: Vice President of Academic Affairs**

Among the many areas of responsibility assigned to the vice president of Academic Affairs (VPAA) are evaluations and tenure review. Representing the District on DTREC are Abe Farkas, dean of Curriculum & Educational Support Services, and Will Baty, interim dean of Learning Resources & Educational Technology. (The Vice President of Human Resources, Karen Furukawa, serves as a resource person to DTREC.) Any questions you have about the implementation of the process should be referred to Nikki Bronson, administrative assistant to the dean of Curriculum & Educational Support Service (521-4521 or [nbronson@santarosa.edu](mailto:nbronson@santarosa.edu)).

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:**

**QUESTION 1:** *What are the general features and/or goals of the tenure review process? What spirit or tone should be maintained?*

**ANSWER 1:** Among the most important features are:

1. SRJC seeks excellence in its faculty. Tenure is an earned status and an opportunity to demonstrate excellence.
2. The tenure review process should be fair, professional, and supportive of a new probationary colleague, allowing him or her to show his or her best academic and instructional talent.
3. Every probationary faculty member deserves an objective and confidential evaluation. If s/he has areas that need improvement or a less than ideal evaluation, s/he should be given written feedback and recommendations that will allow for any necessary improvement without unnecessary public discussion.
4. Team members must strive to work as a team and allow each other to comment, agree, and disagree in a professional environment. Confidentiality is owed to the probationary faculty member but can also serve as a long-term investment in department and campus relationships for all participants. By resisting casual conversations about the performance

of a probationary faculty member, or the opinions of others, a team can work through any problems at a professional level and avoid personalizing the process. During this process, career-long relationships will be formed and/or nurtured. Being clear, fair, confidential, and professional will be in every department's best interest.

**QUESTION 2: *Are the forms I have copies of the only ones for tenure review?***

**ANSWER 2: YES;** however, DTREC reviews these forms on a regular basis and sometimes makes changes. We do not anticipate any changes to forms this year.

**QUESTION 3: *What should be included in my Self-Assessment/Duties Assessment?***

**ANSWER 3: A *Self-Assessment/Duties Assessment* is required for each tenure review contract. The documentation to be included is outlined below:**

Contract I (*Year 1*):

- Required: An assessment of strengths and areas for improvement
- Optional: Faculty statement of educational philosophy
- Optional: Description of your previous teaching experience and how you plan to apply that experience to the courses you are teaching
- Optional: Outline of any goals you have for your teaching during this academic year

Contracts II (*Year 2*) and III (*Years 3 & 4*):

- Required: An assessment of strengths and areas for improvement
- Required: Responses to prior evaluation recommendations/suggestions, if any were made
- Required: A description of current college service, and professional service, and other required duties
- Optional: Faculty statement of educational philosophy
- Optional: Goals for professional development for the next evaluation cycle
- Optional: Comments regarding other aspects of student contact and related duties

**QUESTION 4: *What if there are problems in forming or maintaining a tenure review team?***

**ANSWER 4: This issue is covered in the Contract in Article 30.** The chair and supervising administrator are assigned according to their job positions and will continue to be the same for as long as each individual holds his/her title. If, during the course of the 4-year process, a new chair is elected and/or a new administrator is hired, the team will reflect these changes.

A regular faculty member in the same or related discipline within the department will serve as discipline peer. The peer is selected by the department following standard, objective departmental procedures for assigning faculty as discipline peers to the tenure review team. If, in the middle of the process, a team finds that a discipline peer is unable to serve as required (for example, due to illness, transfer, or sabbatical) a replacement for

the discipline peer will be appointed using the standard, objective departmental procedures.

**QUESTION 5: *What if a probationary faculty member or team member feels another team member lacks objectivity or bias is suspected?***

**ANSWER 5: It depends...** If the probationary faculty member raises the concern, assistance is available. All faculty concerns should be discussed first with the AFA Conciliation/ Grievance Officer who will assist in any necessary referrals to other “referral groups” such as:

1. District compliance officer for matters related to protected groups (e.g. race, gender, or age bias);
2. Academic Senate Ethics and Professional Relations Committee;
3. Supervising Administrator; or
4. DTREC.

If one of the referral groups listed above informs DTREC that a member lacks appropriate objectivity during the process, DTREC may recommend that the member be removed from the team and a replacement be found. These matters and discussions shall be conducted confidentially so that the team and the probationary faculty member can proceed with the process with as little disruption as possible.

**QUESTION 6: *What if a team member or the team itself fails to meet the due dates for submission of reports and documentation?***

**ANSWER 6: Both the Education Code and the AFA/District Contract are clear that the process may not be prolonged to accommodate overdue documentation. Meeting these report and documentation submittal deadlines, however, is NOT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.** All participants must read and understand their obligations, and meet all deadlines. In the event the team fails to file their *Yearly Report* on time, the right of the team to submit a report for that year is forfeited. The appropriate vice president shall utilize any documentation prepared by the team to date and shall forward a report and recommendation to the board in lieu of the team's *Yearly Report*.

If a recommended due date approaches and you have not heard from a team member, you may wish to respectfully inquire about the status of his/her portion of the process. Since everyone in the process has the same recommended due dates and ultimate deadline, sometimes it is simply a matter of scheduling.

**QUESTION 7: *What if a probationary faculty member fails to meet the due dates for submission of documentation?***



**ANSWER 7: Both the Education Code and the AFA/District Contract are clear that the process may not be prolonged to accommodate overdue documentation.** Your obligation is to meet the deadlines for your portion of the procedures. If you do, you will protect your interests. Failure to meet your deadlines may result in a less-than-satisfactory conclusion to the tenure review evaluation.

**QUESTION 8: *The tenure review process is meant to be a confidential activity. What if someone violates confidentiality?***

**ANSWER 8: Strictest confidence is required to protect the rights of the probationary faculty member as well as other participants.** Every probationary faculty member has the right to read and hear his or her evaluations in confidence and to work on suggested improvements without public exposure or involvement. The only individual who may “break” confidentiality is the probationary faculty member. Extraordinary circumstances should be present for this to occur and probationary faculty members are strongly advised to seek the counsel of the AFA Conciliation/Grievance Officer before doing so. Once the probationary faculty member has made public any aspect of the tenure review process, the District may also comment publicly. If you believe a team member has violated confidence, contact the AFA Conciliation/Grievance Officer to discuss the matter.

**QUESTION 9: *What is a Minority Yearly Report? What does it mean when one is filed?***

**ANSWER 9: When one of the three members of a tenure review team does not agree with the proposed content/conclusion of the team's *Yearly Report*, he/she may file a separate *Minority Yearly Report*.** The report filed by the two other members of the team will be known as the *Majority Yearly Report* and will determine the team recommendation. Majority/minority reports allow for participants to disagree in a professional manner and for the process to continue with differing points of view in place. The *Minority Yearly Report* is submitted on the same form as the *Yearly Report* and the same requirements of documentation are required. While a *Minority Yearly Report* may not be a common feature of most tenure review evaluations, it is an important component of professional communication and should be treated with all appropriate respect and consideration by others who review the portfolio.

In the extraordinary event that all three members of a tenure review team hold three separate points of view (no further contract, grant “early” tenure, or move to next year's contract), the three reports and all documentation will be forwarded to the appropriate vice president for a decision concerning the outcome of that year in the tenure review process and the contents of the *Yearly Report* for that year.

As is the case with other portfolio documents, probationary faculty members must read and sign any *Majority* and *Minority Yearly Reports* (acknowledging they have read the report, not necessarily that they agree with it). As in all assessments, probationary faculty

members are allowed to respond in writing to a report and to have their response placed in their portfolio along with the original portfolio documents.

**QUESTION 10:** *What if I have objections to information included in the evaluation reports in my Tenure Review portfolio? Can I respond to the reports produced by my evaluation team members?*

**ANSWER 10:** Though this is uncommon, sometimes a probationary faculty member believes it is important and appropriate to produce a written response to one or the other reports produced by the Tenure Review Team (whether *Team Member Report*, *Yearly Report*, or *Minority Report*). Should you choose to do so, this response will be included in your evaluation portfolio. There are time constraints for the submission of such a response, so it is important you are familiar with the rules and procedures for doing so. For more information about the procedure for filing a response, see Article 30 (30.06.A.9; 30.08.D.1; 30.08.E.8; 30.09; and 30.10).