

**REAPPOINTMENT  
GUIDELINES FOR  
COMMITTEE CHAIRS,  
DEPARTMENT CHAIRS,  
AND DIVISION HEADS**

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OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

**MEMO**

TO: Committee Members, Department Chairs, and Division Head

FROM: Steve Griffith, Senior Vice President  
and Academic Dean

RE: GUIDELINES

I have enclosed several documents that I hope you will find helpful as you conduct evaluations of non-tenured faculty. Please review them carefully and call me if you have questions.

As you know, we are working with a new Faculty Handbook and new policies and procedures for annual performance reviews, tenure reviews, and promotion reviews.

It is important for everyone involved to understand their own individual role and to be as consistent as possible as we implement the new procedures.

## **Reappointment Guidelines for Simpson College Department Chairs**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this document is to provide step-by-step guidelines to be used by department chairs for the purpose of reviewing non-tenured faculty for the purpose of reappointment. Please note that the procedure outlined has changed little from previous years. The department chair is to provide the institution with a recommendation for reappointment of faculty in years one, two, four, and five. See Section 2.2.0. of the SIMPSON COLLEGE FACULTY HANDBOOK PART III: PERSONNEL PROCEDURES.

The deadline for the letter of recommendation for reappointment is available on the dean's office website.

Please use this as a check list for the reappointment process.

1. Determine the deadline for the letter of reappointment and review Section 2.2.0 in the procedures.
2. Seek the opinions of all tenured members of the department about the performance of the candidate.
3. Create the letter summarizing the work of the candidate and the opinion of the department faculty. (Use the example at the end of this section.)
4. Share the letter with the candidate.
5. Send the final letter to the division head.
6. The division head will submit her or his letter with the department chair's letter to the academic dean. (Use the example at the end of this section.)
7. The academic dean will make the final recommendation to the president of the college, who will make the final decision.

## **SAMPLE REAPPOINTMENT LETTER**

October 20, 2007

Dr. Carol Sanders, Academic Dean  
CAMPUS

Dear Dr. Sanders,

This letter is to serve as the letter of recommendation concerning the reappointment of Dr. Bill Kassel for the 2008-2009 academic year.

Dr. Kassel is currently in his fifth year at Cambridge College. He has been reviewed annually since his appointment in 2003, most recently in June, 2007. His performance reviews have been performed using the procedures outlined in the Faculty Handbook. The first three reviews (2003-2004; 2004-2005; 2005-2006) were conducted by then music department chair Maggie Johnson. I have conducted the most recent two in my capacity as current music department chair. Each year, in preparation for his annual review and letter of reappointment, I have made it a practice to review Bill's file including student evaluations of teaching, observe his classes, review his self-evaluation and consult with departmental colleagues. Since becoming chair, I have also made it a point to discuss with Bill all of the materials that have been the source of his review and the annual letter of reappointment. His annual review letters and reappointment letters are available in his file in my office.

At this point in time, Bill's strengths in professional development, committee service and advising have been clearly demonstrated through his ongoing work in the music department. He regularly presents at professional conferences, has an active professional conducting career, and is well on his way to his second book. He has many advisees who regularly report that he is thoughtful and thorough. Bill is an active member of the Cambridge College community participating in his share of committees (Library Advisory and EPCC) and advising a fraternity. At the same time, his struggles with his teaching, particularly in his individual lessons with students have also been clearly documented.

Bill's regular classes (music theory, history of music, world music, etc.) are well organized and clearly presented. His student evaluations of teaching for these classes are about average (3.8/5.0) for Cambridge College. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the student evaluations of teaching for his individual lessons. Here he consistently is significantly below the mean (2.1) for his peers. A review of Bill's evaluations for the last four years shows that this is a problem that he has struggled with since his arrival at Cambridge. The file shows that multiple committees have noted the issue and suggested ways he might improve his teaching. In discussing this issue with Bill, I know that he is well aware of the problem and has taken some steps to mitigate his difficulty in communicating his expectations to students. He reports that he has occasionally met with individual colleagues, has started to work with a mentor from the Faculty Development Office, and recently attended Collaboration for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning Conference in November 2006. Unfortunately, his teaching evaluations remain significantly below the mean for other faculty. In that Cambridge

College is a place that prides itself on not only good teaching but excellent teaching, this is a significant concern to me and other members of the department.

After consulting with other tenured members of the music department, I recommend that Bill Kassel be reappointed for the 2007-2008, but that it be clear that he is not meeting the institution's expectations with regard to his individual lessons. I will be meeting with him at least twice each semester to discuss the issue with him and regularly visiting his classes. Bill has agreed to this regimen. It should also be noted that Bill's teaching will need to improve to meet the institution's expectations to be recommended for tenure, although doing so alone does not guarantee a positive tenure recommendation.

I am happy to provide more information should the committee feel it necessary.

Sincerely,

Susan Peterson, Chair  
Department of Music  
Cambridge College

CC: Dr. Bill Kassel

## **SAMPLE LETTER FOR DIVISION HEADS**

October 27, 2007

Dr. Carol Sanders, Academic Dean  
CAMPUS

Dear Dr. Sanders,

This letter is to serve as my recommendation concerning the reappointment of Dr. Bill Kassel for the 2008-2009 academic year. I concur with the Dr. Peterson's recommendation

In preparation for making this recommendation I have read the letter from Susan Peterson, Chair of the Music Department, visited Dr. Kassel's class, and reviewed his recent formative review files.

I find that the appropriate Faculty Handbook process has been followed and that Dr. Sanders's recommendation is consistent the material in his file, and my own belief of Dr. Kassel's work at Cambridge College.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas Johnson  
Humanities Division Head

**Note that the department chair does chair a committee for the formative review for faculty members in years one, two, four, and five. Please see Section 2.1.0. of the SIMPSON COLLEGE FACULTY HANDBOOK PART III: PERSONNEL PROCEDURES.**

## **Guidelines for Chairing a Review Committee for Faculty in Years 1, 2, 4, and 5**

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to provide step-by-step guidelines to be used by department chairs for when chairing a formative review for faculty. See Section 2.1.0. of the SIMPSON COLLEGE FACULTY HANDBOOK PART III: PERSONNEL PROCEDURES.

The deadline for the letter of recommendation for reappointment is available on the dean's office website.

Please use this as a check list for the reappointment process.

1. Determine the deadline for the letter of reappointment and review Section 2.1.0 in the procedures.
2. Follow the procedures outlined in Section 2.1.1. Timing and Procedures
3. As noted in 2.1.1.2.f. The department chair summarizes the thinking of the review committee in a letter. Use the example at the end of this section.

### **SAMPLE ANNUAL FORMATIVE REVIEW LETTER**

**Bill Kassel Fourth-Year Review**

**June 19, 2007**

The purpose of this document is to provide a summary for the performance review of Dr. Bill Kassel, now in his fourth year at Cambridge College. The Fourth-Year Review Committee for Dr. Bill Kassel consisted of Music Department Chair Susan Peterson, Dr. Beverly Smoot (Music Department) and Tom Dimdale (Chemistry Department). The Committee believes that the purpose of the Fourth-Year Review is to provide the person under review an opportunity to discuss progress on any issues identified in previous reviews, and provide a snapshot of the person's work during the past year from the point of view of departmental colleagues.

#### **Professional Activities and Development**

In the last year, Bill has continued to engage in scholarship and professional work. He was part of a roundtable discussion on Teaching Music to Non-Musicians and presented a paper titled, Notes on Handel's Water Music: A Reflection at the Music in Higher Education Conference in August of 2006. Bill also continued his professional work in Des Moines, where he conducted Mozart's Jupiter Symphony with the Iowa Symphony. In addition, he is continuing to work on developing material from his first book into a second.

#### **Committees and Service**

Bill continued to serve the College this year as advisor to Omega Kappa Gamma, serving as chair of the Library Advisory Committee and as a member of the EPCC. He also regularly works with Habitat for Humanity and most recently spent spring break in Louisiana with a



Habitat team from Cambridge College.

### **Advising**

Bill is actively engaged in advising students. He participated this year in the LAS program and also helped register students last June. Dr. Smoot now has several of his former LAS students and comments how knowledgeable they are about their Cornerstone program and she attributes this to Bill's ability to communicate the purpose of the Cornerstone program. Bill has his office hours posted on his door and he often has a line of students waiting to see him. He is committed to the liberal arts and is a strong voice on the EPCC for interdisciplinary education and the Cornerstone Program. This year the faculty passed an amendment allowing a greater number of Cornerstone Five courses, that Bill initiated.

### **Teaching**

In the music department, we teach in at least two venues. The first is in the classroom and like in most other disciplines, classroom success in music is demonstrated by student evaluations of teaching, the competency and knowledge of students, and the teacher's ability to convey effectively the subject matter assigned. For the purpose of this review, Susan Peterson, Beverly Smoot and Tom Dimdale attended Bill's music theory class. We agree that Bill Kassel is an impressive teacher. He is a strong, dynamic and forceful presence in the classroom. We found that Bill's students were actively engaged in the class, asking and answering questions. Bill creates openness in his classes where students feel free to express themselves, inquire and debate. He is a challenging teacher who knows how to effectively mix the theoretical and practical. His use of project work to illustrate complex music theories is appropriate and effective. Bill is also interested and active in developing new courses. This past October, he co-taught a course in the psychology department on the psychology of performance. He has co-developed a Cambridge Travel Course to London for 2008.

The second teaching venue for music department faculty is during individual lessons with students. It is in the area of individual lessons where the committee feels that Bill needs to improve his performance.

### **Concerns**

As we have indicated in past reviews, Bill's colleagues in the music department appreciate the enthusiasm and energy Bill brings to his work with students. Bill sets high standards for his students and attempts to draw out the very best in them. In past reviews, problems that Bill has had communicating his expectation have surfaced. It was agreed at the end of Bill's last review that he would ask at least two members of the music department to work with him to review the sequencing of his individual student lessons and assignments. Although Dr. Brown did meet with Bill to provide such review, it was not completely successful and student comments and overall student evaluations on his work in individual student lessons are just slightly above last year's level. Bill told the committee that "he did not have time" to meet with other members of the department as suggested by last year's review committee.

Several of the student evaluations of teaching suggest that students are still confused and the communication/expectations problem continues to exist. Comments such as, "I don't know what the instructor expects of me" and "don't know how I am being graded" are common on

his evaluations. This remains a significant concern to the committee and the department. Bill has suggested that the reason for his low scores this year are due to the ongoing distraction of taking care of his elderly mother. The committee is not in a position to comment on this family matter gauge its impact on his teaching, but recommends that Bill consider seeking the help of the dean to discuss this issue. It is clear to the committee that Bill's teaching evaluations for his individual lessons do not meet the standards expected of tenure-track faculty at Cambridge College. The Committee recommends that Bill meet with someone from the Center for Teaching Effectiveness for additional help in addressing his problems communicating his expectations to students and work with department chair Peterson on the matter.

### **Summary**

In summary, we recognize Bill's strong work as scholar, campus colleague, advisor, and mentor. We appreciate his continuing involvement with the activities of the College. We also appreciate his attempt to address the communication and expectations issues identified in this and earlier performances reviews and recognize the improvement he has made. We encourage him to continue with these efforts and to seek the help of his departmental colleagues and the Center for Teaching Effectiveness in this regard. We feel strongly that this issue demands continued attention and significant improvement before his next review.

Sincerely,  
Susan Peterson  
On behalf of the Committee

CC: Beverly Smoot, Tim Dimdale

## **Simpson College Criteria for Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion**

- Classroom Performance/Teaching
  - Effective Advising
- Service to Colleagues and the College
- Professional Development, Scholarship and Achievement

See Faculty Handbook for specific definitions and examples.

## **ADDENDUM: HELPFUL HINTS AND INFORMATION ABOUT DOING REVIEWS OF FACULTY**

### **A. General Notes**

#### **Introduction**

##### Confidentiality

It is important that everyone in the review process understand the confidential nature of the work. Department chairs, division heads, and committee members are to hold all information gained during a review as confidential. Do not share the information with anyone outside the review process.

#### **Definitions**

##### Formative Evaluation/Review

- a process used to provide helpful information about the candidate's performance for the purpose of improvement

##### Summative Evaluation/Review

- a process used to make judgments/decisions concerning continuance

#### **Letters**

##### Formative Letter

This is a formative letter to provide helpful feedback on performance throughout the previous year. This letter will summarize the performance in a given year and be detailed. The department chair creates it with the review committee in years 1, 2, 4 and 5. The formative letter may be reviewed by the division head in preparation for his or her reappointment recommendation.

A formative letter should:

- Be helpful to the candidate
- Should identify strengths
- Point out areas for growth
- Include documentation and examples
- Provide suggested ways to improve, get help, etc.
- Provide a summary of the evidence
- Be conversational, not legalistic
- Be professional, not personal
- Provide an update on progress from the last review
- Not include mixed messages

##### Reappointment Letter

The reappointment letter is a summative. It is directed to the issue of reappointment or tenure. This letter will focus on the reappointment of the individual and use information collected from

faculty in the department and also during the formative review. This letter will be sent to the division head, and eventually on to the academic dean.

A summative letter should:

- Be simple, clear, straightforward
- Be supported by evidence gained during the formative review process
- Put latest review in context with previous reviews
- Include an introduction
- Explain who was involved in the process
- Explain the timeframe
- Explain how information was gathered and upon what the decision was based.

### **Evaluation Best Practices**

A good evaluation process is:

*Clear*

- Transparent, understandable

*Comprehensive*

- Addresses all criteria, includes both strengths and areas for growth, looks at subject from multiple perspectives, includes as much evidence as possible

*Complete*

- Thorough, uses multiple sources of evidence

*Consistent*

- The outcome is consistent with the evidence
- A formative review builds on earlier reviews.
- A reappointment decision is supported by evidence .
- The end product would be the same no matter who did the review.

### **Letter Writing Dangers and Pitfalls**

Don't reference gender, age, or race even a positive way.

Examples:

*"Professor Plum provides a wonderful level of maturity to the department."*

*"It is so helpful to have a women's perspective in department meetings."*

Beware of the collegiality trap.

Example: *"Professor Sanchez just doesn't seem to fit-in with the department."*

Fit is important but focus on specific issues.

Example: *"Professor Sanchez is regularly late for department meetings, refuses to advise first-year students and does not post or keep office hours."*

Don't speculate on reasons for poor performance.

Example: *“It might be that Professor Blunt’s poor evaluations are due to his recent divorce.”*

Although as a member of a review process you are to keep what you learn confidential, don’t promise confidentiality in gathering input from colleagues and students. Tell people that you will try to keep what they tell you confidential, but that you cannot guarantee it.

Don’t substitute your judgment for that of the FPC. You are being asked to provide your professional judgment about a candidate based on the evidence collected. The FPC will make a summative judgment about reappointment, tenure and promotion. You are being asked to judge the candidate against the criteria established.

Example: *“Unless Professor White increases her scholarship, I don’t think she will get tenure here.”*

Remember what you write must be clear enough to be understood by itself and out of context.

Don’t try to hedge around the difficult subjects or use words that can be misinterpreted.

Examples: *“Professor Budge’s teaching style can be described as thoughtful.”*

*“In department meetings, Professor Campbell presents his ideas aggressively.”*

Being fair doesn’t necessarily mean every statement includes both positive and negatives.

Make sure to put the statement in context. Example: *“Although Dr. Thompson’s teaching methods seem to be effective with lower level students he seems to be less effective with our majors.”*

A better course of action would be to separate the issues and put them in context.

*“His student evaluations provide evidence the Dr. Thompson is an effective teacher in the 100-level course. His low scores in the higher level major oriented courses suggest he has problems helping students understand more sophisticated concepts. Since the bulk of his load is at the higher level, this is a serious concern.”*

### **Final Thoughts**

- Thank you for the work that you do on behalf of your colleagues, our students and the college.
- Should there be problems associated with a personnel review, whether or not the stated review process has been followed, will be an important question asked by the college and all parties reviewing the matter. Also of importance will be whether or not our process is based on best practices.
- Don’t hesitate to call the dean’s office if you have a question or concern about procedures for review, reappointment or tenure.



## **B. Steve Nadel's "TOP POINTS" for Annual Pre-Tenure Faculty Reviews (July 10, 2007)**

### **Introduction**

**These tips for doing performance reviews were shared with department chairs by Steve Nadel, one of the college's attorneys. They are designed for educational purposes only and do not supersede the tenure policy and not to serve as a benchmark against which any specific review is judged.**

- Be consistent with tenure requirements
- Always be honest, and critical when it is warranted
- Be specific
- Be consistent over time
- Be consistent between faculty members undergoing review
- Build on what has been said in prior reviews
- Do not let personalities get in the way
- Avoid any possible perception of promises or guarantees
- Provide guidance
- Discuss the review with the faculty member before finalizing it
- Seek guidance from the dean

Be consistent with tenure requirements: The review should focus on performance as it relates to the standards and criteria used for tenure decisions and outlined in the Faculty Handbook. The college's tenure policy should identify the relevant standards and criteria. Address each standard and criteria in the written review.

Be honest and critical: Avoid overly praising the faculty member. This can result from having been involved in the hiring process (being invested in the success of the faculty member); a "honeymoon" period during which a tendency exists to see things through rose-colored glasses; or a mistaken belief that gifting the faculty member with undue praise will elicit the desired performance. Undue praise risks leading the faculty member to believe that the status quo is acceptable and will result in tenure, and it can create problems in the future if later reviews become negative as tenure approaches. Failing to identify problems and deficiencies can set up the faculty member for failure. Honest and critical reviews are fair reviews because they provide the faculty member notice and opportunity to improve. Sugarcoating a review is a disservice to the faculty member, the institution, and the students, all of whom stand to gain if the faculty member is told where improvement is needed.

Be specific: To the extent possible, illustrate your points with specific examples. Examples provide clarity and help prove the point. Examples provide an element of objectivity and keep the focus on the faculty member, not the reviewer.

Be consistent over time: Be consistent in your expectations from year to year when reviewing



a faculty member. Criticism in later years after praise in earlier years should reflect a decline in the faculty member's performance, not a change in the reviewer's expectations or approach to the evaluation. If the standards or expectations change over the years and the faculty member will be held to a higher standard than what was previously found acceptable, make this clear, explain why and what is required, and do so with time for the faculty member to meet the required expectations prior to the tenure decision. The tenure decisions should not be the first criticism of the faculty member's performance.

Be consistent between faculty members: Apply standards and criteria evenly between and among all faculty members you review. If you hold a faculty member to a higher standard than other faculty members you review, be certain you can articulate a proper basis for doing so.

Build on prior reviews: In preparing a review, read through the prior reviews of the faculty member. In the new review, address any concerns or deficiencies addressed in prior years. Failure to expressly address a concern or deficiency which was identified in prior years will create an implication that the concern or deficiency has resolved.

Do not let personalities get in the way: Personalities and personality conflicts should not enter into the evaluation process. The focus is on performance. While some personality traits may impact performance, address any such concerns by referencing the performance problem itself, i.e., the results, not the personality trait you perceive as being the cause.

Avoid any possible perception of promises or guarantees: When identifying concerns and deficiencies, always be clear that "successful resolution of these concerns and deficiencies is necessary, but not necessarily sufficient, to receive tenure." In other words, resolving the problems is a prerequisite but not a guarantee of tenure.

Provide guidance: Provide guidance and suggestions for the faculty member's future performance. Anticipate the needs of both the faculty member and the department and provide guidance accordingly. However, avoid the appearance of a guarantee.

Discuss the review with the faculty member: After completing the written review, meet with the faculty member and discuss the review. Then make additions to the review reflecting the meeting and any additional information. Identify the additions as being added after meeting with the faculty member. If the faculty member offers any personal circumstances as causing or contributing to any deficiencies, this should be noted in the additions to the written review. However, state only that "The faculty member stated..." Then add, "I am (or the committee) is not in a position to comment on personal circumstances." Do not reach any conclusions or offer any personal suspicions as to any personal circumstances which may exist and/or whether they may have caused any deficiencies. Your focus is on performance. If medical issues are raised by the faculty member, you should notify the academic dean or human resources. Make no presumptions about medical conditions – do not presume that a medical condition is a disability; do not presume a medical condition causes any limitations; and do not presume that a medical condition has caused any deficiencies noted in the review.

Seek guidance: If while preparing a review you have concerns about whether the review properly accomplishes its objectives, or if you anticipate problems, you should seek assistance from the academic dean.

**\*THESE POINTERS ARE DESIGNED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. THEY DO NOT SUPERCEDE THE TENURE POLICY AND ARE NOT INTENDED TO SERVE AS A BENCHMARK AGAINST WHICH ANY SPECIFIC REVIEW IS JUDGED. THEY WERE PREPARED AND GIVEN BY ATTORNEY STEVE NADEL AS PART OF A DEPARTMENT CHAIR WORKSHOP IN 2007.**