A Dean's Advice on Successful Preparation at The Crane School of Music for Faculty Evaluation: Reappointment, Continuing Appointment, Promotion, and Sabbatical Applications

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I.   Official institutional policy; what this document is, and is not

Official policy governing academic appointment and promotion at SUNY Potsdam is contained in the institutional "Guidelines for Academic Appointment and Promotion" (available on the SUNY Potsdam website at http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/hr/policies; see the link near the bottom of this page), which in turn reflects official criteria approved by the system-wide SUNY Board of Trustees.

While the document you are reading is intended to be consistent with the official guidelines, it does not have the standing of institutional policy, nor does it represent an interpretation of that policy officially endorsed by Crane School governance. Rather, it is offered to faculty members in the reappointment and promotion process as a set of helpful observations and practical advice from the point of view of a dean who both plays a role in the process and is experienced in reviewing faculty members going through the process. The dean's role as a reviewer complicates this picture somewhat: while more than willing to offer suggestions such as those in this document, because the dean is only one link in the review chain, he cannot offer assurances that others (whether committees or individuals) have similar expectations or view portfolios through the same lens. Therefore it is important for candidates to be very familiar with what the official *Guidelines* actually say, and to seek *multiple* sources of mentorship and advice as they prepare for reappointment, continuing appointment, or promotion reviews.

The *Guidelines* alone have official standing as established criteria, and each stage of evaluation is done with reference to those criteria: Personnel Committee, Department Chair, Dean, Provost, and President. Each reviewer (including the Personnel Committee) makes an independent recommendation, and does so with reference to the official guidelines. The guidelines will be referred to frequently within this document.

II.   Procedural points

Initial faculty appointments are normally made, if the faculty member hired possesses the required terminal degree (see the Crane *Faculty Handbook*, posted on the Crane website under "Information for Crane Faculty," for terminal degree requirements within sub-disciplinary areas), at the Assistant Professor level and with a two-year initial contract. The usual sequence with successful reappointments

involves two subsequent two-year contracts, with a reappointment review prior to the end of each, followed by a final one-year contract before consideration for tenure, or "continuing appointment" as it is known in the SUNY system (normally the review for continuing appointment is also a review for promotion to the Associate rank). In short: 2 + 2 + 2 + 1, then continuing appointment/promotion to Associate. In some circumstances, the pattern of three two-year contracts followed by a one-year contract may vary.

Faculty with prior academic service may request credit toward continuing appointment consideration at the time of their initial hire. This request is made through the Office of Human Resources, which will issue an official determination and establish a "continuing permanency" date. This date (whether or not credit is granted) represents the final date by which either continuing appointment must be granted, or the employee's final contract ends. Every candidate in the tenure track has such a date; if you have any doubt as to yours, please ask the Human Resources office or the Dean.

At SUNY Potsdam, candidates may request consideration for continuing appointment prior to their required continuing appointment decision date (i.e., they may apply for "early tenure"). If a request for early continuing appointment is denied, the candidate may simply be reappointed; in other words, requesting early continuing appointment does not invoke an "up or out" decision. However, those considering such a request are strongly encouraged to have conversations with their department chair and dean, to discuss whether or not it is prudent and advisable to seek an early decision.

The official calendar for reappointment reviews is maintained by the Office of Human Resources and is published on that office's website (http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/hr/reappointment). Candidates will receive official notice from the Human Resources office when reappointments are due; however, they are also notified by the Crane Dean when reappointment materials are expected, since materials must be reviewed by the Crane Personnel Committee and Department Chair before the dean's review date as listed in the official Human Resources calendar (therefore the date materials are due to the dean's office will always be significantly earlier than the date noted in the official communication from Human Resources; if you are in doubt about when materials are due, consult with the Dean's Office). Candidates being reviewed in a fall semester review cycle should expect their portfolios to be due early in that term, and likewise spring semester reviews will have an early spring semester due date, as provided in each case by the Dean as the cycle begins.

For faculty members with an initial two-year contract, the first reappointment review will occur in the fall semester of the second year. Following this review, reappointment reviews occur in the spring semester of the year prior to each contract's expiration.

The review sequence proceeds through these steps:

 Crane Personnel Committee and relevant Department Chair(s)
   (simultaneous)
 Crane Dean
 Provost
 President
 Chancellor (in the case of promotion and continuing appointment)

Crane faculty members have a primary appointment to one of the School's departments, and the chair of that department will review the candidate's portfolio. However, many faculty members also teach some courses in another department, and therefore have a secondary departmental appointment. In those cases, the chair of the secondary department is also invited to review the portfolio.

At each stage in the process, copies of each recommendation will be sent to the reappointment/promotion candidate. The reappointment portfolio remains available to the candidate throughout the process, and the candidate may add materials at any time, even after a level of review has been completed. This should be exceptional, however; the portfolio should be presented as complete when it is initially submitted. If you wish to add material after the initial submission, simply speak to the secretary in the Dean's office whose responsibility it is to receive and take custody of submitted documents.

It is at the discretion of each reviewing level whether the recommendation will be a simple statement or a longer elaboration. It is this dean's practice to write substantial commentary, and candidates should consider any such commentary, whether by dean, chair, committee, or provost, carefully, particularly when the next review arrives. When offered, commentary is intended to be formative, and may assist a candidate in identifying areas that need to be strengthened, either in substance or in documented presentation.

If submitted as hard copy, materials are customarily submitted in a three-ring binder, or possibly more than one binder. More will be said regarding the quantity of material below. Submission in electronic form is also possible and, from this dean's point of view, strongly encouraged, so long as the format is easily understood, well organized (i.e. easily navigable), and reliably accessible on common computer platforms; keep in mind that multiple individuals must all access your material readily and easily. Recent submissions in electronic form have been made either using a flash drive which, when opened on a computer desktop, provides a clickable index leading to all categories of material, or through a weblink leading to material accessible online through protected access and viewable through a common web browser.

Whether the portfolio is submitted in hard copy or electronically, it <u>must</u> be submitted with a paper copy of the *Personnel Action Form* for academic employees

(in the "Personnel Actions" category at this link: http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/hr/forms). The first part of this form must be filled out by the candidate, including the request for the appropriate action (reappointment, continuing appointment, promotion). If you are in doubt as to what action should be requested, please consult with the Dean. Candidates should be mindful that this form will acquire recommendations at each stage of the review process, so it is preferably inserted into a pocket of the binder or otherwise made easily accessible by those in the review process.

III.   Making your case

I strongly urge you to think of the portfolio submitted in the framework of *making your case* for reappointment and/or promotion. Candidates are encouraged to see every aspect of the portfolio submission through this lens: its physical or electronic appearance, its organization, ease of access to sections and content, clarity of presentation, logical sequence, quality of writing, and other respects. Imagine yourself as the reviewer, and ask yourself whether or not the materials speak for themselves in a clear and compelling way to your reappointment/promotion case.

It is this dean's recommendation that the principle of reverse chronological order be applied to most if not all aspects of the portfolio and its documents: most recent first, then older material, in order, following. As a matter of practical advice: if plastic sleeves are used to contain material submitted, *be sure that the reviewer does not need to remove documents from the pocket to review what you intend her or him to review*. Everything should be clearly visible as the reviewer turns the pages of the portfolio. In addition to the question of inconvenience, if materials must be removed from a sleeve, they may be re-inserted out of order or in the incorrect sleeve, making the next person in the review chain subject to a confusing presentation.

Following the Personnel Action Form, the portfolio should begin with an *Academic Faculty Information Form* for the most recent completed academic year (see the "Personnel Actions" category on this page: http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/hr/forms). If submitting an electronic portfolio, the Faculty Information Form may be submitted electronically as a .pdf. Since this form provides a quick summary of activities through a single academic year, candidates are encouraged to provide Faculty Information Forms for earlier years as well, presented in reverse chronological order behind the most current one. Even if your portfolio presents all the information requested in the Faculty Information Form in other ways, you must include this form and should make certain that it is completed in an accurate and thorough fashion.

An up-to-date and complete CV should follow the Academic Faculty Information Form(s), reflecting the candidate's entire academic career, including recent activity. Here and in other relevant portions of the portfolio, take care to include clear date information for every category of information, and list items in reverse chronological order, as noted already.

The substance of the portfolio should then proceed to document the three large areas which are key to academic faculty evaluation: *teaching*, *research or creative activity*, and *service*. While these are indeed the three large areas, and it is most helpful to think of the portfolio broadly organized along those lines, the *Guidelines* referenced above list the categories for evaluation under five headings (and should be consulted for more detailed descriptions of these broad areas):

> Mastery of subject matter
> Effectiveness in teaching
> Scholarly ability
> Effectiveness of university service
> Continuing growth

Note especially that the *Guidelines* construe "scholarly ability" in its broadest sense, and use the inclusive Boyer model of scholarship to encompass the scholarship of *discovery,* scholarship of *integration,* scholarship of *application,* and scholarship of *teaching.* Clearly this definition includes the full range of scholarly and creative work in which Crane faculty are engaged, including research and writing, solo and collaborative performance, composition, pedagogical and educational research, and other variations of musical work. This may in turn suggest ways in which candidates may consider presenting their material and "making their case."

IV.   Speaking with your voice

While many of the documents assembled will and should speak for themselves, this dean regards it as a very important principle of "making your case" that in every section of the portfolio you speak *with your own voice.*

Substantive reflection on teaching speaks strongly to a faculty member's commitment to continuous self-evaluation and improvement. In addition to providing clear commentary on one's intentional efforts to address concerns in teaching and to make improvements, reflective material can also help provide context for specific teaching situations. Reflective statements can be organized in various ways; the best way may depend upon the nature of a particular candidate's teaching load. Possibilities include a relatively short reflective statement for each course taught in a given semester, including reactions to student teaching evaluations, notes for improvement in the future, and particular circumstances relevant to a specific teaching experience. In other cases, a lengthier and more comprehensive statement might be written encompassing an entire semester's teaching. In whatever way they are presented, reflections on teaching should not be merely descriptive of a teaching approach to a course (though it is certainly appropriate to include such information); they should demonstrate a real sense of reaction to each semester's actual work with students, showing responsiveness to the success or challenge of each class, ensemble, or studio as, for example, indicated by student evaluations. The ideal result is a clear demonstration of a commitment to continual improvement in teaching. As the

portfolio is built, reflective comments should be clearly organized along with other material reflective of teaching excellence, especially student evaluations.

Candidates are very strongly encouraged to keep the "making your case" principle in mind in the presentation of student teaching evaluations. Note that you should include a comprehensive and complete set of evaluations for all courses taught. If they are presented with statistical summaries by course (highly desirable when these summaries are available), make sure that the summary precedes the individual forms for each course, and that material is clearly identified. Double-check to be sure that documents are in correct order as presented.

It is this dean's view that personal reflections and/or summaries – in other words, *speaking with your own voice* – are important to *all* areas of the portfolio, not only in demonstration of teaching excellence. Commentary on creative and/or scholarly work done since the last evaluation offers evaluators a helpful framework for understanding the context of specific documentation submitted. Similarly, a reflective statement on service assists in framing the candidate's progress in developing a record of service at various levels (department, school, college, wider profession).

The format for this kind of written material is at the discretion of the candidate. Some faculty choose to frame the entire portfolio with a substantial introductory statement, perhaps in the form of a lengthy letter to the reviewers. Others write separate statements for each section of the portfolio. So long as the portfolio gives a strong sense of *speaking with your own voice*, and in doing so clearly frames and contextualizes the work represented by documentation in the portfolio, the precise format can vary. As will be noted later, this is an area in which it is highly recommended that you consult with faculty who have been through this process previously, possibly asking them to allow you to see portfolios they have submitted, or to review yours in draft form for suggestions.

An important note about referencing students: It is important to demonstrate sensitivity when referring directly to specific students, or including material about specific students, especially if the references might be perceived as negative or inappropriately personal. In a narrative about teaching, for example, if it becomes important to mention a case involving a teaching challenge with a specific student, it is important to do this without using the student's name, removing any details that might suggest a specific student, and couching the description in general terms. Remember that faculty colleagues will be reviewing your document, and many of them may know students you teach, so it would put those students in an inappropriate position to disclose information about them that may be sensitive or personal and ought to remain in confidence.

V.   Documentation, balance, and being selective

The content of your portfolio, of course, primarily consists of documentation of activity in many forms. Specific documentation is critically important and will be expected by many in the review process; simply to list recent scholarly activities, for example, is not sufficient – there must also be an appropriate level of supporting documentation, which will vary by the nature of the activity (copies of publications, conference program listings, drafts or parts of drafts of submitted work, letters confirming acceptance, etc.).

Quantity does not correlate directly to quality in a faculty member's portfolio, and it is possible for a very large quantity of material not clearly supportive of the case, and not properly contextualized or organized, to work against the effectiveness of the presentation. Although comprehensive documentation is certainly of critical importance, keep in mind the framework of *making your case*, and seek to view the portfolio through the eyes of those who will, in fact, evaluate it. The discipline of attempting to compile a hard-copy portfolio in single binder is something to consider strongly. Depending on the nature of the documentation, a compromise may be to present a primary binder with supplemental material in one or more additional binders. Some faculty members will have very large quantities of student evaluations of teaching, which may need to be placed in their own binders.

Suggested ways to be selective include these:

-   In presenting original course material as evidence of teaching excellence, include representative samples (of study guides, worksheets, etc.) rather than exhaustive compilations of everything you use within a course.
-   If evidence of scholarly or creative activity is contained within published material that is bulky, present photocopies or scans of the relevant pages, and include a note that the original publication (a book or journal, for example) can be provided to the evaluators on request.
-   While it may be relevant in some cases to include material on accomplishments prior to employment at SUNY Potsdam, the relevance of such material should be carefully considered, should be selectively presented. The focus ought to be on work done at the institution, and the primary focus of any portfolio should be on the period since initial appointment or since the last evaluation occurred. (See additional comment on this topic below.)
-   If presenting a digital portfolio, you might consider the use of active links to provide reviewers access to additional information or documentation on a particular topic. *However*, great care should be taken to make sure that the links provided function properly; and I do *not* recommend inserting URL addresses into a paper document, since this makes it highly inconvenient for a reviewer to move between a hard copy and a digital device, typing URLs manually into the device.

Another important aspect of selectivity comes into play for those going through second and subsequent evaluations. This reviewer suggests that, while each

evaluation should present a comprehensive picture of the candidate's record at the institution, material already reviewed in earlier cycles may helpfully be thinned out, summarized, and otherwise reduced. For example: instead of including all concert programs for prior years, make a summary list of performances by date, and include only especially significant program copies. One might think of this as *telescoping* older material as one goes through successive evaluation cycles.

Note, however, three specific instances that should be given special consideration:

- When the application for continuing appointment (tenure) occurs, while some "telescoping" is still (in my view) appropriate and advisable, the portfolio should truly represent the candidate's complete work in academic rank prior to tenure.
- For a candidate given credit toward the tenure clock for academic appointments prior to appointment at Crane, even though the focus of the review will always be on work done at Crane, it is helpful to include some material from the academic career prior to Potsdam. This is especially true if the tenure clock is quite short.
- The substance of an application for promotion to full professor (see more on this below) should be on activity since promotion to the Associate rank. Again, some prior material may be relevant and should be provided for context, but the focus and the main need for documentation would be for the time spent in rank as an Associate Professor.

VI.   Some observations on material in each category

    a. Effectiveness in teaching

Material normally presented in support of this category includes:
- Course syllabi
- Original course material (handouts, study guides, original supplemental material, but presented, if appropriate, in the form of selected samples rather than exhaustive compilations)
- Student evaluations of teaching (preferably: summaries for each course, followed by *all* individual student forms)
- The candidate's reflective comments on teaching, either course by course or semester by semester, demonstrating thoughtful effort toward continuous improvement

Additional material to consider:
- Evidence of student successes (external validation of supervised student work, acceptances to graduate programs, awards and honors, performances, etc.)
- Evidence of student mentorship, including faculty/student research projects, internships, and related cases
- Peer evaluations of teaching

With reference to the last item: the Crane Personnel Committee will arrange for one or more of its members to visit classes, lessons, and/or rehearsals for candidates under evaluation, with due advance notification of the candidate; the committee member will provide a written summary of the observation to the candidate, which is expected to be included in the evaluation portfolio.

In addition, I strongly encourage candidates to ask other colleagues regularly to visit their classes, lessons or rehearsals for the purpose of offering their observations. Written summaries of such observations may be included in the evaluation portfolio, and add to the depth of information presented about one's teaching ability. This is encouraged at all levels of evaluation, including applications for promotion to the Professor rank.

Some comments about student evaluations of teaching:
At SUNY Potsdam, faculty members may use institutional evaluation forms available from the Provost's office, forms specifically developed by and for Crane faculty members, or forms of their own design.

All of these are acceptable ways to gather student input about teaching effectiveness. If you choose to use forms other than the Provost's Office or Crane forms, this dean strongly encourages you to be certain that the instrument has carefully designed questions for students which allow them to make clear their opinions of the experience in the classroom, laboratory, studio, or rehearsal. If the form is vague in what it asks or if it does not clearly ask the student for her or his views on the faculty member's effectiveness as a teacher, its ability to contribute to *making your case* is greatly diminished. Candidates are encouraged always to use forms which permit students to answer open-ended questions (as do the SUNY Potsdam Provost's forms and the Crane-specific form). Comments made in response to such questions are often very useful to faculty members in highlighting specific issues that are points of success or challenge, and these comments often provide points that the faculty member can address in her or his teaching reflections (see note below).

Since student evaluations of teaching will be compiled over time and viewed in terms of the ongoing record they present, it is important not to change the form employed unless there are important reasons to do so, and then only rarely. If the form changes from semester to semester, it becomes more difficult to *make your case* with regard to consistent excellence, and continuous improvement, in teaching.

In the administration of student evaluations of teaching, it is almost inevitable, even for an excellent teacher, that occasional negative ratings and/or comments will appear. Candidates should not be reluctant because of this to include in their portfolios every evaluation form (which is expected by reviewers). Candidates should be mindful that most Personnel Committee members, and certainly the chairs and dean, have reviewed many collections of student

evaluations, and are experienced in reading them in context. Isolated outliers are understood as such; overall patterns are much more important. Furthermore, the highly recommended inclusion of personal reflective comments on teaching provides an important and appropriate opportunity for the candidate to acknowledge particular ratings or comments which might be of concern, and to provide context for them and/or indicate steps taken to address the concern that was raised. This becomes a positive and proactive statement in the candidate's portfolio.

Please see notes above, under "Speaking with your voice" (IV), regarding sensitivity to privacy issues related to specific students.

b. Scholarship and/or creative activity

It has already been mentioned that the SUNY guidelines for appointment and promotion adopt the broad Boyer definition of scholarship, and thus allow wide latitude in the kinds of activities documented as part of the portfolio, so long as they relate clearly to the faculty member's area of appointment and teaching duties.

Within The Crane School, this documentation may take a wide variety of forms, including but not limited to:

- Performances (as soloist, collaborative artist, or conductor), listed with dates, locations, and program information; actual concert programs should be included, but can be presented selectively (as noted) for older performances already presented in earlier evaluations
- Published reviews of performances
- Documentation for performances of original compositions, including commission information if appropriate; selective samples of scores and/or recordings
- Evidence of commercial recordings of performances or compositions, as physical media or through reference to externally available sources
- Published reviews of composition performances, recordings or publications; published reviews of performance recordings
- Publication of scholarly research, in any of a variety of forms: books, book articles, journal articles, reviews, and others, either in physical copies or through reference to external sources; these may be singly authored or jointly authored
- Documentation of presentations, panel participation, and other forms of participation (beyond attendance) at conferences and symposia

- Documentation of workshops, masterclasses, and similar sessions (note that some of these may overlap into the service category, below)
- Participation in special festivals or other unique events
- Awards received that clearly relate to work as a scholar, performer, conductor, composer

It is helpful always to make clear when performances or publications represent selection by peer review or invitation by an institution or body. While other kinds of activity are appropriate to include, those activities that have been distinguished by peer invitation or validation should be duly pointed out, and carry particular weight.

c. Service

Service may helpfully be thought of, and perhaps organized, in expanding outward circles: service to the department, the School, the College, the profession, and the community.

Examples of service include but are not limited to:
- Service on departmental or School-wide committees
- Service on College-wide committees, or as a member of the Faculty Senate
- Other forms of campus service (for example, service to special programs, such as Honors, Presidential Scholars)
- Service on search committees
- Service to professional organizations related to one's discipline, including service as an officer in such organizations, roles in the operation of conferences (as distinct from conference presentations), etc.
- Service to organizations or efforts in the community, whether local or beyond, that may not be directly related to the musical discipline but relate more broadly to the mission of the School and College. This may include service on boards or committees engaged in support for educational or the arts, for example. Note, however, that, in the opinion on this dean, involvement with external organizations whose missions are not clearly consonant with those of the School and/or College do not strengthen the case of a reappointment or promotion candidate.

For Crane, one type of service is of special importance, and has a relationship to the teaching role: student recruitment. Efforts made on behalf of student recruitment to Crane, in addition to participation in the Crane on- and off-campus audition process and campus Open House days, should be pointed out and documented in the portfolio. These might include visits made to high schools and/or workshop/masterclass presentations in those contexts; special studio-

specific or program-specific initiatives; representing the school in a recruitment capacity during large off-campus events; special recruitment initiatives within a particular area; and others.

VII.   Criteria for promotion

When an evaluation cycle involves a request for promotion to the next academic rank, it is critical for the candidate to review carefully the specific criteria for the rank in question as presented in the *Guidelines* referenced above. Both the Associate Professor and Professor ranks, which are those normally under consideration in an evaluation process, are described in detail, and the expectations for promotion differ between them. The case presented must address the specific expectations of each promotion stage in order to make a successful case.

VIII.   Other items

Letters of support from colleagues and others:

It is a common and important practice to include in the portfolio letters of support, written at the candidate's request, by colleagues. This dean strongly encourages this practice, with the suggestion that such letters be as broadly representative of the faculty as possible, crossing departments, disciplines, and ranks. There is no required or suggested number for such letters, and were I to provide one I risk misdirecting a candidate since reviewers may have very different ideas about this form of documentation. I would use the "broadly representative" criterion as a guideline, erring on the side of more rather than fewer without feeling the need to have a truly excessive number.

SUNY Potsdam does not currently require formal input from outside the institution in its reappointment and promotion processes. However, I encourage you to request professional colleagues at other institutions, or appropriate professionals who may not be working in academia, to write letters of support for your portfolio. While letters from many categories of individuals may apply in specific cases, for those in academia it may be helpful to consider the academic rank of those writing letters of support: in an application for continuing appointment, strongest consideration should go to letters from external colleagues who, themselves, are tenured; and for application for promotion to professor, external colleagues who are at the highest rank at their own institutions.

The inclusion of letters of support is particularly important in applications for continuing appointment and for promotion (whether to Associate or Professor rank). A strong set of supportive letters showing support across the school, possibly outside the school on the SUNY Potsdam campus, and from recognized professionals beyond the campus can be very important as an aspect of *making your case* in the context of a well-presented portfolio.

One particular case I caution against, however, is requesting that *current* students submit recommendation statements. Requesting them risks placing the student in an awkward position, and might easily be misperceived. I strongly discourage asking current students to write letters of support.

Letters from successful *alumni*, however, are certainly appropriate to be considered for inclusion, and may strengthen the case for excellence in teaching.

Finally, letters submitted as part of the portfolio should be current or nearly current. While you may wish to keep letters written for one evaluation cycle and include them again in the next, it is important that most of these presented in a particular review cycle be clearly up to date and reflective of your current professional work.

Overlap between categories:

In some cases, it may be difficult to decide whether an item belongs in one category or another. Certain activities which seem to belong in the "scholarship" category may, for example, overlap into that of service. This is something well understood by those evaluating, and it is this dean's suggestion that the candidate include complete documentation of the item in the category which seems to have the strongest association, with a brief reference or mention in the other.

Miscellaneous material, including congratulatory notes:

Candidates often accumulate a great deal of material which, on the surface, would seem appropriate to include as support, including casual congratulatory notes or e-mails after successful performances or presentations. This dean encourages a high degree of selectivity with regard to this kind of material. Inclusion of a few such notes for a few items in the portfolio can adequately demonstrate that the candidate is well regarded by colleagues (whose support is more appropriately demonstrated, in any case, by formal letters of support); to include voluminous informal messages or notes, again in the opinion of this reviewer, begins to undermine the character of the portfolio, and hinders rather than helps in making a clear, concise, and compelling case.

Asking colleagues to review the portfolio before submission:

This practice is one which, as already noted, this dean encourages very, very strongly, along with the possibility of requesting that faculty members who have already been through a reappointment or promotion process share their own portfolios for review and study. New faculty members are assigned a senior faculty mentor, and this process of consultation appropriately begins with one's own mentor. However, this reviewer particularly encourages candidates to make such requests of *several* faculty members, rather than a single one, and that those faculty members be representative of a variety of ranks and/or areas. Keep in mind that the Crane

Personnel Committee itself will have a different makeup each year, and that it will include a variety of faculty members from across the School. Therefore, the wider the variety sought in those whose advice is requested in assembling the portfolio, the better. In the end, consider the advice that each faculty member consulted provides, and make your best decision.

Consulting with department chairs and the dean:

Although the department chairs and dean are part of the evaluation process, do not hesitate to ask questions of them regarding the process or the portfolio submission. While it would not be appropriate to submit a draft complete portfolio to them for comment, it is absolutely appropriate to ask questions.

IX. Second and subsequent evaluations, and comments from prior evaluations

Once the first evaluation is successfully completed, you will possess a series of recommendations from the review process written by the Department Chair, Personnel Committee, Dean, Provost and President. While some of those may simply state that reappointment is recommended, others (including those made by this dean) will include comments very specific to the case, and may reference items for suggested improvement or issues of concern.

It is, therefore, essential to begin the next reappointment cycle by reviewing the last cycle's recommendation statements, and clearly to address any specific items pointed out. If comments are made, their intent is to provide guidance toward future success, and, if they are not responded to, future reviewers will likely take note. Such comments should be addressed in future documentation presented, in personal reflective commentary, or both, as appropriate to the issues involved.

X. Promotion to full professor rank

The mechanics of an application to move from Associate Professor to Professor rank are the same as earlier evaluations: a portfolio is assembled and submitted and reviewed by the same chain of reviewers as described above. Note that applications for promotion (of any kind) are only considered in the *spring semester* evaluation cycle.

There is no policy restriction at SUNY Potsdam on when, after achieving continuing appointment and promotion to the Associate rank, a faculty member may request promotion to full professor. As noted above in the case of seeking continuing appointment early, a faculty member considering an application for promotion to full professor is strongly encouraged to have a preliminary conversation, well before she or he begins to assemble the portfolio, with the department chair and dean. I also strongly encourage conversations with colleagues already at the Professor rank, and not only those on one's own discipline. These conversations can help the potential

candidate consider whether the time is right for a promotion application to go forward.

It is a common practice in academia to put oneself forward for promotion to the highest rank *no sooner* than six years past promotion to Associate, and in some institutions this is a policy requirement. Even though this is not the case here, it is this dean's advice that the six-year benchmark should be taken very seriously, and that it truly be considered the normal timeframe for a promotion case. Anyone considering such an application at an earlier time is even more strongly encouraged to consult with the dean, chair, and other senior colleagues as to advisability. Although an unsuccessful application for promotion to full professor does not carry consequences other than the immediate one of not achieving the goal (an unsuccessful application for promotion to Professor may be attempted again in a future review cycle), it can easily bring lingering harm to interpersonal relationships and collegial work, and therefore should not be undertaken lightly. Put another way, an application for promotion to full professor sooner than six years in the Associate rank demands of the applicant a very high standard of both achievement and presentation. The standard is a high one at any time, including after six years in rank; but early applications carry the demand of making a particularly compelling case that, without question, meets the "substantial and sustained" requirement, qualitatively, set by the Board's *Guidelines*, within a short timeframe.

In the case of seeking promotion to the highest rank, it is indeed especially important to read carefully the criteria stated in the *Guidelines* for this promotion. In the view of this dean, three items in particular carry special importance:

o   The mere fact that this is, indeed, the "highest rank" invites a sense of respect for the process and for one's colleagues, and seriousness of purpose and effort. While those at the Professor rank certainly continue to produce work throughout the remainder of their careers, and to continue to grow in their appointments, achievement of the "highest rank" should represent a true career benchmark.

o   The opening statement that "Promotion to Professor indicates *very substantial* and *sustained* performance on *all* of the Trustees' criteria" (emphasis added). In this promotion, the *Guidelines* suggest less flexibility in terms of significant variations in a candidate's strengths, among the stated criteria for promotion (as described already); there is a clear expectation that strength be exhibited in *all* categories, sustained over time. And while that "time" is not specified, the language of "substantial and sustained" will doubtless in the eyes of many reviewers be associated with a strong investment of time.

o   The relevant statement in the *Guidelines* then spends a noteworthy quantity of language addressing the importance of teaching in this evaluation step, concluding with this statement: "The College does not believe that a faculty member who cannot demonstrate clear, reliable, and consistent evidence of excellence in teaching should be promoted to

Professor. Excellence in teaching should be the *sine qua non* of promotion to Professor." Thus it is made clear that the demonstration of teaching excellence must bear scrutiny and be truly compelling.

It is this dean's recommendation that a portfolio submitted for promotion to full professor be organized with the same guidance given above, with regard to its overall organization, its clarity and ease of use, its systematic addressing of the stated criteria, its documentation, and, in sum, its ability eloquently to *make the case* for the candidate, with the candidate clearly speaking in her or his *own voice* as an important feature of the portfolio. This reviewer also suggests (as noted already) that it is most important for the candidate for full professor to provide thorough and detailed documentation on activity *since promotion to the Associate rank*; the "telescoping" principle of selectivity already cited should apply with regard to earlier (pre-tenure) material. It may be important and useful to include some pre-continuing appointment evidence, but much of it can be summarized and abbreviated; focus instead on the timespan since that benchmark, and with regard to supportive documents such as letters and statements of external support, make sure they are current. The use of personal reflection to *make the case* is as important in an application for promotion to full professor as any other situation, if not even more so, and is strongly encouraged with reference both to teaching (where it can help meet the strong language in the criteria as noted above) and to the other areas of review: research/creative activity and service.

XI.   Applications for sabbatical leaves

Applications for sabbatical leaves are received and considered in a *fall semester* review timeline each year (for consideration of full-year, fall semester, or spring semester sabbaticals for the following academic year); notice a separate column in the Human Resources Office's schedule for reappointment that applies to sabbatical requests. The deadline for application is somewhat later than the deadline for fall reappointment cases; typically applications are due to the Dean's office in mid-October.

Sabbatical leaves, available only to tenured faculty members, can be requested for a full year at half pay or a half year (one semester) at full pay.

The Faculty Handbook language on eligibility for sabbaticals is as follows (emphasis added):

*Academic employees having continuing appointments and college administrative officers not in a negotiating unit established pursuant to Article XIV of the Civil Service Law **who have completed at least six consecutive years of service within the University or who, if they previously have had a sabbatical leave, have completed at least six years of service within the University from the date of return from their last sabbatical leave,** shall be eligible for sabbatical leave. In computing consecutive years of service for the purpose of this section, periods of vacation leave and periods*

of sick leave with salary shall be included; periods of leaves of absences, other than vacation and sick leave with salary, and periods of part-time service shall not be included but shall not be deemed an interruption of otherwise consecutive service.

Please see the Faculty Handbook for additional language regarding official policies on sabbatical leaves (Section VIII/F).

These applications are considered in the same chain as are reappointment and promotion cases: Personnel Committee and Department Chair, simultaneously; Dean; Provost; President. Submitting an application for a sabbatical leave employs the same form, Personnel Action Form – Academic, as is used in the reappointment and promotion process.

It has been many years since the campus has been able to devote dedicated budget resources to replacement coverage in support of sabbatical leaves granted to faculty where replacement is required (as is almost always the case in Crane, due to area specialization). However, the campus deans and Provost each year review the mix of full-year (where salary savings may occur) and half-year leaves requested, and, depending on the balance of net savings and coverage requirements, make recommendations for awards that can be granted within those funding parameters, blending resources available across the schools.

Sabbatical applications need not be lengthy, but it is critical that they clearly and specifically address *each one* of the points identified in the instructions accompanying the Personnel Action Form:

a) the purpose and the objectives of the leave and how these will be met
b) the preplanning involved in the proposed project
c) the benefits to you, the department and the College if the leave is granted
d) fellowships, grants-in-aid, or earned income you expect to receive during the period of leave
e) the names of outside sources from whom you have tried to obtain funding for the project
f) how the work of your leave will be evaluated in terms of the objectives listed

It is my advice, as in compiling portfolios for reappointment and promotion, that you use "making the case" and "speaking with your own voice" as guiding principles in assembling a sabbatical application. As in the other processes it may also be helpful to consult with faculty who have made successful sabbatical applications previously, possibly asking them to review a draft version. While as noted it is important to cover all the points listed, I suggest it is particularly important to be attentive and thoughtful with reference to item c: the benefits of the proposed sabbatical to you, to the program (in particular, its students), and to the institution.

Your department chair will also be required to submit a statement regarding the specific needs for replacement if a leave is granted. This is not your responsibility,

although it is possible the chair might consult with you in developing this part of the proposal.

Notification regarding the outcome of a sabbatical leaves request occurs on a date in January which is included in the schedule posted with HR as referenced earlier.