MEMORANDUM

TO: Truc Nguyen, Chair
    Committee on Professional Matters

FROM: Reed Dasenbrock
      Vice Chancellor
      for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to Tenure and Promotion Guidelines

Thank you for your email of October 15th concerning the results of the Committee on Professional Matters (CPM) meeting on October 14th. We appreciated the discussion with the committee. With respect to the two changes which CPM intends to forward to SEC for consideration, I have drafted a rationale for those changes which is attached and which I hope meets the need you expressed.

Language Changes
With regards to the other changes, I have reviewed the comments from the faculty survey, and I believe that we addressed the substance of many of the comments through suggesting alternative wording for some of the changes that we were discussing during the meeting. So if you are to consider these proposed changes at a future meeting, we would appreciate it if you would consider the language included below, not the original language sent to you. There are three proposed language changes:

1. First, we grant the force of the point concerning the difficulty in some fields of finding reviewers who are not co-authors, so we would propose striking the list of examples (“from co-authors, co-principal investigators” etc.) Instead, the sentence would read as follows: “Letters should not be solicited from those having a personal or professional relationship with the applicant that would reduce objectivity.” We think this language establishes the general principle that the letters should come from objective sources without either a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest without causing the kind of practical difficulties sketched in some of the comments.

2. We also agree that there may be cases where external evaluators from the UH system might be appropriate, so we are fine with returning to the original language which just rules out referees from the Mānoa campus. This proposed change is now moot.

3. Finally, the most contentious issue involved the language we included involving the deans’ “consideration.” The comments made by the faculty on this point indicate both that this is a controversial issue and that many faculty were unaware that this
Chair Truc Nguyen  
October 19, 2010  
Page 2

language was changed in the contract. Since it is clear that the meaning of the additional language inserted into this contract ("consideration and") is not uncontested, and since it is also clear that we (OVCAA and MFS) are not the parties charged with adjudicating the meaning of the contract, our proposal is that we simply quote the language of the contract here, with the understanding that others will probably have to sort out exactly what it means. So our proposed language would be simply to quote the paragraph from Article XII, Section G.2.f referring to Mānoa in its entirety: "At UH-Mānoa, the TPRC shall review the dossier and make a recommendation, then return it to the Dean/Director for consideration and transmission to the Chancellor."

Rationale for Changes  
Given those points and suggested revisions in the language, the remaining proposed changes boil down to two. And given your request to develop a rationale for the changes you plan to recommend, I thought it might also be useful to state briefly the rationale for these two changes in their current form. I hope this is useful in your committee’s deliberations.

Authorship Conventions  
There are at least three dimensions of authorship conventions which vary enormously among disciplines: first, the genre of publication (books, articles, conference proceedings, etc.); second, the extent of co-authorship; and third, the meaning of authorship order in the case of co-authored publications. It is our experience that since TPRCs are constituted wholly by faculty outside the candidate’s home school or college, it is frequently the case that the conventions in place in a given field are not perfectly understood by the TPRC, and this can be a cause of differences of opinion between departmental and higher levels of review. The procedures currently in force place the burden on the candidate to explicate the conventions governing his or her work: this has not worked perfectly and seems unfair to the candidate. Some departments, as at least one member of the CPM pointed out, have consequently done exactly what we are proposing and incorporated a statement about the prevailing authorship conventions in their field in their departmental policies and procedures. There seemed quite a bit of support for this idea in the comments you passed on to us. We are not mandating that such a statement be developed, and we understand that it may be difficult or impossible in some departments to do so. However, our proposed language ("ideally" being the keyword) suggests that departments wherever possible should come to a common understanding about these conventions, and we believe that including such a statement in the Policies would be an enormous help to everyone involved in the tenure and promotion process, including the candidates themselves.

Conflict of Interest and Objectivity of Review  
The current language that simply suggests that candidates not ask their dissertation advisors to serve as references seems an inadequate response to potential conflicts of interest. Our proposed language moves beyond this to making a general statement that letters should come from those who are in a position to evaluate the work of the candidate
objectively. As stated, we hope this is not a controversial suggestion. In addition, we are proposing a change in the process used to obtain external letters. The current language suggests that departments should ask as many people from the candidate’s list as from outside the candidate’s list but states no expectation about the make-up of those who actually write: “It is recommended that the Department Chair, in consultation with the Chair of the Department Personnel Committee, write to three of these people and add two or three more names of other known scholars who can evaluate the applicant’s work.” It has been the case in the past that all of the letters in a given file came from names suggested by the candidate (presumably, because they were the ones who responded favorably to the department’s request). While this might seem favorable to the candidate, a member of a TPRC wrote us last year concerning a case in which this happened suggesting that this actually hurt the candidate because a more objective set of external evaluations would have left the TPRC with a more positive impression of the candidate’s record. So our proposed language (“[i]t is recommended that the Department Chair, in consultation with the Chair of the Department Personnel Committee, should secure letters from 2-3 of these people and a comparable number of letters from other known scholars who can evaluate the applicant’s work.”) recommends a balance in the letters received between those proposed by the applicant and those proposed by the department instead of a balance simply in the number of requests.

It was suggested in our discussion of this issue that obtaining outside reviews would be easier if the process started earlier. It wasn’t clear to us if the Committee was planning on proposing additional changes to this document beyond the ones we are proposing, but obviously any additional changes that the CPM might propose are ones that we would be happy to consider now or after they went to the Senate for its consideration.

Once the Senate acts on any changes it sees fit, and if there are any new changes suggested by CPM and we have had an opportunity to review them, we will need to send the new document to UHPA for consultation. So that UHPA has time to consider any changes fully, our request would be that the Senate should complete its consideration of any changes it wishes to make to the document this academic year by its March meeting.

Attachment
MEMORANDUM

TO: Susan Hippensteele, Chair
    Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Reed Dasenbrock
    Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to Criteria and Guidelines for Faculty
          Tenure/Promotion Application

In August, OVCAA transmitted to you a proposed revision of the Guidelines for Tenure and
Promotion which contained a number of changes from the previous document. This was
referred to the Committee on Professional Matters (CPM), who met with me and Assistant
Vice Chancellor Beverly McCreary on Thursday, October 14, to discuss them. As I
understand from the chair of CPM, Professor Nguyen, they are in agreement with two of
these changes and are proposing them to you for the Senate’s consideration. However, they
asked us for a statement of our rationale for proposing these changes at this time.

The first change involves the delegation of authority for waivers to time in rank. This
language was put in to bring the Mānoa Guidelines in compliance with current practice. In
November 2006, the Board of Regents delegated certain personnel actions to the President,
who in turn delegated them to the Chancellors in March 2007. One of the personnel actions
that was delegated to the Chancellor was the approval of waiving minimum requirements
for tenure and promotion. This related to the requirements outlined in Board of Regents
Policy, Section 9-2, which establishes the minimum educational requirements and time in
rank for each rank and classification of faculty. Chancellor Hinshaw noticed a disconnect
between this delegation and the ability to adjust the probationary period for tenure track
faculty members. The authority for this action had been delegated to the Deans and
Directors in October 2001. Therefore, a Dean or Director could approve the shortening of
a faculty member’s probationary period, however the Chancellor would have to approve
waiving the same faculty member’s time in rank. This did not make sense. Therefore, in
2009, the Chancellor delegated the authority to waive a faculty member’s time in rank to
the Deans and Directors. She retains the authority to waive minimum educational
requirements. The language in the Mānoa Guidelines was changed to address this
delegation, as faculty are required to submit requests and place approved copies in their
dossiers.

The second involves changing the language in V.A.2 and V.B.2 concerning promotion to
Associate Professor (14) and Associate Researcher (R4). The current language is “the faculty
member must demonstrate a level of scholarly achievement and output which reflects
stature as an established scholar in comparison with peers active in the same discipline.”
This language is perceptibly different from the language used in IV.A.3 and IV.B.2
Chair Susan Hippensteele
October 19, 2010
Page 2

concerning tenure, in which the phrase “the applicant should be well on the way to becoming an established scholar in his or her discipline” is used twice. Since in most cases the application for tenure is the application for promotion to the associate rank, it is hard to understand why there is this difference in language. Our proposal to change the language concerning promotion to match the language concerning tenure came actually from a department chair who brought this issue to the attention of OVCAA. Of course, the inconsistency could be removed by adopting either phrase in all four relevant places, but we thought the language from the tenure section was better because in some fields, an applicant for tenure and promotion to the associate rank may well have a body of scholarly achievement deserving of tenure and promotion yet the publication of that work has been so recent (or has yet to occur) that “stature as an established scholar” is an impossible standard to reach. The rate at which completed research reaches the professional community is very discipline specific, with preprint and electronic comment allowing for virtually immediate reception in some fields such as Physics while it may take years for university press monographs (unheard of in many fields but still the gold standard in many fields in the humanities) to see the light of day.

c: Assistant Vice Chancellor McCreary