

July 10, 2026**To:** Deans, Department Heads/Chairs, College Promotion and Tenure Committees, and Faculty**From:** Jesse Perez Mendez, Provost and Executive Vice President**RE:** 2026 – 2027 Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Calendar

PROVOST SUMMARY ON PROMOTION AND TENURE PROCEDURES

Decisions to promote faculty and to award tenure are among the most important judgments made by any university. Those decisions determine the future quality of our academic programs. As a comprehensive, NextGen land-grant research university, the richness of Kansas State University is defined in part by the many activities in which our faculty engage across the institution — teaching, research and other creative activity, extension, and directed and non-directed service. The variety of faculty assignments also contributes to the complexity of evaluating faculty performance. The university must therefore provide thoughtful, accurate, and thorough guidance to all members of the academic community who participate in the evaluation of faculty members for promotion and tenure. This summary is intended to offer such guidance and to complement, the governing provisions of the University Handbook (Section C and Appendix Q), Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) policy, and approved departmental and college criteria, standards, and guidelines.

We reaffirm our commitment to the centrality of the departmental faculty in the evaluation of faculty members for appointment, reappointment, promotion, and the granting of tenure. It is within the candidate's home department, where the criteria, standards, and guidelines for assessing faculty performance are best understood, that evaluation properly begins. As a dossier moves beyond the department and college, the Deans Council, the Provost, and others look to the judgments of the departmental faculty, and of the external reviewers invited to participate, for their principal guidance. Considerable deference will be shown to the judgments emanating from the department and college, especially in cases where those judgments (eligible faculty, department head/chair, college promotion and tenure committee, and dean) are nearly unanimous, either for or against the granting of tenure or promotion. In light of this responsibility, departmental faculties must engage in the evaluation of their colleagues with an unwavering commitment to the objectivity, rigor, and integrity of the evaluative process, fully cognizant that a judicious and defensible outcome is predicated on the proper application of the university's policies and procedures on faculty evaluation.

Discipline-specific expectations are often articulated both quantitatively and qualitatively (e.g., a scholarly book published by a reputable press, articles in leading journals, juried creative products, professional recognition through grants, invited presentations or performances, evidence of teaching excellence, or named inventor on patents). Each department in which faculty appointments are held maintains [approved documents](#) (i.e., departmental documents) that describe the criteria, standards, and guidelines used to guide evaluations for promotion and tenure, describing the evidence of activity in instruction, research and creative activity, extension, and service appropriate to the field(s) represented in the unit.

Such unit-level evidence is essential, although sole reliance on it in a formulaic manner is inadequate. Departments and colleges are advised to review and revise their criteria, standards, and guidelines periodically, with special consideration for the value of accomplishments in collaborative and team science, the scholarship of engagement, and products of intellectual property (e.g., copyrights,

patents, discoveries, films, works of art, tangible research property). Consistent with University Handbook C31.2, a department or unit's evaluation system must be approved by a majority vote of the faculty, the unit's administrative head, the dean, and the provost, and must be reviewed at least once every five years. Please note that revisions to departmental criteria, standards, and guidelines require approval before they may be used.

What is paramount, and what should be the yardstick by which we evaluate excellence, is the impact of an individual's work during the period in question: on their scholarly or professional community, on the students they teach, on the community members, clients, or patients they serve, or on society through economic development, extension outreach, or life-improving outcomes related to innovation and entrepreneurial activity. Critically important is the professional trajectory of the candidate and the evidence that the individual will be able to sustain the required trajectory, as gleaned from the cumulative profile to date. Written evaluations from individual faculty members, external reviewers, advisory committees, department heads/chairs, and deans are most helpful when they are candid and balanced, judiciously identifying and discussing areas of strength and weakness in the candidate's record.

This university's approach to faculty tenure and promotion rests on an underlying assumption of enlightened recruitment, appropriate support and mentoring, and a presumption of success. It also rests on the expectation of significant achievement appropriate to a land-grant, research university. These expectations must be well articulated, communicated, and consistently applied. As the University Handbook makes clear (C131), time in rank is not, by itself, an appropriate evaluative measure. A faculty member should be considered for promotion or tenure when the departmental faculty and the department head/chair believe that the individual's record of professional accomplishment across all areas of assigned activity has met or surpassed the applicable criteria as codified in university policy and spelled out in the approved departmental documents and position description—though not later than the maximum probationary period for candidates being considered for the granting of tenure (C82.2–C82.3). We further expect that a faculty member's workload has been assigned, in accordance with KBOR's faculty workload policy and documented in annual workload agreements, in a manner commensurate with promotion and tenure expectations.

To maintain an atmosphere of transparency in the promotion and tenure process, this memo is posted publicly and shared with department heads/chairs, deans, and the members of college promotion and tenure committees.

I strongly encourage everyone involved in the evaluation process to review [University Handbook Section C](#) (Evaluation of Faculty, C30–C156), Appendix Q, and applicable KBOR policy, together with the approved criteria, standards, and guidelines of the candidate's department and college. This memo and additional information on faculty appointment, promotion, and tenure are available through the [Office of the Provost](#).

Preparation of the Review Dossier

The dossier is developed through open communication, with clear expectations and contributions from all involved parties, so that candidates are informed participants throughout. Dossiers shall be organized in accordance with the university's *Guidelines for the Organization and Format of Tenure and Promotion Documentation* (Sections I–IX) and submitted electronically through SharePoint for 2026-27. The candidate is responsible for compiling and submitting accurate, complete, and clearly organized documentation of accomplishments in accordance with the criteria, standards, and guidelines established by the department (C111). The department head/chair is responsible for completing Section II, Description of Responsibilities During the Evaluation Period, which documents

the candidate's assigned distribution of effort and must be completed and shared with the candidate *prior* to the preparation of dossier materials, so that the file is developed within the appropriate evaluative context.

When prepared correctly, the dossier is straightforward, since it largely consists of materials accumulated during the probationary period or period in rank by the candidate and the department head/chair. I strongly encourage department heads/chairs to give candidates the opportunity to review the materials in the dossier before external evaluative letters are solicited and before the file is submitted to the eligible faculty for their evaluation. It is the responsibility of the department head/chair and the dean to ensure that no procedural errors occur in the evaluative process. It is not appropriate to add information to the dossier after it has been reviewed at a given level; if significant new information arises (e.g., a major award or comparable recognition), all prior reviewers must be given the opportunity to consider it before it is incorporated.

Selection of External Evaluators

External evaluation provides an independent assessment of the quality, impact, and trajectory of a candidate's scholarly, creative, professional, or extension activities in relation to disciplinary norms. Department heads/chairs are required to solicit a minimum of **three (3)** external evaluations for each candidate; departments or colleges may require additional evaluations consistent with approved unit-level policies (see University Handbook C36.1 and Section VIII of the *Guidelines for the Organization and Format of Tenure and Promotion Documentation*). When outside reviewers are used, an equal number are usually suggested by the candidate and by the department head/chair (C112.2).

Only reviewers external to Kansas State University, including any of its campuses or formal affiliations, may provide confidential evaluations for inclusion in the external evaluation section of the dossier. External reviewers should be recognized experts in the candidate's field, hold a rank equal to or higher than that sought by the candidate (or possess comparable professional standing), and be capable of an independent, objective assessment of the candidate's contributions measured against the approved departmental documents. Because outside reviewers are most likely to be familiar with and able to judge a candidate's research and other creative endeavor, that aspect of the review should be recognized and weighted accordingly (C36.1).

Reviewers should not have conflicts of interest that would compromise the objectivity of the evaluation. Conflicts may include close personal or familial relationships; current or recent collaborative, supervisory, or mentoring relationships; recent co-authorship or shared grant support; financial interests; or other associations that might call a reviewer's impartiality into question. As a rule, comments from a candidate's major professor or graduate-school classmates are less persuasive and should be avoided (C36.2). Letters from persons who do not know the candidate personally, but who can clearly assess the significance of the candidate's qualifications, are of the greatest value. Because some reviewers are difficult to secure, identifying and inviting external evaluators early in the cycle is strongly recommended.

Solicitation of Letters

To ensure consistency and fairness, the department head/chair (or dean) is responsible for the final selection and solicitation of all external evaluators. To promote clarity, fairness, and informed evaluation, external reviewers shall be provided, at a minimum, with:

- a description of the candidate's faculty appointment, including assigned areas of responsibility and workload distribution;

- the approved departmental promotion and tenure document(s) that define the standards and expectations for the candidate's appointment; and
- the relevant portions of the candidate's dossier (the full dossier or specified sections), with sufficient contextual information to allow reviewers to understand the candidate's appointment type and evaluative context.

Reviewers should be asked to analyze the candidate's contributions in the appropriate areas (e.g., instruction, research and creative activity, extension, and service) and to indicate the extent to which those accomplishments meet or exceed the department's criteria for promotion and/or the granting of tenure. To promote equity and comparability, external reviewers should be asked standardized or semi-structured questions aligned with the approved departmental documents, addressing at a minimum: (1) the quality and significance of contributions; (2) impact and visibility within the field; (3) evidence of independence and trajectory; (4) standing relative to peers at a similar career stage; and (5) alignment with departmental promotion and tenure criteria. Because institutional expectations differ, reviewers should not be asked whether the candidate would receive tenure or promotion at the reviewer's own institution. Each reviewer shall also provide a brief curriculum vitae (not more than two pages) documenting their qualifications for the review.

Departmental and Unit Responsibilities

Once the external evaluations are received and added to the dossier, the department head/chair shall make the candidate's file and the departmental criteria documents available to the eligible faculty at least fourteen calendar days prior to the meeting to discuss the candidate's petition (C112.1). It is a faculty responsibility to provide independent, written judgments on promotion and/or tenure. Templates and pro forma letters should not be used; each faculty member should clearly state their opinion, for or against, and why (C112.3). Eligible faculty individually review the file, considering the department's criteria, standards, and guidelines, and then meet to discuss the petition.

The department head/chair shall produce a thoughtful, balanced, and comprehensive evaluation of the candidate's record, informed by the letters from external reviewers and eligible faculty and guided by the approved departmental documents. The department head/chair provides the candidate a letter that includes the recommendation, its rationale, redacted comments to protect anonymity, and the faculty vote; this letter, together with all recommendations and non-redacted comments of the eligible faculty and the candidate's complete file, is forwarded to the dean (C112.5). Where appropriate, the department head/chair's letter should also address:

- the significance of the candidate's distribution of effort in judging the quality and quantity of the record of accomplishment in each area of assignment;
- split views for and against promotion and/or tenure reflected in the letters of external reviewers or the eligible faculty; and
- the evidence that speaks to excellence within the candidate's interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary area of work, where applicable.

Because a dossier will be evaluated by university colleagues from other academic departments, the department head/chair is responsible for helping reviewers outside the candidate's home department understand disciplines that share equally rigorous but different measures for judging excellence and impact. The department head/chair's responsibility goes beyond summarizing the opinions of the eligible faculty to include the administrator's own perspective and any additional information that helps explain key issues in the case.

Documenting the Procedural Steps of the Review

The department head/chair shall include in the dossier an outline of the procedural steps followed in the unit-level review. When the department head/chair is advised by a departmental committee, the members of that committee shall be identified in the dossier. If a committee member has a conflict of interest, that member must be excused from all deliberations concerning the candidate; the committee should explain who was recused and why, and the department head/chair should document this as well.

Documenting and Explaining Differences of Practice and Opinion

Faculty activities in instruction, research and creative activity, extension, and service vary considerably across colleges, departments, disciplines, and subfields. Conventions of authorship order, for example, differ by field; and a student rating below a unit's overall norm may be typical for a large or notoriously difficult introductory course while signaling a concern in another. The department head/chair and dean share a responsibility to identify and carefully explain such differences in their evaluative letters, particularly when a candidate works in an emerging or highly interdisciplinary field. In dealing with collaborative work, the department head/chair should solicit specific comments about the candidate's role in the collaboration and the significance of the candidate's contributions. In contentious cases characterized by a mix of favorable and unfavorable judgments at the department and college levels, the department head/chair and dean must include balanced, thoughtful commentary on the strengths and weaknesses of the case.

Best Practices: Clarity, Consistency, Candor, and Confidentiality

- The judgments from all evaluators should provide a balanced analysis of the candidate's record.
- The department head/chair is expected to explain the reasoning behind divergent opinions among the eligible faculty. Likewise, the dean should explain the college committee's response to negative or mixed evaluations from the faculty, and any negative response from the college committee to a positive departmental evaluation.
- Faculty, committees, and administrators at every level must strive for unerring fidelity to the policies and processes on promotion and tenure evaluation as articulated in the University Handbook, KBOR policy, and established department and college procedures.
- Providing tenure-eligible faculty with clear explanations of the requirements for tenure and candid advice about their progress, including through the mid-probationary review (C92), fosters a more positive environment for faculty success and retention.

Peer evaluations gathered from individuals at Kansas State University and at other institutions are handled in a confidential manner, and faculty should not expect access to them except in association with grievance proceedings (University Handbook C35 and [Appendix G](#)). These materials, along with other documents reflecting the peer-review process, and the candidate's file, are retained by the dean of the college. To the extent evaluation materials contain individually identifiable student information (e.g., TEVAL data), such data are treated as an education record under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and handled accordingly. All persons asked to participate in a review must be diligent in maintaining confidentiality with respect to the materials and conversations related to that review, consistent with University policy and the Kansas Open Records Act.

Promotion and Tenure Calendar

The dates below are drawn from the university's [2026–2027 Master Calendar for Promotion, Tenure, Sabbatical, and Annual Evaluation](#). Per the Office of the Provost, these dates should be used as a

guide for suggested deadlines; colleges and units may establish earlier internal deadlines. Please confirm each date against the current master calendar before distribution, and refer to the University Handbook for policy-specific dates.

Date	Milestone
September–October 2026	Candidates prepare dossier materials for review.
November 6, 2026	Departmental promotion and/or tenure recommendations are forwarded to the Deans. Department head/chair recommendations are forwarded to candidates. Dean forwards documents to the College Promotion and Tenure Committee.
December 1, 2026	College Promotion and Tenure Committee reports its findings to the Dean of the College.
December 8, 2026	Dean notifies candidate and department head/chair of the College and Dean's recommendations. Candidates may withdraw within seven calendar days.
December 15, 2026	Dean submits promotion/tenure materials and recommendations for candidates who have not withdrawn to the Deans Council.
December 2026–January 2027	Deans Council reviews promotion and tenure files.
February 5, 2027	Deans notify candidate and department head/chair of the Deans Council recommendation and send recommendations to the Provost. Candidates not recommended by the Deans Council have fourteen calendar days to appeal to the Provost.
March 31, 2027	Provost sends recommendations for tenure and promotion to the President.
April 7, 2027	Provost informs candidates of promotion/tenure decisions.
April 27 or 29, 2027	Promotion and Tenure Ceremony on Manhattan Campus