

Santa Rosa Junior College

**Guide to the
Tenure Review Process for
Probationary Faculty Members**

Fall 2009

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

(Please forward any questions, comments or suggestions for improvement to this handbook to Janet McCulloch at 527-4494 or jmcculloch@santarosa.edu or Abe Farkas at 524-1508 or afarkas@santarosa.edu .)

INTRODUCTION:

The AFA and the District Tenure Review and Evaluations Committee (DTREC) hope this handout will serve as a helpful aid to all participating in the tenure review process in our District. While it is not a legal document, it does attempt to portray an accurate use of the guidelines set forth in the formal contract between the AFA and the District. This handout is also proposed as a “work in progress.” AFA and the members of DTREC hope you'll share your comments with us as you read or use these pages so we may shape even more useful comments in coming years. Contact Janet McCulloch at 527-4494 or jmcculloch@santarosa.edu with your comments and suggestions.

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

Some faculty members are new to the roles required of the tenure review process and even senior faculty and administrators may need to confront and overcome new problems in the process as they arise. DTREC offers you this handout with questions, answers, and resources in an attempt to outline clear performance standards and to provide for the resolution of problems before they become serious. In addition, the Staff Development Department may offer a mentoring program for colleagues who are probationary faculty. Your comments and participation in this aspect of staff development work will be welcome. Abe Farkas, dean of Curriculum and Educational Support Services (524-1508 or afarkas@santarosa.edu), is the contact person for those comments.

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

DISTRICT TENURE REVIEW AND EVALUATIONS COMMITTEE (DTREC) 2009-10: (Please contact anyone on this committee if you have questions regarding the process.)

Janet McCulloch, Faculty Co-Chair (<i>Regular Faculty/ AFA Chief Negotiator/AFA Appt.</i>)	527-4494
Abe Farkas Administrative Co-Chair (<i>Dean, Curriculum and Educational Support Services</i>)	524-1508
Ted Crowell (<i>Adjunct Faculty/AFA Negotiator/AFA Appt.</i>)	527-4607
Susan Wilson (<i>Regular Faculty/Dept. Chair/DCC liaison/Senate Appt.</i>)	524-1813
Audrey Spall (<i>Regular Faculty/Counseling</i>)	527-4891
Eric Stadnik (<i>Adjunct Faculty/Senate Appt.</i>)	527-4815
Ezbon Jen (<i>Administrator/Dean</i>)	524-1591
Karen Furukawa (<i>Administrator/Human Resources</i>) resource to committee	527-4302
Toni Eaton (<i>Dean's Office</i>) administrative support	521-7886

NOTE: DTREC is a unique committee, since it makes recommendations to both the AFA and District negotiating teams. The faculty union (AFA), the faculty Academic Senate, and the District management all have a stake in the procedures to be used for tenure review and evaluations. The California Education Code says these processes/procedures are negotiable items requiring consultation with the Senate. All three parties agreed to use DTREC as the vehicle to ensure representation by each affected group, and the work of the committee constitutes AFA consultation with the Senate. DTREC membership reflects the shared interests

of the stakeholders. It is comprised of two representatives appointed by AFA (one of whom is to be an adjunct faculty member, the other from the negotiation team, typically the chief negotiator); two representatives appointed by the Senate (one of whom is to be a department chair to provide liaison with the Department Chair Council); and two representatives from the District administration (one of whom is the dean of Curriculum and Educational Support Services, by position). In addition, the director of the Human Resources Department serves as a resource for DTREC. DTREC works out procedures and Contract language at the committee level, with review by each constituent group, and the final results come to the negotiations table for resolution of any remaining differences.

TENURE REVIEW PROCESS OVERVIEW:

Four-Year Process:

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

The first contract (Contract I) is for the first year of the process. At the end of that year, the District board of trustees, relying on the recommendations of the tenure review team, the superintendent/president, and the documentation of the tenure review process, makes a decision to offer the next contract, not re-employ, or grant tenure. According to the Ed. Code, no justification is required if a decision is reached to not re-employ at the end of the first contract.

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

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

Tenure Review Team:

The tenure review team is composed of three individuals.

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

Documentation – the Tenure Review Portfolio:

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

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

Timeline:

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

You are responsible for:

- Submitting your *Self-Assessment/Duties Assessment* on time;
- Cooperating with the team to:
 - Establish observations dates: and
 - Meet with team members and the entire team as requested.

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

RESOURCES:

Support for Probationary Faculty – Mentoring:

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

Certainly we need to share written guidelines. Maps and campus forms are designed to help the new faculty member, but no amount of paperwork can replace the rich benefits of one-to-one, collegial support for newcomers. This year, our Staff Development Department may sponsor an informal mentoring program similar to those currently used in other community college districts. Introductory elements of this program are in place and may be offered to probationary faculty through the office of Abe Farkas, dean of Curriculum and Educational Support Services. Contact Abe for more information (524-1508 or afarkas@santarosa.edu).

The All Faculty Association (AFA):

You may contact the AFA office (527-4731 or afa@santarosa.edu) with general questions. Judith Bernstein or Candy Shell, AFA Office Coordinators, will direct your query to the proper person. You may contact Ann Herbst, AFA Conciliation/Grievance Officer (527-4732 or aherbst@santarosa.edu) directly if you have questions regarding the proper implementation of the tenure review process. If you believe the Contract is not being followed, contact Ann.

AFA/District Contract:

The AFA/District Contract is posted on-line at <http://www.santarosa.edu/afa/contract.shtml>. Of particular importance to probationary faculty members are Articles 17 and 30.

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

District Tenure Review and Evaluations Committee (DTREC)

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

District: Vice President of Academic Affairs

Among the many areas of responsibility assigned to the vice president of Academic Affairs (VPAA) are evaluations and tenure review. Representing the District on DTREC are Abe Farkas, dean of Curriculum & Educational Support Services, and Ezbon Jen, dean of Health Sciences. (The director of Human Resources, Karen Furukawa, serves as a resource person to DTREC.) Any questions you have about the implementation of the process should be referred to Toni Eaton, administrative assistant to the dean of Curriculum & Educational Support Services (521-7886 or teaton@santarosa.edu).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contract I (Year 1):

- Faculty statement of educational philosophy
- Description of your previous teaching experience and how you plan to apply that experience to the courses you are teaching.
- Outline of any goals you have for your teaching during this academic year.

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

- Responses to prior evaluation recommendations/suggestions, if any were made.
- Student contact and related *Self-Assessment/Duties Assessment*
- Other: Comments regarding other aspects of student contact and related duties.
- Faculty statement of educational philosophy
- Faculty statement of strengths and areas for improvement, if any.
- Goals for professional development for the next evaluation cycle (required for probationary faculty)

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

ANSWER 4: **This issue is covered in the Contract in Article 30.** The chair and supervising administrator are assigned because of their job positions and will continue to be the same for as long as each individual holds his/her title.

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

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

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

1. District compliance officer (race, gender, or age bias);
2. Academic Senate Ethics and Professional Relations Committee;
3. Supervising Administrator; or
4. DTREC.

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

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

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

If a recommended due date approaches and you have not heard from a team member, you may wish to respectfully inquire about the status of his/her portion of the process. Since everyone in the process (as many as 60 probationary faculty members each year) has the same recommended due dates and ultimate deadline, sometimes it is simply a matter of scheduling.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As is the case with other portfolio documents, probationary faculty members must read and sign any *Majority* and *Minority Yearly Reports* (acknowledging they have read the report, not necessarily that they agree with it). As in all assessments, probationary faculty members are allowed to respond in writing to a report and to have their response placed in their portfolio along with the original portfolio documents.