

Overview of Electronic Submission of Tenure and Promotion Files
Palmetto College Campuses
University of South Carolina

Overview

The new process for electronic submission and transmission of tenure and promotion files has been designed to reduce the time and resources used to compile and evaluate tenure and promotion files, as well as to equalize the labor required by individual candidates, who do not all have access to support staff to prepare multiple tabbed paper copies of files. To minimize costs and transition time, the new process will use both a secure file sharing site owned and solely managed by Palmetto College and Blackboard, a program with which many faculty are already acquainted. This will provide a secure process for electronic access to each file as it progresses through the system.

The new tenure and promotion forms adopted by the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate in 2013 were designed to accommodate the transition to electronic submission by reorganizing the structure of the file, so that new material is appended to the end of the document rather than inserted into different places in the file. The .pdf file created when the candidate converts the Microsoft Word document will include automatically generated tabs demarking each individual section of the file, allowing the reader to navigate the file easily.

Summary of Important Changes

The sequence of tenure and promotion review is unchanged in this electronic submission process, as are the participants in the review. Changes are limited to how documents are prepared and transmitted. The new process is designed to be minimally disruptive to all parties involved. Below is a summary of how each party's role is changed:

- *Candidates* will submit their primary file in .pdf format, rather than printing, copying, and assembling hard-copy paper files. Candidates will write their files using a Microsoft Word document containing preformatted headers, as they have always done, and then at the completion of the document, will save their files in .pdf format. Rather than submit the files to the local campus Academic Dean, candidates will upload their files for both external review and Palmetto College Campuses tenure and promotion review to the secure online Palmetto College Campuses Tenure and Promotion Submission Point and will receive a confirmation that the file was successfully transmitted. For external review, the candidates' primary supporting documents will be largely electronic, with multiple copies of physical documents submitted if desired (such as books and journals). For Palmetto College Campuses tenure and promotion review, the candidate's reference collection of documents will continue to be a paper copy submitted to the local Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
- *External Reviewers* will submit their reviews in the same manner as our current process. The Palmetto College Office will create a .pdf copy of the review (by scanning or converting as needed) and append these documents to the file in the appropriate bookmark. The major change here is that the Palmetto College Office staff will handle the inclusion of external reviews; our current system requires each local campus Academic Dean to travel to Columbia with the files for the Vice Provost to insert the reviews. This change will result in a significant savings of money and time.

- *The Palmetto College Office* will provide centralized administrative support for each local campus, appending external reviews and teaching summaries to the files and then making the files available to appropriate tenure and promotion reviewers. Administrative support staff in the Palmetto College Office will maintain a checklist for each file to ensure that all materials have been received and appropriately inserted in the file. On request, candidates will be able to review these checklists up to the point that voting on the file begins. Faculty Organization chairs will work closely with the Palmetto College Office to ensure that only eligible members are added to each Blackboard organization (for example, in the case of members ineligible because of service on Grievance and Welfare Committees, and in determining the membership of the Sumter Committee of the Whole). At the end of file review, the Palmetto College office will depopulate the Blackboard organizations and remove candidate files.
- *Division Chairs and Associate Deans for Academic Affairs (if applicable)* will review files in Blackboard and then transmit their votes and justifications to the Palmetto College Office, who will update the vote summary form and add the letters to the file. The Palmetto College Office will then upload the file into the local campus tenure and promotion committee Blackboard organization.
- *Local T&P Chairs* will use Adobe Acrobat to update the vote summary form and to append to the primary file all items received at the unit level (such as ballots and any addenda items). Training and support will be provided for the chairs, who will require access to Adobe Acrobat Professional.
- *Local T&P Committee members* will be able to review a file by accessing it through Blackboard, rather than requiring the creation of multiple copies or checking copies out. Ballots and vote justifications will be submitted through a secure “double-envelope” process. In other words, the administrative assistant to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will collect encrypted Microsoft Word ballots, rename the files for anonymity, and then forward all committee ballots to the chair at one time. The administrative assistant will not have the passwords to open files; the T&P Committee Chair will be able to open files but not to identify who submitted what ballot. At this time, we will use existing local campus tenure and promotion ballots.
- *System T&P Committee members* will follow the same procedures as the local T&P Committee level.
- *The System T&P Committee Chair* will follow the same procedure as the local T&P Committee level, working directly in the Palmetto College Office with support staff to collect ballots and justifications and to add them to the file.
- *Deans, the Executive Vice Chancellor and Vice Provost, the Palmetto College Chancellor, and the Provost* will access and review each file through Blackboard as each is forwarded to them. They will insert their own letters as .pdf files.

Security and Access to Files

Responsibility for maintaining confidentiality will remain with faculty, staff, and administration who are part of the tenure and promotion process as outlined in the *Regional Campuses Faculty Manual* and in this document. As with our existing paper transmission process, confidentiality of tenure and promotion files and ballots is of paramount importance.

- Files uploaded to the Palmetto College Campuses Tenure and Promotion Submission Point and to Blackboard shall be stored on a secure server, with unique IDs and passwords provided to all persons who have access to files.
- To preserve the security and confidentiality of the electronic transmission process, persons with qualified access should maintain sole ownership of their ID and password.
- To preserve confidentiality, persons with qualified access should not attach tenure and promotion files to emails.
- All downloaded files must be secured using password protection or encryption.
- At the end of the file review process, all downloaded material related to the file evaluation process should be deleted.
- Any documents downloaded and printed must be shredded at the completion of the review process, with the exception of an original hard copy retained in the Palmetto College Chancellor's Office. Electronic copies of the file will also be retained in the Palmetto College secure server and in a separate secure external backup system.