



College of Liberal Arts

Guidelines for Avoiding Conflicts and Potential Conflicts of Interest in Academic and Professional Collaboration When Establishing Faculty Evaluation Committees

Preamble. The College of Liberal Arts strives to ensure that all individuals involved in the faculty review process adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. The College also recognizes its responsibility to foster faculty success in research, scholarship, and creative activity by cultivating an environment of collegial and professional collaboration, including joint scholarly and creative projects. All participants are expected to focus on documented information, avoid practices that could compromise fairness or impartiality, and guard against inaccuracies resulting from undue emphasis or omission of information.

To attain these two objectives simultaneously, ensuring fairness in evaluation while supporting collaborative academic work, the College of Liberal Arts establishes the following guidelines regarding membership on departmental and college level faculty evaluation committees, including Tenure Evaluation and Advisory Committee (TEAC), Promotion to Full Evaluation and Advisory Committee (PFEAC), Peer Review Comprehensive Periodic Evaluation (CPE) Committees, Annual Review Committees, and other committees of comparable function or scope within the Departments and College.

1. **Conflicts of Interest and Potential Conflicts of Interest.** The composition of each committee shall comply with the requirements prescribed in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP). Any issues arising due to conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest should follow procedures prescribed in appropriate HOP.
2. **CLA Guidelines.** These guidelines do not attempt to enumerate all potential conflict of interest scenarios. Instead, they provide directions to Department Chairs, School Directors, committee members, and evaluated faculty regarding the most common potential conflicts related to academic and professional collaboration that may arise between a committee and an evaluated faculty member.

3. **Academic and Professional Power Imbalances.** Committee members must not have professional ties to the candidate that create or could reasonably be perceived to create a power imbalance. For example, if the evaluated faculty member serves as an editor of a journal or volume to which a committee member has submitted a paper (or vice versa), such a situation constitutes a potential conflict of interest and is not permitted.
4. **Academic and Professional Collaboration.** Collaboration between an evaluated faculty member and a committee member (e.g., co-authorship of publications, participation in a joint grant, or similar academic projects) is permissible only if such collaboration involves a minority (less than half) of the committee members.
5. **External Committee Members.** If existing or potential conflicts of interest reduce the pool of eligible department members below what is required to constitute a committee, external members from other departments or colleges may be appointed to serve on the committee.
6. **Final Determination.** Participants in the review process shall identify a situation that would implicate a potential conflict of interest or violation of policy as soon as it arises by reporting it to the appropriate chair and dean so that a determination can be made.