

**Philosophy Department**  
**Personnel Policies and Procedures**  
Revised, March 2008

This document covers those personnel actions, which determine the professional life of philosophy department members insofar as the department has a role or input. They may be amended by a majority vote of the Department. Where, if anywhere, they are *in conflict* with the Policies of the Board of Trustees, the *Agreement* between the State of New York and United University Professions or the Cortland College Handbook (or this document's interpretation, if vague, can be made *consistent* with those document), the Policies, current Contract or Handbook will predominate.

- I. *Standing Departmental Arrangements for Personnel Decisions*
  - A. Personnel decisions other than initial appointment shall be made by the Philosophy Department Personnel Committee (hereinafter *the Committee* or *the Personnel Committee*) and the Philosophy Department Chair or Acting Chair (hereinafter *the Chair*) as specified below.
  - B. The Role of the Department
    1. If the department is not acting as a committee of the whole, at its first meeting of the academic year, sometime prior to September 5, nominations for the Committee shall be made. All permanent members of the department may place names in nomination. [A permanent member of the department is any member of the department other than an adjunct appointment.]
    2. After nominations have been made and prior to September 15, the election of the Committee shall take place. This election is to be by secret ballot and a candidate shall be elected to the Committee if, in addition to being eligible, the candidate receives the vote of the majority of those casting ballots. Only permanent members of the department are eligible to vote.
    3. If the number of permanent members of the department is fewer than six, the Personnel Committee shall act as a committee of the whole.
    4. At least once every three years (but also at any time a permanent member wishes to propose a change to this

document) the department shall review its Personnel Policies and Procedures. Proposed changes or renewed ratification of the document as is shall be by majority vote of the permanent members of the Philosophy Department and will be submitted to the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) for approval.

5. Once the Personnel Policies and Procedures are approved by FAC, they will take effect the following year unless the Department votes unanimously to enact them sooner.

#### C. The Committee

##### Constitution

1. The number of members of the Committee shall be four members or else shall be a committee of the whole (see I.B.3)
2. The Chair, pursuant to the Handbook, may attend and participate in the meetings and deliberations of the Committee, but the Chair shall not have a vote.

##### Business and Responsibilities

3. The first order of business for the committee shall be to elect a chair from amongst its members, which it shall do by October 1 of each year by secret ballot and by majority of those casting a ballot. Voting shall be 24 hours after the discussion of candidates in the event that two or more people are candidates for the role. In the event of a tie, a revote will be held. If a tie still remains, a coin toss will resolve the issue.
4. It shall be the responsibility of the Committee to consider the applications of members of the Department for renewal of term appointment, granting of continuing appointment, recommendation for promotion, and leaves of absence without pay. It is also the responsibility of the Committee to submit to the Chair the results of the deliberations and balloting by the Committee on or before the date published by the College as the due date or, in consultation with the Chair, some other time convenient for the Chair and the Committee.

##### Procedures

5. The candidate whose case is being considered may not take part in either the deliberations or the balloting on his/her own case. Where the Chair of the Committee is under consideration by the Committee, the Committee shall meet in advance to elect, by secret ballot and majority vote, a

Chair *pro tem* to chair the Committee during the deliberation and balloting on the Committee chair.

6. Personnel Committee votes shall be by secret ballot and majority vote. Balloting shall take place no sooner than 24 hours after and no later than a week after deliberations on an action. No information about the deliberations shall be conveyed to the candidate by any member of the Committee before the balloting is complete and the recommendation formulated.
7. Ballots for promotion and continuing appointment shall include the categories *very highly recommended*, *highly recommended*, *recommended* and *not recommended*. Ballots for leaves and renewal of term appointment shall include only the categories *recommended* and *not recommended*.

D. The Chair of the Personnel Committee

1. The Chair of the Personnel Committee shall review the Policies and the College Handbook on the rules governing personnel policies, and exert every effort to ensure that the Department is compliant with the rules therein.
2. It is the responsibility of the Chair (or *Chair pro tem*) of the Personnel Committee to advise candidates of impending deliberations. This notification shall occur as early as possible in order to allow the candidate time to prepare his/her file and to schedule an appearance before the Committee should the candidate wish. Notification shall never be less than one week before the deliberations.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Personnel Committee to notify the candidate of the result of the balloting, the recommendation insofar as that is compatible with the requirements of the secret ballot. This notification will occur as soon as possible after the completion of the formulation of the Committee's recommendation. This notification can simply be a copy of the letter conveyed to the Chair of the Department pursuant to **I.C.3** above, but there are no barriers to conveying this information to the candidate before that letter is formulated.

E. The Responsibilities of the Department Chair

1. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair to distribute copies of the Department's current policies and procedures to all members of the Department, the Dean of the School, the Chair of the Fine Arts and Humanities Personnel

Committee and the Vice President for Academic Affairs whenever they are revised. Such distribution shall take place no later than October 15<sup>th</sup> of the Academic Year which follows their adoption.

2. It is the responsibility of the Chair to constitute the Committee each year (**see I.C.1, 2 above**) and to be the primary executor of the requirements in **I.B above** at the first department meeting of the year.
3. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair to advise Department members of their eligibility for appropriate personnel actions (promotion, sabbatical, continuing appointment, renewal of term appointment) and the schedule of the College's deadlines as distributed by the College to the Chairs.
4. In the event that a member of the department is not a U.S. citizen, the Chair is responsible for familiarizing him/herself with immigration issues and assisting the faculty member where they can.

F. Responsibilities and Rights for the Candidate.

1. It is the responsibility of the candidate to add to his/her departmental file any material s/he wishes to have considered.
2. It is the responsibility of the candidate to complete the appropriate promotion or renewal form provided by the college for the personnel decision in question.
3. The candidate has the right to appear before the Committee on her/his own behalf or to have a colleague appear for her/him.
4. The candidate has a right to submit a self-recommendation to the Chair of the Fine Arts and Humanities Personnel Committee, the Dean, the Provost or the President of the College, but in that event s/he must submit a copy of the self-recommendation to the Committee at the same time.

II. *Initial Appointment to the Philosophy Department (new hire)*

A. The Role of the Department

All permanent members of the department, not limited to the Committee, except those being replaced by the new hire or those who are candidates for the appointment, will participate in dossier evaluation, interviewing and selecting the candidate.

III. *Reappointment, Promotion and Continuing Appointment Criteria*

A. Primary Framework

1. The Board of Trustees mentions the following criteria in the three areas of teaching, scholarship and service when considering hiring and promotion of a candidate:

- Promise (of tenure-track, assistant professor)
- Accomplishment (tenured, associate professor)
- Excellence (tenured, full professor).

The Committee, in its deliberations, should structure its consideration of a candidate around this framework.

B. Departmental Policy Statement on Teaching, Scholarship and Effectiveness of Service

1. Effectiveness in Teaching

The Philosophy Department notes that SUNY Cortland is primarily a teaching institution. However, if the candidate shows strength in two of the areas (e.g., teaching and service), the candidate may show adequacy in the third area.

Teaching ability is considered to be the most significant measure of an instructor's worth to this institution. Teaching is the single area where weak performance cannot be made up by a strong record in other areas.

An instructor may be recommended for reappointment with a weak teaching record, but reservations and a notice to improve must be included in the reports of the Personnel Committee and the Department Chair. No instructor will be recommended for promotion or for continuing appointment with a weak teaching record. All individuals within the department, but in particular the Personnel Committee and Department Chair, should provide as much assistance to the candidate as possible in order to strengthen the candidate's teaching effectiveness in the case of a candidate with weakness in this area. In addition, the improvement of the candidate's teaching record to an acceptable level of proficiency will be emphasized over the instructor's performance during the first two years of teaching. This is particularly important in the case of individuals from groups historically under-represented at the College and those with little prior teaching experience.

Recognizing that the quality of teaching is difficult to measure, the following points will be considered:

- Knowledge of the field
- Class presentations or activities
- Attitude toward teaching
- Impact on students
- Continuing growth
- Course development.

Information regarding the above, and the candidate's overall teaching effectiveness, will be derived from two components:

- (a) The administration of CTE questionnaires, in one or more formats; and,
- (b) Materials and information submitted by the instructor

The latter includes course syllabi, course objectives, assignments, examinations, and other materials that are provided to the students. In addition, the candidate may include one or more of the following:

- Additional evidence of student evaluation of the candidate's teaching-related activities
- Letters from colleagues, both within and outside of the department, who have been invited by the candidate into the classroom to observe the candidate's teaching
- Evidence of the instructor's significant input and assistance in students' writing assignments, problem sets, and other out-of-class assignments
- Information on the instructor's role in assisting students in research activities
- Information on the instructor's role in assisting students with career plans
- Examples of graded papers and exams
- Other documents related to teaching and other teaching-related activities. (As noted in the College Handbook, these may include evidence of work with students through independent study; the supervision of coop education; curriculum development; course development; off-campus recognition of teaching; contribution to institutional change; interdisciplinary teaching; honors and awards for teaching; work with student organizations; the development of new teaching methodologies and/or instructional materials; and other evidence of teaching effectiveness).

Given the emphasis of the College and Department on the development of writing skills, candidates are encouraged to incorporate essay exams and writing assignments into their courses to the greatest extent possible. Evidence of an instructor's commitment to teaching of writing skills as well as subject matter will be noted and viewed as an important component of a candidate's teaching record.

Regarding student evaluations: non-tenured faculty members are encouraged to administer some form of course-teacher evaluations each time a course is taught. The College-wide format-based CTE must be administered at least every third time a course is offered; however, candidates are strongly encouraged to submit as many CTE results as possible in order to provide documentation of their teaching effectiveness. If candidates so desire, course-specific evaluation forms may be used in addition to the College-wide format-based CTEs: both may be administered during the same semester for the same course, or one may be administered during the same semester for the same course, or may be administered without the other. However, as noted above, the College-wide format should be used at least every third time a course is taught. The course-specific formats must be agreed upon by the department as a whole, and will conform to guidelines to be set by the department. In addition, other evidence of student evaluations of courses may be submitted, as desired by the candidate.

With regard to both the College-wide format-based and course-specific evaluation forms: The evaluation will be administered by a person other than the candidate, and the faculty member being evaluated will not be present nor see the evaluations until the final grades have been submitted. If so desired, the instructor may provide, as a supplement to course-teacher evaluations, a written description of the course, including observations about the students in the course. Such a description might include: a general description of the level of the course, the student composition in terms of class year and major, information as to whether the course is required or not, and a general comment on the teacher's perceptions of the motivation and general level of the students in the course.

The candidate may submit student comments if she or he so chooses. Candidates should either submit all student comments or none at all; in other words the candidate must not submit

comments selectively. If student comments are submitted, the candidate should note the specific courses for which no comments are given, and thereby indicate that no existing comments are omitted from the file.

For reappointment, promotion and continuing appointment, the Personnel Committee and Department Chair must take into account the results of the course-teacher evaluations, course syllabi, exams, and all other documents submitted by the candidate. The Personnel Committee's written report on the candidate should provide an accurate assessment of the instructor's teaching performance based on all of these sources of information and should state explicitly – and with utmost clarity, avoiding vague statements – what assessment is drawn from these sources of information. In the case of either positive or negative comments, the Personnel Committee and Department Chair must state in very specific terms the basis upon which they draw their assessments.

Additional evaluation procedures include the following:

- Faculty members will have the right to provide, in writing, their interpretation of any teaching evaluation materials at any level of the personnel review.

- Grade distributions are available to the Department Chair and the Division Dean, and it is the responsibility of the Chair and Dean to bring the candidate's grading patterns into general accordance with college-wide norms. Grade distributions are not to be used for purposes of evaluating the candidate's teaching effectiveness. As noted in the Final Report of the 1981-82 Committee for Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness at SUNY Cortland (at the charge of the SUNY Cortland College Faculty Senate), the Committee "did not view grade distribution data as providing much useful evidence on teaching effectiveness" (p. 3). Candidates may include this data if they so choose, but are not required to do so.

- Any faculty member who wishes to be exempt from the CTE questionnaire requirement may be granted an exemption by the department. In such cases, a visitation component will be substituted for the CTE component; however, the department would prefer that the visitation system be used

as an additional source of information on teaching effectiveness, rather than be used in place of CTEs whenever possible. If the visitation system is chosen, the visitation team will consist of three members chosen according to the following guidelines.

- (a) The faculty member being evaluated will select one member drawn from the department.
- (b) The department, according to its own procedures, will select a different member drawn from the department
- (c) The Division Dean will select one member drawn from a list of faculty members who have been awarded an excellence in teaching award or hold the rank of Distinguished Teaching Professor. The initial list may be expanded on recommendation of the "Committee on Teaching Effectiveness" with the approval of the Senate.
- (d) The visitation team will observe at least three classes in the course over a period of at least four weeks. Each visitor will write an independent observation report and will send copies to the person being evaluated and to the department.
- (e) The visitation process will be subject to modification by the "Committee on Teaching Effectiveness" with the approval of the Senate.
- (f) The visitation team's report is to be distinguished from letters from colleagues, both within and outside of the department, who have been invited by the candidate to observe the candidate's teaching, as discussed above.

## 2. Effectiveness in Scholarship

In the consideration of faculty members for continuing appointment, the totality of the candidate's research accomplishments during his/her professional career is the primary criterion by which the candidate's research record should be evaluated. Candidates with professional experience at institutions other than SUNY Cortland shall have their research activity at these institutions also taken into account in any assessment of the total research record.

In accordance with the policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees, research and professional activity is to be broadly interpreted and shall include any or all of the following activities:

- Published Book or monograph
- Journal article
- Book chapter
- Book/journal editor
- Book review
- Paper presented at professional meeting
- Research grants or fellowships
- Unpublished manuscripts
- Technical reports
- Manuscript referee
- Discussant or chair of professional panel
- Consulting activity

The Philosophy Department clearly recognizes that there are numerous routes to achieving a sufficient level of scholarly activity for continuing appointment. Therefore, we will not quantify the number of publications and conferences attended for a candidate to get promotion.

### 3. Effectiveness in Service

The opportunities for service at the departmental and College level abound. Ordinarily, in renewals of term appointment, extensive service beyond the department is not expected, as the necessity for scholarship and teaching are more imperative. After tenure is granted, however, college service is anticipated and expected, and department members are encouraged to engage in the faculty senate, UUP or leadership in one of the many all-college initiatives which are a feature of SUNY Cortland's environment.

#### IV. *Leaves of Absence*

Requests for leaves of absence should be submitted to the Chair of the Department who will then make a recommendation to the Dean.

#### V. *Mentoring*

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the senior members of the Philosophy Department to mentor junior faculty to insure the latter's success and happiness in their position at Cortland.

Responsibility for mentoring particular junior members shall be divided equally among the senior members including the Chair.

B. Mentoring process

1. Meet with new faculty before the semester starts going through all the items on the orientation checklist from the Chair's Handbook.
2. Meet with new faculty before classes begin or during the first week of classes, paying particular attention to syllabus construction and start of the semester course issues.
3. Meet with faculty of color about bias-related incidents on campus discussing college policy and community reactions. The same would apply to gay/ lesbian faculty, international faculty, women faculty, and/or faculty members from other relevant social groups should the need arise.
4. Meet with new faculty the third week of classes to discuss reappointment procedures, DSI and other personnel issues they need to know so as to be prepared for the next year. Also discuss how classes are going and schedule a class visitation. Inquire about progress in completing dissertations. (Where applicable.)
5. Once a semester, a junior faculty member may ask another faculty person to visit a class. Such visitations are voluntary. After the visitation, the observing party is encouraged to discuss the visit with the junior faculty member and a written report shall be given to the latter.
6. Meet with non-tenured faculty before the start of second semester to debrief from the first semester and cover issues that may arise for them during the spring.
7. Chair or personnel committee chair meets with faculty to discuss how their reappointment files look.
8. Time during weekly department meetings may be allotted to discuss issues of concern to non-tenured faculty.
9. Chair makes it clear that she/ he is readily available for spontaneous meetings should the faculty member deem it necessary.