

Confidentiality Considerations

1. *Access to the contents of the dossier:*

a. The *Faculty Manual* identifies only the following individuals as authorized to review the completed dossier (Section 4.IX.12.):

- The initiator (who summarizes everything in the dossier *except* the Associate Dean's recommendation, which is added after the initiator has completed the initiator's recommendation and summary [Item M] and passed the dossier on to the Associate Dean)
- The Associate Dean
- Members of the Tenure and Promotion Committee
- The Dean
- The President
- The Faculty Review Committee, in cases of an appeal by the candidate and with the consent of the candidate

In addition, because all tenure decisions are made by the Board of Regents (*Faculty Manual* IX.5.), members of the Board may have access to completed dossiers for tenure candidates as well.

b. The *Manual* also indicates that some individuals have access to specific items in the dossier, in order to prepare their own contributions to the dossier. For example, the tenured members of the department preparing letters for the dossier, and the candidate's student committee responsible for preparing a narrative summary of the student evaluations, have access to the completed student evaluation forms (see Items D and F). The treatment of each item in this handbook identifies those individuals with access to that specific item, beyond those granted access to the completed dossier.

c. Some items in the dossier are public documents. These include:

- *Item O – The department's Statement on Significant Professional Activities*
- *Item P – In cases of a joint appointment, the Joint Statement of Departmental Expectations for the position*

d. Some items in the dossier may be shared at the candidate's discretion with individuals not specified in the *Faculty Manual*. These include:

- *Item A -- The candidate's CV*, which must be shared with some individuals (see Item A) but may be shared by the candidate with others
- *Item B -- The candidate's personal statement*, which the candidate may elect to share with others for advice and feedback on its contents

e. The *Manual* expressly prohibits the sharing of some items in the dossier with specific individuals. These prohibitions include:

- *Item D – Letters from tenured members of the department*, which are not to be shared with the candidate or with anyone else not granted access to the completed dossier (Section 4.XI.4.d).
 - *Item I – Peer reviews of the candidate’s teaching*, which are not to be shared with the candidate (Section 4.XI.4.i).
 - *Item L – Peer reviews of the candidate’s administrative work*, which are not to be shared with the candidate (Section 4.XI.4.l).
- f. It is recommended that any dossier item that is neither a public document (Items O and P) nor a document belonging to the candidate (Items A and B) be treated as confidential, to be shared only with those granted access to the completed dossier and with those explicitly granted access to that item in the *Faculty Manual*.

2. *Confidentiality in initiator’s discussions with the candidate:*

The *Faculty Manual* indicates that “in completing the dossier, the initiator(s) of the candidacy shall...confer regularly with the candidate about the progress of the compilation and the general nature of the material” (Section 4.XI.3). In addition, “the candidate may request at any time a discussion with the initiator(s) of the candidacy...regarding the general contents of the dossier” (Section 4.XI.12). However, the *Manual* also indicates in Section 4.XI.12.(b) that “in such a discussion, the participants will strive to keep the names of individuals who have contributed to the dossier and the precise nature of the contribution confidential.”

In light of these parameters, initiators are encouraged to apprise candidates of the overall portrait of their professional strengths and weaknesses as that portrait emerges throughout the compilation of the dossier. These conversations are important to the candidate’s morale during the review process and to his or her preparation for the interview with the Tenure and Promotion Committee. However, the initiator must take care to maintain the confidentiality of specific contributions to the dossier. While initiators can and should discuss the aggregate contents of the dossier in summary fashion, they must not identify the contributors to the dossier nor associate specific findings or statements with specific individuals.

