

# *Rutgers Council of AUP Chapters*

***American Association of University Professors***  
***American Federation of Teachers***

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May 6, 2008

Dr. Philip Furmanski  
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Rutgers, the State University  
83 Somerset Street  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Dear Phil:

We have reviewed the drafts of 2008-2009 Academic Reappointment/Promotion Instructions provided to us in accordance with Article XIV of the Agreement and I write to convey to you a couple of observations, a couple of suggestions, and one serious concern.

There are four changes that seem worth noting, two to the Instructions themselves and two to the Forms.

ARPI, Section O. "Notification of Final Action":

Change 1: Subsection 1) Makes explicit that "double negative" tenure candidates and candidates for promotion within the tenured ranks are to be notified in writing by their dean or designee within 10 days of the final decision by the dean (excluding rank review cases, which go to the PRC).

We appreciate and applaud this change. Although the Instructions already required that all candidates be notified by dean/designee within 10 days of knowledge of the final decision, the practice until recently had been to delay notification of double negatives until the Board of Governors' first round of personnel actions. We raised a concern that the practice deprived candidates of two to three months of time to come to terms with the bad news and, for tenure candidates especially, time to go on the job market. Making the notice requirement for these candidates explicit should help to remind deans to act on the notice provision rather than on the prior practice.

Change 2: Section O, Subsection 2) provides that deans and directors will be informed by the Provost in Newark and Camden of decisions on promotions and reappointments to the non-tenured ranks, while in New Brunswick, "final decisions on reappointments without tenure will rest with the deans."

While this change appears reasonable in light of the vastly greater size of, and hence number of such decisions on the New Brunswick/Piscataway campus, it conflicts with Section P. "Final Levels of Review," which says that deans are final for double negatives and, "All other personnel actions that do not involve tenure decisions or promotion within the tenure ranks

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**Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey**

48 Street 1603 (Livingston Campus), Piscataway, NJ 08854-8036 (732) 445-2278 Fax: (732) 445-5485

E-mail: [aaup@rutgersaaup.org](mailto:aaup@rutgersaaup.org) Web Site: [www.rutgersaaup.org](http://www.rutgersaaup.org)



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require the formal approval of the Provost or the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs." We suggest reconciling the conflict by revising the language of Section P. (Our second suggestion is, in light of the recently announced change in titles, a quick search be done, and all references to "Provost(s)" be changed to "Chancellor(s).")

Change 3: Form No. 2, "Criteria Applicable to this Candidate," now asks whether candidates for promotion from Associate to Professor in rank ten or more years after the grant of tenure "wish to be considered as a ten year case for promotion to Professor?"

This new question seems appropriate in that some eligible candidates might not want the ten-year rule applied.

Change 4: Form No. 3-a, "Confidential Letter Cover Sheet," has a new section, "C. Referee recommended by (check all that apply): 1. Candidate, 2. Chair/Program Director, 3. Colleague, 4. Dean," with a box to check after each.

This change is of serious concern to us in that it reintroduces real problems that had long since been resolved in a positive manner. Years ago, confidential external letter-writers were named on separate lists, A-list: not recommended by candidate; B-list: recommended by candidate; and C-list: potential letter-writers candidate requests not be solicited. It was widely believed that B-list letters were sharply discounted just because the authors had been suggested by the candidate. This put candidates in a double bind: "If I suggest the best qualified, most prestigious people in my field, their letters will not count as much, but if I don't, they may not be asked, and/or it may be thought that I am avoiding them." The A/B-list distinction undermined the process of selecting the best, most highly qualified and prestigious experts as potential referees.

It is our firm belief that the selection of referees, and the weight accorded their letters should be determined by the quality of the evaluators themselves, not by who suggested the names. We strongly urge you to reconsider and reverse this change.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lisa C. Klein, President  
Rutgers Council of AAUP Chapters, AAUP-AFT

C: Karen Stubaus  
Sean Spinello  
BJ Walker  
Mary Gibson