

## CAP'S TOP TEN LIST OF TIPS FOR PERSONNEL FILES\*

### **TIP ONE:** Letters

- **General:** Be short, to the point, and use lay language wherever possible. Advocacy is no substitution for evaluation.
- **Department Letters:** Contextualize and evaluate as much as necessary.
- **Decanal Letters:** Should provide information and evaluation not covered by department letter or personal statement. Do not repeat or quote extensively from the APM, the department letter, or the candidate's personal statement. If the dean's recommendation differs from that of the department, explain the difference. An effective and compelling decanal letter is often achieved in one page, though controversial cases may warrant a slightly longer letter.

**TIP TWO:** Be explicit about rank, step, and salary recommendations: "We/I support a one-step merit advancement and an additional increment of salary (define increment) based on \_\_\_."

**TIP THREE:** Offer expertise to help readers at higher levels of review to understand the quality, quantity, significance, and impact of research and how these metrics compare to standards in your discipline.

**TIP FOUR:** Evaluate teaching and mentoring. Highlight student achievements and post-graduation trajectories for PhD and MA advisees. A quantitative chart summarizing teaching evaluations is very helpful. Provide context, such as standard teaching load, course relief, and buyouts.

**TIP FIVE:** Evaluate service contributions in light of the time commitment required and the overall value of those contributions to the constituencies they serve. Do not simply list committees!

**TIP SIX:** Evaluate contributions to diversity, as specified by APM 210, wherever appropriate.

**TIP SEVEN:** Evaluate external letters and the professional stature of the letter writers (address in the confidential list of letter writers to protect confidentiality). Be aware of the difference between midcareer letters, tenure letters, and letters for other levels of promotion.

**TIP EIGHT:** Big Steps reviews (i.e., promotion, advancement to step 6 or Above Scale) include everything since the last big review. No year is un-reviewed.

**TIP NINE:** Be clear and explicit in reporting department votes. Include as much information about split votes as possible.

**TIP TEN:** For regular merits, publications (published, in-press, under revision) are counted ONCE. Make sure you have advised the candidate so that their in-process research items are included in the file when they will have the greatest impact. It is appropriate to include a portion of an in-progress book, for example, to demonstrate ongoing work on a large project. However, subsequent reviews must clearly outline additional work completed since the last review. A statement should be included that outlines a candidate's contributions to jointly authored works.

*\*Note: this list is for Department Chairs and Deans. Department Chairs may consider sharing these tips with faculty. A list of tips for faculty will be available shortly.*