

School of Arts and Humanities Statement on Confidentiality in the Academic Review Process

Peer review is at the core of the academic personnel process, and confidentiality is essential for principled and credible peer reviews. These obligations reside at all levels, including individual reviews of candidate files, submission of internal evaluation letters, participation on AP committees, and discussions during faculty meetings to consider candidates for appointment and evaluate colleagues for promotion and advancement. Violating confidentiality at any level means betraying the integrity of the process in its entirety.

Faculty members wishing to receive guidance regarding their personnel files may do so within the parameters of confidentiality. For example, faculty members who wish to remain informed regarding departmental assessments of their promotion cases may review the departmental evaluation letters. All faculty members under evaluation should be reminded of the opportunity they have to provide a written response to the department's evaluation letters included in their file. This response will be formally included in their file before it is sent to the Dean.

Obligations of confidentiality do not preclude individual faculty members from mentoring colleagues and offering guidance on how to meet the AP standards of their department, provided they do not disclose information revealing the identities of other faculty members or the specific contents of any comments made during the committee or faculty meetings devoted to the assessment of personnel files.

We want to reaffirm our belief that the excellence of the peer review process depends on our ability to make confidential evaluations. Equally importantly, it depends on the ability to respond to those evaluations focusing on substance rather than on fear of personal or professional repercussions. Through our own adherence to confidentiality, our promotion of its importance, and our commitment to our shared principles of community, we will continue to uphold the prestige of our school, the quality of its peer review process, and the inclusiveness of our community.