Fall 2013

To: Department Chairs, Directors, and Deans

From: Jeff Linderoth, Chair, Physical Sciences Divisional Committee

Re: Submission of Tenure Review Documents for 2013-2014

Documents relevant to the submission of tenure dossiers to the Physical Sciences Divisional Committee, including the most recent version of the committee’s tenure guidelines and template letters (effective 11 June 2013) are available at www.secfac.wisc.edu/divcomm/physical

Please pay special attention to the requirements for documenting teaching activities and effectiveness. For promotions, the committee expects to see clear evidence of annual departmental peer review of teaching. A form for peer evaluation of teaching is available on the website.

Please review the instructions for soliciting letters of evaluation for tenure cases. The dossier must include a minimum of five “arms-length” letters from knowledgeable experts who can provide objective evaluations for both appointments and promotions. Letters from individuals such as the candidate’s major professor, close postdoctoral supervisors, frequent collaborators, recipients of joint funding, or others who may have a substantial interest in the candidate or his/her work are not “arms length” and are generally given reduced weight by the committee. The committee strongly discourages informal contact (e.g., by phone or email) with letter writers prior to formal solicitation. All correspondence with letter writers should be documented.

When a department’s executive committee vote is not unanimous, the chair’s letter should summarize the major concerns raised during the discussion.

An annotated composite tenure dossier and other sample dossiers are available for review in the Divisional Committees office. We strongly urge candidates and department chairs (or others responsible for preparing tenure packages) to examine these documents. A poorly prepared tenure package may be returned to the department for revision without review.

Finally, unfounded rumors continue to persist that tenure clock extensions (e.g., for parental leave) may count against a candidate at the divisional level. These rumors directly contradict the practice of the Physical Sciences Divisional Committee. It is important that departments dispel such rumors. Unused extensions will not cause the case to be considered as an “early” tenure decision (but the cover letter should identify the original tenure clock and any extensions to make this clear).

We look forward to working with you over the coming months. Please contact me (890-1931, linderoth@cae.wisc.edu) or the divisional committees coordinator (262-3931, divisional@secfac.wisc.edu) if we can be of assistance.