SUBJECT: Peer review of tenured faculty

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish uniform guidelines and procedures for peer review of tenured faculty.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed February 1 of every even-numbered year (ENY) by the Dean in consultation with the department Chairs, with recommendations for revision presented to the Council of Deans for review prior to final approval by the President.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. **Background.** In order to foster development of faculty talents and achievements, improve communication and teamwork, stimulate self-evaluation, and enhance quality improvement, it is important to have yearly faculty and Chair review coupled with peer review of tenured faculty.

2. **Procedure.** All faculty members will undergo yearly review by the Department Chair as described in the School of Health Professions (SHP) Annual Faculty Performance Appraisal Plan. Tenured faculty will be reviewed by the Committee for Peer Review whenever any one of the following conditions obtains:
   a. within six years of promotion to tenured status;
   b. within six years of prior review by the Committee; or
   c. upon receiving a less than satisfactory rating in the annual review process.

3. **Peer Review.** The purpose of periodic evaluation is to provide guidance for continuing and meaningful faculty development; to assist faculty in enhancing professional skills and goals; to refocus academic and professional efforts when appropriate, and to support the faculty member in addressing her/his responsibilities to the school and the State of Texas. This is not to be construed as threatening tenure as a concept and practice but rather to support an appropriate balance of emphasis on teaching, research, service and other faculty duties. The evaluation shall also include a rating for the faculty member’s compliance with TTUHSC policies, procedures, and work rules.
   a. This evaluation will be integrated with the Department Chair’s annual faculty evaluation process. Nothing in this document shall be interpreted to infringe on the tenure system, academic freedom, due process, or other protected rights, nor to establish a new term-tenure system or require faculty to reestablish their credentials for tenure. Actions by the Dean for Cause under other TTUHSC or SHP policies are not affected by this document.
   b. Faculty members will be notified by the Dean’s office to submit copies of the annual reviews, current curriculum vitae, and other relevant materials for review by the Committee for Peer Review. Reviews of teaching by the students should be included in these materials.
   c. The Committee for Peer Review for the SHP shall be comprised of a minimum of three (3) tenured individuals selected from the School of Health Professions faculty by the Dean. The proportion of individuals from the regional campuses shall be in proportion to the relative number of the tenured faculty of those campuses. Committee members will not serve in the year of their own review.
   d. Personnel from the Dean’s office will provide administrative support to the committee. This administrator will support the communication in writing of the findings of the Committee to the faculty member, the respective Chair, and the Dean.
e. The committee will thoroughly review the faculty member's submitted materials and provide a written report with an assessment of:
1) satisfactory, no additional review needed;
2) superior, with a recommendation for further review for consideration for special commendation or award; or,
3) a need for further review.

f. A Committee for Peer Review finding of "satisfactory" or "superior" concludes the review process for that faculty member. If a need for further review is determined, the committee shall determine the nature and format for this review, and the faculty member must be informed in writing regarding the nature of any concerns. Such an evaluation need not imply a performance that is not satisfactory, but rather a situation that cannot be fairly assessed with the available materials. This review may include classroom or lab visits and the solicitation of additional information by peer interview or questionnaires. The faculty member may, if desired by the committee or the faculty member, appear before the committee. The faculty member or the committee may request consultative input by outside peer(s) (outside the committee or outside the institution) with a written review, especially if the area of interest is not otherwise represented on the committee or in the institution. The results of this review will be communicated in writing to the faculty member, Chair, and Dean.

g. The committee report will be due 6 months following initial notification of the faculty member by the Dean's office.

4. On the basis of that report, actions as described under sections 5 or 6 below may result. The faculty member may challenge the findings of the report within the School's existing grievance procedures. In addition, the report may be used to determine salary recommendations, award nominations, or consider other forms of recognition commensurate with exceptional performance.

5. Professional Development Procedures. Follow-up development procedures will also be standardized, although specific activities designed to improve performance may vary according to the individuals involved. These development procedures are as follows:

a. Any faculty member whose evaluation reflects a pattern of less than satisfactory performance will be informed in writing of deficiencies in teaching, creative activity or research, or service.

b. A written program of development, not to exceed two years, will be established in consultation with the Chair and the faculty member. Each academic unit may develop additional procedures for involving other faculty in the formulation of a written program of development.

c. For individuals whose performance indicates they would benefit from additional institutional support, the evaluation may be used to provide such support (such as teaching effectiveness assistance, counseling, mentoring in research, development leave for course work, etc.). The professional development plan is a document indicating how specific deficiencies in a faculty member’s performance will be remedied. The plan will grow out of collaboration between the faculty member, the committee, the department Chair and the Dean, and should reflect the mutual goals of the faculty member, the department, and the School of Health Professions. The plan will be formulated with the assistance of, and in consultation with, the faculty member. It is the faculty member's obligation to assist in the development of a meaningful and effective plan and to make a good faith effort to implement the plan adopted.

d. Although each professional development plan is tailored to individual circumstances, the plan will, (1) identify specific deficiencies to be addressed; (2) define specific goals or outcomes necessary to remedy the deficiencies; (3) outline the activities to be undertaken to achieve the necessary outcome; (4) set time lines for accomplishing the activities and achieving intermediate and ultimate outcomes; (5) indicate the criteria for assessment in
annual review of progress of the plan; and (6) identify institutional resources to be committed in support of the plan.

e. The faculty member and the Chair will continue to provide annual reports summarizing progress toward development objectives. For the individual on a development program, each year the Dean and the Chair will provide the individual faculty member an evaluation report that will be signed by the Dean, Chair, and faculty member. Upon completion of the plan, the Chair will prepare a final report to the Dean with copies to the faculty member and the Committee for Peer Review.

f. Consideration by the Committee for Peer Review at the end of the Development Program will result in one of the following decisions:

i) Determination that satisfactory progress has been made and no further action is necessary. The faculty member's performance would thus be considered satisfactory.

ii) Determination that because of extenuating circumstances, the development program should be extended.

iii) Refer the case to the Dean for further consideration.

6. **Disciplinary Actions.**

a. The report may be used to undertake appropriate disciplinary action if incompetence, neglect of duty, or other good cause is determined to be present.

b. The report may be used for recommending termination in accordance with HSC OP 60.01, Tenure and Promotion Policy, and TTUHSC OP 60.03, Comprehensive Performance Evaluation of Tenured Faculty. In addition and consistent with Texas law, a faculty member subject to termination on the basis of this report shall be given an opportunity for referral of the matter to external nonbinding alternative dispute resolution as described in Chapter 154, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, as amended or modified, or another type of dispute resolution if agreed to by both parties within a reasonable period of time.