

Department of Mathematics and Statistics

AUPAC Policies

Approved: 2022

Academic Unit Personnel Advisory Committee (AUPAC) – PAC Policies

Department of Mathematics and Statistics – April 2022 update. (Previous version approved 5/4/21)

Composition of AUPAC

The AUPAC for the Department of Mathematics and Statistics will consist of two parallel standing subcommittees referred to as the PAC and the L-PAC. These two subcommittees of the AUPAC reflect the critical value of faculty governance in the evaluation and promotion of faculty in our department. For ease of reference, PAC continues to refer to the five-person committee reviewing tenure-track and RTA faculty progressing in the ranks of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. The Lecturer PAC, shortened to L-PAC, is the parallel three-person standing body that provides this critical peer review for RTA faculty progressing in the new promotion ranks of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and Principal Lecturer, beginning Fall 2022. Parallel departmental documents describe Policies as well as Evaluation and Promotion Guidelines for each of the PAC and the L-PAC. These two subcommittees of the department's AUPAC maintain good communications as needs arise regarding any aspect of the process and evaluation of faculty in either career promotion path.

Composition of PAC

The PAC for the Department of Mathematics and Statistics is a peer-elected body of five faculty members, one of whom is designated PAC chair and at least two others have had previous PAC experience. A PAC member can hold the chair position for at most two consecutive years. PAC membership is strengthened by a diverse representation of the area groups in the department. This method of selection preserves continuity while reflecting the current culture of the department.

Election of PAC members

The chair of the PAC is chosen by the previous year's PAC and preferably from then current PAC members. The PAC chair must have at least two years of previous PAC experience. If the PAC chair candidate is selected from outside the current PAC membership, the candidate must be confirmed by a departmental vote of approval.

The other four individuals serving on PAC are elected in a department meeting by secret ballot. Nominations must include at least two individuals who have previous PAC experience. If the new PAC chair has been selected from outside the current PAC membership, the department should give strong consideration to electing at least one individual from the current PAC to maintain continuity. All full-time faculty in the department other than the AUH are eligible to vote. Each voting member will vote for at most four of the nominated individuals. PAC membership will be determined by the votes as follows. First, the two nominees with prior PAC experience receiving the most votes will be elected as members. Then from the remaining nominees, the two individuals with the most votes will be elected as members.

Filling PAC vacancies

In the event that a PAC member vacates their seat for any reason, that seat will be filled by an election in a department meeting. Nominations and elections will follow the same format as for annual PAC elections. If the vacated seat results in fewer than three PAC members with previous experience, then nominations must consist of individuals with previous PAC experience. If multiple seats must be filled, then there must be as many nominations as necessary to result in a majority of experienced PAC members. As discussed in Composition of PAC, a diverse representation of the area groups in the department should be a consideration when filling PAC vacancies.

In the event that the PAC chair vacates their seat, the PAC follows the standard procedure for appointing a new PAC chair. If an existing PAC member is chosen as PAC chair, then the seat that member held is then filled by the policy in the preceding paragraph.

Timeline for Primary PAC Duties

The primary duty of the Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) is to evaluate faculty performance in the three areas of teaching, scholarship, and service, providing recognition for their efforts and offering recommendations in accordance with the Faculty Handbook. This is done on a yearly basis for tenure-track faculty and for tenured faculty who request it based on the contents of their yearly Faculty Activity Reports. The PAC also evaluates tenure and promotion applications and performs midpoint (mid-tenure) reviews based on materials submitted by the faculty member.

The PAC begins its meetings at the start of the academic year, usually the first week of fall classes. PAC priorities are determined by university deadlines. PAC workload is generally very heavy in the fall as the PAC strives to provide detailed feedback while meeting the university's deadline of October 1 for annual evaluations. While, per the Faculty Handbook, the AUH is responsible for annual evaluations, it has become the practice of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics that the PAC writes the official written evaluation for tenure-track faculty. The PAC chair and AUH discuss ratings on or around September 15 and maintain open communications. The PAC chair sends the evaluations to the AUH, the PAC makes any agreed-upon final edits, and the AUH sends these annual evaluations to faculty members. This practice serves a valued function in the department by aiding both the AUH and tenure-track faculty in providing important depth and breadth of feedback during the probationary years.

If the AUH and the PAC cannot come to agreement, the AUH has the option of writing a separate letter for the faculty member, which then becomes the official annual evaluation. In this case, the faculty member will also be provided a copy of the PAC evaluation letter and can choose to include this with the AUH evaluation in tenure and promotion applications. Upon request from the faculty member, the PAC chair will forward the PAC's annual evaluation letter to the Dean.

After completing evaluations for tenure-track faculty, the PAC next prioritizes requests for PAC input from Associate Professors, followed by requests for PAC input from Professors

and/or other instructional faculty members. When time allows, and in consultation with the AUH, the PAC will write the annual evaluation report for these requests with review by the AUH as described above. Otherwise, the PAC provides input on ratings to the AUH, and the PAC chair meets with the AUH in a timely manner to discuss content for the annual evaluation letters that the AUH writes. The department encourages communications between the AUH and the current PAC chair should the AUH wish to consult on any annual evaluation letter the AUH writes.

The other university-established deadline for the PAC is November 15. This is the date by which tenure and promotion reviews must be completed by PACs and AUHs for faculty members who have applied for tenure and/or promotion. As part of each review, two classroom observations are conducted by a subset of PAC members. Communication lines should be kept open between the PAC and the AUH as they carry out their respective, independent evaluations. The PAC chair sends the PAC's recommendation letter to the Dean and sends copies of the PAC letter to the AUH and the faculty member.

In the first half of the spring semester, the PAC attends to other business (e.g., updating PAC documents, annual activity report, T&P dossier). In the second half, the PAC evaluates any midpoint review documents submitted. The department's midpoint dossier submission date is roughly mid-March. The AUH and the PAC independently evaluate the materials and the PAC writes midpoint evaluations in discussion with the AUH as described above for annual evaluations. At least one classroom observation by a member of the PAC is part of this review. The midpoint review report is provided to the faculty member by the end of the spring semester. In April, the PAC invites new faculty members to a discussion regarding writing the annual Faculty Activity Report and elects a PAC chair for the next academic year in accordance with the process discussed above in this document.

Annual Evaluation Appeals Committee

Based on the Faculty Handbook, a faculty member can appeal an Annual Evaluation within seven days after receipt of the official written evaluation. In the event that the Annual Evaluation was authored by the AUH independent of the PAC, the appeal will be evaluated by the current PAC. In the event that the Annual Evaluation was authored by the AUH in consultation with the PAC, then an ad hoc Evaluation Appeals committee will be formed by the Department, as described in the paragraph below. PAC policies regarding conflict of interest apply to the members of the appeals committee.

When an ad hoc committee is required, this committee will be comprised of three former members of the PAC not currently serving, prioritized by experience first as chair of the PAC and secondarily by experience as member of the PAC. The individual making the appeal may identify one eligible former PAC member for one of the seats, with the other two seats filled according to the previously outlined policy.

The appeals committee will evaluate the appeal according to the Faculty Handbook III.E.4. The appeals committee communicates its recommendations to the AUH and to the PAC if the PAC was involved in the original evaluation. The AUH and PAC remain in communication

regarding the outcome of the appeal and any modifications to the original evaluation letter.

PAC Behavior Guidelines

Recusal

In the event that the PAC is asked to perform an evaluation of a faculty member for which one of the PAC members has a conflict of interest, that PAC member will be asked to recuse themselves from all considerations of that evaluated faculty member but will otherwise remain a member of PAC. If the PAC chair is recused, an acting PAC chair is selected from the remaining four PAC members for the relevant evaluations.

Dismissal

As per the Faculty Handbook (III.E.2.a), “The AUPAC may by majority vote of the committee as a whole remove a member of the committee for violation of AUPAC rules. Any such action is subject to review by the AUH and the dean.” Any PAC member may initiate the review of possible rule violation. In the event that a majority votes for dismissal, the PAC will prepare a report describing the rule violation and providing the evidence used in determination of the decision. The dismissed PAC member may also prepare a rebuttal statement. These reports will be submitted to the AUH and the dean for review.

Confidentiality

As per the Faculty Handbook (III.E.2.a), “All members of the AUPAC must respect and maintain strict confidentiality of deliberations on all matters under their consideration. Failure to maintain confidentiality may be grounds for removal from the AUPAC or for a misconduct charge.”

Materials (physical or digital) relating to PAC evaluation of faculty must be kept secure and private. Physical copies of reviewed materials should be securely destroyed using locked disposal bins.

Decision Making

The PAC strives for consensus in its decisions. In the lack of consensus, a majority determines the decision. In the event that there is an even number of PAC members deliberating (e.g., in the case of a recusal), a split decision is decided by the PAC chair or acting PAC chair.

Updates to Faculty Handbook

References to JMU’s Faculty Handbook in this document are intended to reflect its current state. If the JMU Faculty Handbook is amended, this document defers to the new Faculty Handbook wording.