CEP Guidelines for Allocating Faculty Positions (2026)

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Introduction

Impelled by the financial crisis of 2008-2009, the faculty established guidelines to inform the deliberations of CEP and the decision-making of the President and Provost regarding the allocation of the possibly reduced number of tenure-track positions. These guidelines were initially intended to aid not only in allocating positions but also in rethinking the curriculum and the existing distribution of teaching resources. CEP has since consulted these guidelines to inform decisions about where to add faculty as part of long-range curricular and strategic planning efforts and to facilitate the transition to a 4-course load.

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The 2009 guidelines were modified in 2013 to allow for proposals from interdisciplinary programs and in 2014 to specify that lines made vacant by pre-tenure reappointment denials and tenure denials would be presumed to return to the originating department and could be considered on an expedited timeline.

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The 2009 guidelines also stipulated that after ten years, the Faculty should review how this process for allocating faculty positions has functioned, and consider whether the guidelines should be altered. The review was conducted during the academic year 2020-2021 by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Council on Educational Policy Pool, whose 2021 report recommended retaining the pool with another evaluation of the allocation process in five years.[1] The following guidelines respond to the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation #6 to "update the CEP Guidelines for Allocating Faculty Positions to represent CEP's allocation criteria accurately and transparently" and "that these guidelines be reviewed regularly - at least every other year - to ensure that they align as closely as possible with what is actually guiding CEP decisions" (p.17). The most recent guidelines, last updated in 2024, can be found here. CEP recognizes the importance of reviewing the guidelines on a regular basis, especially in light of the strategic planning process.

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Guiding Principles

The College's mission to provide a transformative liberal-arts education that connects the arts and humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and engineering, and interdisciplinary programs is central to CEP's curricular discussions and recommendations regarding the allocation of new or vacated faculty positions. Through the procedural guidelines set forth herein and through our

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[1] The nine recommendations in the Ad Hoc Committee's October 2021 report were discussed during the 2021-2022 academic year: 10.8.21 Presentation from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Pool; 11.5.21 small group conversations on the report; 11.19.21 discussion on pool recommendations; 1.28.22 update on the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations; 2.11.22 discussion and vote that no department can have more than one representative on CEP at the same time; 2.18.22 vote that a CEP member cannot serve again for a period of 4 years.

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review and allocation of tenure lines, CEP aspires to:

- support every department and program to offer a curriculum that reflects a true liberal-arts education, including diverse curricular offerings, high-impact learning experiences, and reasonably sized classes
- maintain a balance of faculty between divisions, departments, and interdisciplinary programs
- Help the College fulfill its mission to build and maintain a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community
- ensure that every department and program is able to maintain standards of excellence in their field within the liberal-arts context
- empower faculty to shape the curriculum by building on existing interdisciplinary connections and cultivating new curricular directions

CEP considers these factors during its deliberations, keeping in mind the ultimate goal of the College to provide an outstanding liberal-arts education. CEP does not rely on any specific formula in weighting its various considerations and must necessarily decline to support excellent proposals because of the limited number of new positions available for allocation in any one year.

Positions made vacant through negative pre-tenure reappointments and tenure decisions will normally be allocated to the department or program of origin. In these cases, CEP will require a full proposal for replacement. Departments may choose to submit proposals for fast-track consideration, as long as it does not jeopardize the integrity of the process of reconsideration and appeal of the decision to deny tenure or reappointment.

Deliberative Process

According to the current timeline, each academic year, typically around the end of September, the call goes out to department chairs and program coordinators in the form of a memo from the Provost on behalf of CEP, inviting proposals from departments and programs to fill new and vacant tenure-track positions at the College. Those proposals are normally due around the end of November. The number of open positions in any one year, often referred to as the "pool," is dependent on such factors as faculty retirements, resignations, tenure or reappointment denials, deaths, and new positions made available by the Board of Managers or private foundations. The Provost's memo shares the number of available positions and provides links to proposals from the previous year, along with CEP's recommendations concerning those requests, both of which can serve as a guide in crafting new requests.

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In October, department chairs and program coordinators (or their designees) are invited to schedule office hours with CEP in order to ask questions that may clarify or strengthen their proposals. These appointments represent an opportunity for CEP to respond to queries rather than a chance for invited individuals to advocate for a position.

Beginning early in the spring semester, CEP begins a detailed consideration of each proposal it has received. When needed, CEP holds extra and/or longer meetings to ensure a thorough discussion of each proposal. Normally, each meeting is devoted to discussing a subset of the total requests from departments or programs. Any member of CEP with an appointment in a department or program requesting a new position is asked to step out of the room for the initial discussion (the member or members are present for any subsequent discussions).

Proposal discussions often generate questions that CEP would like answered by a particular chair or coordinator, who is then invited to attend a CEP meeting to respond to specific queries. Departments and programs that have submitted proposals for multiple tenure lines are often asked to prioritize one. The CEP discussions ultimately result in a straw poll among the members to guide further deliberation until a consensus emerges regarding a list of positions to recommend for approval. The list is then included in a memo that is made available to the Faculty in preparation for discussion at a faculty meeting, typically sometime in April. During that meeting, CEP listens to all opinions voiced by members of the Faculty concerning the recommendations. CEP then convenes again to finalize its recommendations to the President for approval.

Once a position is approved, the department/program works in partnership with the Provost's Office to conduct the search. The Office of the Associate Dean of the Faculty for Diversity, Recruitment, and Retention supports departments and programs in conducting inclusive and equitable searches. The Provost's Office also supports both College-wide and department- and program-level practices that help the College retain the excellent faculty it hires. This work reflects the College's commitment to excellence through its employment practices.

Fast-Track Proposals

Departments and programs may submit fast-track proposals throughout the year, and CEP considers them on an expedited timeline. These proposals should follow the same format as a normal proposal. Fast-track proposals that are recommended will be made available prior to the faculty meeting during which the recommendation will be discussed. Those that are not recommended will be made available with CEP's spring report.

Those wishing to submit fast-track requests should be aware of the following guidance from the 2022-2023 CEP annual report:

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When a department requests a fast-track approval for a tenure line, CEP considers the proposal outside the usual timeline, and without comparison to the other tenure-line requests for the year. This makes the consideration of fast-track requests very difficult and potentially unfair; accordingly, CEP can only approve these requests on **rare** occasions. The main guiding principle for such approval is that not only is the proposal for this tenure-track line extremely compelling, but there should also be **immediate urgency** to the request. Note that CEP's decision not to bring to the faculty a fast-track request **does not** reflect on the basic merit of the request but merely on whether it meets the criteria for immediate action.

Note that any position recommended for approval by CEP and brought to the faculty for discussion in response to a fast-track request from a department or program subtracts from the overall number of positions available in the pool to all departments and programs and thus must meet a high bar for approval from CEP.

Guidelines for Proposals

CEP considers the following guidelines in deciding to recommend the allocation of tenure-track positions:

(1) **The significance of the position to the curriculum of the department or program, including for majors, minors, and non-majors.** It is important for departments and programs to articulate clearly how the proposed position fits within their curriculum. For example, are courses in the proposed field required for the major? How does the position help the department or program maintain academic excellence? Would this hire allow the department or program to engage a field that has not traditionally been a part of the curriculum? Does the requested position respond to an emerging line of inquiry in the discipline? It is often helpful to CEP to gain a sense of the department's or program's history and the vision the department or program has for its future.

(2) **The impact of the proposed position on the quality and nature of student-faculty interaction.** Will the position allow the department or program to offer high-impact learning opportunities or experiences, such as Honors seminars, writing courses, first-year seminars, research opportunities, and a meaningful senior comprehensive? Will the position help evenly distribute mentoring and advising in the department or program? Will this hire mean that the department will be less reliant on visiting faculty? Will this position allow the department or program to alleviate enrollment pressures or help with student recruitment? It is important that CEP understand what challenges this position will help the department or program address in terms of its educational mission.

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(3) **The contribution of the proposed position to the College as a whole.** We are a small liberal arts college that values both depth and breadth of study. When departments and programs welcome new faculty, they join not just the unit into which they are hired, but the wider College community. How will the faculty member hired into this position contribute to the interdisciplinarity and/or broader curriculum of the College? Could this person, for example, teach courses that are cross-listed or eligible for credit in interdisciplinary programs? Might their courses serve to fulfill prerequisites for other disciplines? Are there ways that your department or program can collaborate meaningfully in this hire (for example, with a joint appointment)? In lieu of letters of support, CEP strongly encourages the department or program to have conversations with the chairs and coordinators of other departments and programs about possible collaboration.

(4) **The department's or program's plans for recruiting and supporting the faculty member hired into this position.** How will this position attract a wide pool of excellent candidates? How will the department or program welcome a new colleague and support their development in teaching, scholarship, and service during their first years at the College? Your plan should discuss mentoring, broadly, including how faculty share the responsibility, how the department provides and solicits frequent constructive feedback, and how to help faculty integrate into the community. It is important that CEP understands how the department or program will help a new colleague thrive and build a lasting career at the College.

Formatting Requirements

CEP expects each proposal to address these guidelines as thoroughly as possible. Maximum 3000 words, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. Proposals should not exceed 5 single-spaced pages, independent of charts and graphs.

Originally approved by faculty vote October 8, 2009
Modified by faculty vote October 11, 2013, May 16, 2014 and September 27, 2024

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