Some Guidelines for CVs and Promotion Dossiers

Reviewing P&T dossiers is one of the great joys of being Dean. It is wonderful to see the presentation of accomplishments in teaching, research, and service, whether of junior faculty during their probationary period, or of senior faculty as their careers mature. That said, I am struck each year by instances of striking clarity, creative presentation, innovative documentation, and—unfortunately—occasional ambiguity, even obscurity. This is an attempt to provide some guidelines for both CVs and dossiers as a whole, a complement to the excellent guidance that faculty receive from Chairs and in P&T workshops.

CV Form, Format, and Content

The CV is the principal tool for a faculty member to record accomplishment, to monitor his/her progress, and to present work for evaluation—not least for *annual reviews*. Later, it is the core of the promotion dossier. During the probationary period, faculty *might* adapt the CV presented for annual review to highlight plans and progress toward promotion and tenure: e.g., manuscript chapters written, papers "in progress" or "under review", anticipated activity, goals, and so forth. I encourage Chairs to provide guidance, and faculty to seek it, early and often. Here are some thoughts and suggestions. I hope you can consider them and adapt them to your disciplinary norms.

- SIU format: The SIU format may feel restrictive and run counter to disciplinary practice. However, it has the advantage of allowing readers at SIU (whatever their discipline) to find what they need easily. Whatever the pros and cons, this CV format is *required* for annual updates and for dossiers. Best to start early, get it right, and build the CV within this presentation format.
  http://www.siu.edu/~cola/documents/CVFormat_SIUC.pdf
- Clarity: *The* point of a CV is to communicate with others, including others outside the discipline.
  - *Ambiguity of content* is frustrating at best and, if seen as intentional (padding the CV), may undermine the reader's trust in this critical document of professional self-presentation.
  - The CV is worthy of careful graphic design. The *layout* of this document will matter more than m any other documents in an academic's life.
  - Current software allows anyone to create sophisticated documents: be careful not to overdo it, but make appropriate use of headings, paragraph style, tables, columns, (reverse) indentation, bullet points, & fonts (type, size, full & small caps, bold, italics, underline) in order to highlight, to distinguish sections, to distinguish lists of elements, to distinguish features, and so forth.
- History: The CV summarizes accomplishments over time (degrees, positions, publications, performances, etc.). List past to present **or** present to past, but *not both* in a given section!
- Distinguish *sections* (SIU-prescribed & other) using consistently formatted headings and sub-headings.
  - Use a style manual (APA/other), adapt such, or develop your own. But be consistent!
- Adapt or elaborate upon SIU *headings* to your discipline: try to describe contents of a section with a title that is both true to the discipline and meaningful to readers outside it.
  - Be careful not to accidently mislead: e.g., colleagues in the arts sometimes list *reviews* of exhibits or performances under "publications". Readers sometimes puzzle to figure out if this is a publication *by* the candidate or *about* his/her work.

- Distinguish different *types of activity* (particularly in the areas of research and creative activity):
    - most publication disciplines distinguish books, edited books, chapter in collections edited by others, articles in peer-review journals, published conference proceedings, papers/posters presented at conferences, papers presented at university colloquia, invited work, and so forth. Usually, these should be listed in separate sections. Certainly, they should be clearly identified.
    - You may use the CV to monitor and present progress: e.g., listing non only published papers, but those "in press" (accepted), "under review", and even "in preparation"— clearly identified.
    - "Sorting" creative work in the arts is often much more challenging, but nonetheless extremely important. Depending on the nature of the record, types of work may be sectioned or clearly identified in a date-sorted list. Thus exhibits of art may be clearly identified (or sorted) as "solo shows", "two-artist shows", "small group shows", or "group shows". Similarly, musical performances may be identified (or sorted) as "solo performance", "recital", "performance with orchestra), and so forth. *The point is that the record should best represent the faculty member's accomplishments in the context of that individual's creative work* and *the ways in which criteria of quality, selectivity of venue, and peer review are understood in that discipline.*
    - When redundant, do not repeat *recurring activity* (e.g., service on a committee): rather list with relevant distinctions (e.g., multiple dates of service)—e.g., Admissions (2006, 2008, Chair 2010).
- Distinguish *items* using carefully-formatted lists:
    - List important items (e.g., *Interests and Specialties, Current Projects, Courses*) as vertical lists (use bullets or spaces) rather than a string of items weakly separated by punctuation.
    - Lists of publications, presentations, exhibits, performances, and so forth are of central importance. Murkiness here can be truly irritating to readers, and it is surprisingly common. Distinguish items using reversed indents (hanging), bullets, numbers, extra spacing between items, and/or other means.
    - Some colleagues use color, *italics*, or **bold** to highlight accomplishments *since last review* (whether since last promotion or "during the past CY" in an annual CV update): e.g., 2008.
- Consistently present and distinguish *elements* within items:
    - E.g., for Education, present the degree, institution, award date, and field for *each* program completed, and do so in a *consistent order*.
    - For publications, presentations, exhibits, or performances, present information clearly, consistently, and fully: include authors, date, title of work, and outlet/venue (at least).
    - Consistently highlight (with italics or underlining) the title of a work, or the venue in which it appeared/was performed (journal, conference, edited collection) *according to a style manual.*
- Be *very clear* about the status of work: use "in press", "forthcoming", etc. clearly and appropriately.
- Authorship: a special and critical feature
    - Disciplinary norms differ, but authorship may be key in deciding whether an individual has established an *independent* program of research or creative activity, or has made *unique* contributions to a collaborative effort. Thus "with [co-authors]" is less helpful than a full, correct list of co-authors. In many collaborative disciplines, 1st authorship means principle author. Relevant disciplinary norms re authorship may need to be presented.
    - Some colleagues note student authors (e.g., with an asterisk)—helpful.
    - Some colleagues bold his/her name to readily establish a pattern of authorship.

Dossiers: Content, Format, Miscellaneous Points

Generally, dossiers are very good. For the most part, the correct material is there and in the right place. There are some persistent and re-emerging problems, and more points worth noting.

- At no point in the process are dossiers evaluated by weight or by thickness of the binder.
- Distinguish (a) the dossier and (b) supporting materials: think summary and raw material.
- The dossier should be a concise, clear, well-organized summary of the case, documenting accomplishments that can be readily verified through inspection of supporting materials.
- The record of accomplishment to be judged is principally presented through (a) the CV, complemented by (b) the candidate's statements of teaching, research, and service, as well as (c) relevant evaluations (student course evaluations, peer teaching evaluations, Chair's ratings of venues, external letters, etc.).
- Statements of research, teaching, and service are growing again. These should be brief (2-3 pages).

Teaching

- What is the candidate's contribution to the educational mission of the unit, College, and University?
- Candidate's statement may present approach, and summarize and contextualize accomplishments.
- Contribution includes teaching interests and expertise, and specifically the *courses taught*: these should be listed clearly by *name and #* in the CV and the dossier (see below), and they might be sorted by UG/graduate or in some other meaningful way.
- Documentation of effective teaching probably should include the following:
    - Syllabi: Dept should examine; Chair might comment; include sample in *supporting materials*.
    - ICE evaluations (or equivalent):
        - include summary (key items, #20 & #40) for *all/most* courses, or *justify* a selection
        - organize these by course & course type (addresses teaching effectiveness across types)
        - include other data *selectively* (if at all)—to illustrate particular strengths, improvement in teaching a particular class
    - Peer evaluations: 1-3, perhaps at different stages in probationary period; improvement?
    - Student letters and comments: a few letters (ideally solicited from past students), limited comments ("best teacher I've ever had", "saved my life", &/or to illustrate strengths)
    - Indirect teaching: important and often omitted—independent studies, UG projects, UG student groups, grad committees and thesis supervision
    - Distinguish *committees* and *chairing* at both Master's and doctoral level!
    - Try to characterize relative strengths, unique qualities of teaching, special contributions.

Research and Creative Activity

- The key question: is there a record of a *sustained, independent program of research/creative activity,* resulting in *substantial publications/exhibits/performances,* in/at *selective, peer-reviewed publication outlets/venues,* and having *a significant impact on the field?*
- Clearly list well-sorted accomplishments of R/CA in the CV, make sure that references elsewhere in dossier and Chair's letter match these.
- Address following issues: quantity, rate, &/or volume of work, quality in terms of peer-review (venue, selectivity—Chair's ratings, external letters), and impact (external letters, citations, recognition).
- If collaborative work, is there evidence of enhanced productivity and/or unique contribution.