1. Guiding Presumptions for the Contract Renewal Process

The candidate, after having already undergone a thorough and extensive competitive review process in being hired, will be assisted by the contract renewal process in her/his development as a scholar, teacher, mentor, and colleague, and her/his advancement towards tenure and promotion.

The Departmental Personnel Committee (DPC) will undertake a fair assessment of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, and offer the candidate helpful suggestions for means of improvement where necessary. Each review by a DPC is part of a sequential process, and each subsequent evaluation will carefully assess the candidate's progress in strengthening her/his case for promotion and/or tenure and in remedying previously-noted weaknesses.

The Department encourages the maximum participation of all members of its community in decision-making, consistent with the norms of fairness, maintaining community, and adherence to external requirements.

2. Summary of the Sequential Process

The "College Focus" document from the Dean of the College of Social Sciences, discusses "The Contract Review System" on page 11f. There, the process is defined as follows:

In the first year of probation, review happens in the Department level after only a few weeks on campus, in September, and the College should notify the candidate of the outcome in January. In the second year, there are two review periods, one in the early fall, and the other in the late spring. In the third year and after, the review process may take place in the Fall or Spring or both.

The DPC review in the first year should assure that the candidate has been on campus, teaching assigned classes without noticeable complaint, participating in departmental affairs, and generally demonstrating activity as a teacher, scholar, and colleague.

The two reviews in the second year of probation, and those subsequently, should each undertake the somewhat more elaborate procedures outlined below, with increasing attention being paid to whether or not the candidate continues to demonstrate strengths, and is satisfactorily addressing the weaknesses, if any, noted in previous assessments, and/or whether other weaknesses have been perceived. This means that the candidate should increasingly meet the criteria for tenure as the tenure decision approaches.

3. Categories for Evaluation

The current Agreement between the faculty union (University of Hawaii Professional Assembly--"UHPA") and the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii (a document which is variously called "The Agreement" or "The Contract") describes the contract renewal process in Article XII, on page 39f. The current "College Focus" document elaborates on it somewhat on page 11f. The Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) annually submits to the Deans and Directors, and they to the department chairs for their use and for submission independently by the DPCs, "Probationary Faculty Forms" as well as "Time Lines for Termination of Probationary Faculty" which are used to determine the timing of the Department's contract renewal procedures.

The Chair shall give a copy of each of these documents, and this "Statement of Procedures for Contract Renewal" of the Department of Political Science to each newly-hired faculty member and discuss them with the new faculty member as soon as possible after s/he is hired. The Chair shall also give in a timely
manner to and discuss with each candidate any new or amended documents which probationary faculty need in order to prepare themselves for the contract renewal process.

"Article XII, Renewal of Contracts During Probationary Period", paragraph A "General" of The Agreement states in part:

Recommendations for renewal shall require that the Faculty Member's performance has been assessed for strengths and weaknesses and has been rated satisfactory, that there is a continuing need for the Faculty Member's services at the University, and that the Faculty Member has made the professional improvement or has demonstrated the professional and personal qualities needed by the department, or similar considerations. A positive assessment does not necessarily assure renewal of appointment.

On the VPAA forms, the DPC shall indicate whether it determined the "Overall Rating" of the probationary faculty member to be "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" and whether its recommendation is for "Renewal" or "Nonrenewable" of the probationary faculty member's contract.

When more than one faculty member is being assessed by the DPC, the candidates shall not be compared to one another.

4. Information Used By the DPC in the Assessment
The Chair of the Department, though informed by the DPC report, is not a member of the DPC and engages in, and reports to the Dean, an assessment of probationary faculty independently of the DPC.

Each probationary faculty member shall assemble and give to the DPC a file of appropriate information, which should include assessments of scholarly work, statements and copies of research projects proposed or underway, and other evidence of professional activity and improvement.

Full and complete teaching evaluations from all classes taught, based on a common departmentally-approved instrument, administered independently of the probationary faculty member by the Department, shall also be placed in the member's DPC file.

The DPC independently of the probationary faculty member shall elicit supplemental information by requesting written submittals only on teaching, scholarship, and professional, university, departmental and community service from faculty and students. Only signed letters will be accepted, with the confidentiality of the author being assured throughout the review process.

The DPC should make an effort to elicit responses from all Department faculty members, especially those who are within the candidate's field of specialization. Letters from other UH faculty may be solicited, when appropriate.

Requests for student comments will be distributed by the DPC to departmental graduate students and undergraduate majors by email and by posting on official departmental bulletin boards.

When requesting letters, the DPC should make it clear that it is asking letter writers to assess the strengths and weaknesses of, and continuing need for, the candidate in terms of her/his teaching, scholarship, Department participation, professional and community service, meeting the curricular needs of the Department and University, and other elements as described in Article X of the UHPA Agreement.

The DPC is not a venue for the filing of formal complaints. If the DPC were to receive something which seems to be a formal complaint, the chair of the DPC will immediately contact the appropriate administrator or counselor (Department Chair, Dean, Student Advocate, and the like) for evaluation and resolution of the matter.

In order to assess the candidate's strengths and areas that need improving, the DPC does not need exhaustively to search for every bit of information available, but merely try to obtain a fair sampling of relevant information. Whenever the committee receives negative information about the candidate, the committee should evaluate the information as to its accuracy.

5. Composition of the DPC
The DPC will be composed of five tenured faculty members randomly selected from all Department tenured faculty members above the rank of the candidate being reviewed. Prior to the actual selection, each of the candidates being reviewed may ask the Department Chair to remove one name from the pool of potential DPC members. This request will be kept confidential. The five tenured faculty members shall be chosen from a box containing the names of all departmental tenured faculty members above the rank of the candidate being reviewed, excepting any otherwise eligible tenured faculty members who have been excluded by the candidate(s) under review. The names of all eligible tenured faculty members who have previously served on a DPC shall also be included. The names shall be pulled blindly from the box by the Department Chair during a Department Meeting. No active member of the tenured faculty above the rank of the candidate being evaluated has the right to refuse to participate in the selection process or to refuse to serve on the DPC, if selected.

6. Procedures of the DPC
The Chair of the DPC is a tenured faculty member elected by DPC members. Each member of the DPC shall receive a copy of this document, and all of the other documents mentioned above. The meetings of the DPC shall be closed and all information and discussions kept in confidence.

In the process of its deliberations, the DPC shall make the candidate's file available to all Department tenured faculty members above the rank of the candidate being considered so that the faculty may perform its proper role in evaluating the candidate. The DPC shall then hold a meeting with all tenured faculty members above the rank of the candidate in order to solicit information about the candidate and obtain a sense of an interactive faculty evaluation.

The DPC will strive to arrive at a consensual appraisal of the candidate's professional progress. In the absence of consensus, the decision about the "Overall rating" and "Recommendation for or against renewal" will be determined by a majority vote by secret ballot.

7. The Norm of Confidentiality
All DPC members will adhere to strict confidence of information sources. Unsigned letters and "secondhand" information are not legitimate inputs into the DPC assessment process and will not be accepted or considered.

The candidate's file shall be available only to the candidate and tenured faculty members above the rank of the candidate being considered.

If a DPC participant feels the process of the Committee has been seriously breached or the norm of confidentiality violated, and cannot resolve the matter in the Committee, he or she has the right to take his or her case to the Department Chair for resolution. In the absence of a satisfactory resolution of the issue, he or she may then bring the matter to the attention of a meeting of all tenured faculty above the rank of the candidate. Maintaining the confidentiality of sources, however, will remain the prime consideration at all times.

8. The Right of Candidates to Respond to the Committee's Assessment
During the initial deliberation stage, candidates shall have an opportunity to respond to any especially critical information which the Committee might receive (with the author's anonymity insured if the author wishes to remain unidentified to the candidate).

The candidate shall have a chance to review and comment on the DPC's draft report.

The candidate may, at his or her discretion, choose to bring the final report before a meeting of the tenured faculty members (including the Chair) above the rank of the candidate for further discussion.

9. Reporting the Committee's Assessment
The Committee's final report will be submitted to the Chair, who will show both the Chair's and the DPC's assessment to the Candidate, who signs a statement of acknowledgment (and not necessarily agreement) before the Chair transmits all of this to the Dean for the Dean's subsequent assessment and decision.

The Committee shall inform the Department that the procedures have been completed and that the report is available in the Departmental Office for inspection by all tenured faculty members above the rank of the candidate being considered.