

# Guidelines for the Preparation of Personal Narratives

The purpose of the brief personal narrative is to give those reviewing your candidacy for reappointment, tenure or promotion an opportunity to learn more about you and your work than they might from your professional résumé alone. The narrative may, therefore, include a general statement of your career goals, teaching philosophy and reasons for entering academic life. More specifically, it offers you an opportunity to describe all of your professional responsibilities--your teaching, student advising, departmental and college-wide committee work, and your scholarship (which encompasses a variety of approaches in different disciplines, including creative work in the arts) and community service--in your own words. Your narrative should be prepared with specific reference to the contribution you have made or expect to make at the State University of New York at New Paltz.

In the preparation of your narrative, give consideration to your primary audience. It will be an important source of information about you as a professional for your external reviewers, your departmental personnel sub-committee, if one exists, your Departmental Chair, the Central Personnel Committee charged with reviewing your candidacy, the Dean, the Provost and the President.

Many approaches are possible. One that is most straightforward is chronological, within general areas under review in accord with the Trustees' Criteria. If you adopt this approach;

1. Begin with a general statement of goals and philosophy.
2. Then, if appropriate, describe your doctoral dissertation, giving its title, and a brief summary.
3. Describe your teaching career and your objectives and goals as a teacher. Describe the courses you have taught, new courses you have developed, innovations you have introduced into your class work and contributions you have made to teaching in your discipline. For example, have you employed new instructional technologies in your established courses, or newly developed ones? Include information on workshops or seminars you may have attended that helped to improve your teaching technique, or presentations you may have made to your colleagues on the improvement of instruction.
4. Describe how your study and scholarly or creative work has proceeded since your dissertation or terminal degree project. Have you embarked upon new or related areas of study? What have been the results? What is the connection between your original interests and your continued intellectual development?
5. Describe how you have maintained your scholarly interests. Have you attended conferences, seminars or workshops that have helped you develop your scholarship? Have you applied for and received grants? Explain how you have used your sabbatical leaves or reassignment from teaching to further your scholarship.

6. Describe your role as a member of the College community and the broader professional community. Include information on your responsibilities as an advisor to students, both your own majors and others; your departmental and college-wide committee work; and your service as a professional to the public in the region, state and nation.
  
7. Conclude with a projection of your future academic career at SUNY New Paltz. What direction do you expect your scholarly work to take in the future? What new developments do you anticipate in your teaching? How do you envision the future development of your responsibilities to provide service to the institution and, where appropriate, in your professional capacity to your professional organization and/or the external community? Think in terms of goals that, if reached five and ten years from now, will indicate that you have met your expectations of yourself. What, in other words, do you hope to be the “shape” of your academic career and how do you think SUNY New Paltz can best help you meet your goals?

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