External Mentoring Program for Junior Faculty

Background: Several years ago the Department agreed that it could be useful to untenured faculty to have an outside expert read their manuscript at some point before its submission to a press and when input from such a manuscript review could be usefully incorporated into the pre-tenure book revision process. (Other schools have established such reviews with one or two outside experts coming to campus to meet with untenured faculty to provide manuscript guidance.)

At the time this policy was established, no guidelines were written to cover its implementation. Arts and Sciences, we have learned, will not fund such an initiative centrally; therefore, its implementation has to be frugally managed.

The Personnel Committee proposes the following:

(1) that any untenured faculty member who wishes to have one scholar external to Columbia review his or her manuscript before tenure may ask that the Chair put in motion such an invitation;
(2) that this program is voluntary; no one is obliged to request such an external reader;
(3) that the results are for the benefit of the untenured faculty member and are not to be shared with the department;
(4) that such a review does not preclude the outside faculty member from being asked to write a tenure letter; in fact, having done such a review may uniquely position that faculty member to be a knowledgeable and useful letter writer;
(5) that the total amount to be spent on such a consultation cannot exceed $1000, which must include a $400 honorarium. Travel, lodging, and any meals associated with the visit must come from the remaining $600;
(6) that, alternatively, the untenured faculty member can travel to the consultant’s home institution, but the same $1000 limit applies;
(7) that, practically speaking, selecting scholars from the Mid-Atlantic and lower New England region will, most often, allow us to do these visits within the proposed budget;
(8) that the continuation of the program depends on ongoing availability of funds from the departmental budget.