Faculty Policies

Promotion and Tenure Policy

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Annual Report on Promotion and Tenure
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The assignment of academic rank and the award of tenure safeguard the University's intellectual standards, its academic integrity, and, in the end, its academic freedom. Few decisions carry the degree of institutional importance or affect the University's future as much as those involving the promotion and tenure of academic faculty.

This document concerns teaching faculty in units that report to the Vice President and Provost of the University who have been elected by the Board of Visitors and who are on the tenure track. It applies to the renewal of term appointments, to the awarding of tenure, and to promotions up to and including the rank of full professor for all schools or divisions that report to the Vice President and Provost of the University.

Each school or division must have a written policy for promotion and tenure that reflects the standards of its disciplines and its own considered aspirations. Differences among disciplines are appropriate, indeed inevitable, but each set of standards must be justified against an articulated mission, must establish procedures that assure their fair and reasoned application, and must be consistent with the policies and procedures outlined below.

Tenure track elections are "with term" if there is a specified number of years for which the appointment extends under the employment agreement between the faculty member and the University entered into at the time of initial hiring or on a "with term" renewal. The complementary phrase "without term" is used to denote the award of "tenure." "Tenure" or a "without term" election refers to an appointment to the faculty of indefinite duration. Both faculty "with term" appointments and faculty "without term" appointments are subject to annual evaluations, to a system of merit pay, and to appropriate sanctions, including suspension or termination of employment, in the event of unacceptable performance of duties.

The Probationary Period on the Tenure Track
The probationary period for tenure is the cumulative amount of time spent under term appointments while on the tenure track. In ordinary cases, it does not exceed seven years in full-time faculty activity. Tenure track faculty are entitled to fair consideration for renewal and/or tenure, but there is no presumption of or entitlement to renewal or tenure by virtue of being on the tenure track. Rather, renewal and tenure decisions are individually determined, in light of departmental, school, or University needs and appropriate standards. A candidate is entitled to fair consideration as measured by departmental or school needs and standards, in light of overall University objectives.

The probationary period may be extended beyond its ordinary term only if a written request by the faculty member has been approved in writing by the dean and the provost. Approval by the dean and the provost must be sought and provided in advance whenever possible. A leave of absence from the University does not extend the probationary period without such written request and approvals. Examples of circumstances under which "clock-stopping" may be approved include but are not limited to: (1) engagement in important public or University service, (2) maternity or family parenting, and (3) serious personal or family illness.

In cases in which the original term appointment is shorter than the period for tenure consideration, probationary faculty are entitled to adequate consideration of their potential for renewal for an additional term appointment and to advance notice that such consideration is to be given. They must have the opportunity to submit supporting documents as a part of that process. Ordinarily, the provost does not review decisions not to renew term appointments prior to the tenure review.

Faculty members in the probationary period who are not to be re-elected after the expiration of the term of their appointment are entitled to notice of non-renewal in advance of the expiration of the appointment as follows:

1. For persons who are not to be renewed after more than two years of service: One calendar year.
2. For persons who are not to be renewed after two years of service: By December 15 of the second year if the
definition of the terms “teaching,” “research,” and “service” will vary from school to school, as will the weights assigned to each in the tenure decision. Schools must specify their interpretations of these terms in their written internal tenure and promotion documents, as well as indicate, as objectively as is practical, how such activities are to be weighted in the reviews carried out by the provost and her or his advisors, but institutional review will be conducted in the broad context of the following criteria:

1. Quality of, and commitment to, student instruction (including teaching, course design, course material, interaction with students outside of formal instructional periods, and other mechanisms of enhancing student learning);
2. Quality of, and productivity in, scholarship, research, and/or creative activity; and
3. Service contributions to the University, the profession, and the public.

Student Instruction. An award of tenure will not normally be made unless there is evidence of both the candidate's sustained commitment to classroom instruction and the candidate's sustained effectiveness as a contributor to the intellectual development of students through devices such as course design, course material, interaction with students outside of formal instructional periods, and other mechanisms of enhancing student learning. The means of assessment of that contribution will vary with the field, with the level at which the teaching is concentrated, and with the degree of objectivity with which outcomes can be measured during the probationary period. In schools that serve undergraduate students, separate attention should be focused on commitment to and effectiveness of undergraduate instruction. Student evaluations must be a part of the evidence in all cases, but by themselves they are not enough. Students are important judges of a teacher's fairness, organization, and personal qualities in the classroom, laboratory, seminar, or office; but the candidate's faculty peers are normally the better judge of the content of her or his pedagogy. Popular teaching and good teaching are not necessarily the same thing. Advising, availability to students, and other forms of beneficial interactions between the candidate and students may be given appropriate weight as a part of the "student instruction" criterion, but are not, by themselves, a substitute for accomplished classroom instruction or for other elements of the tenure standards.

Research. While the standard will be discipline specific, there must exist a body of original research or creative work sufficient in quality and quantity to have led at least to the beginning of a national reputation in the candidate's field. There must also be strong indications of a commitment to original research or creative work that will lead to sustained contributions over time and to the judgment that growth in stature will continue. While external evaluations of the candidate's contributions to original research or creative work are a required component of a positive case for promotion or tenure, it is also required that the appropriate faculty unit and the dean make a careful and independent judgment that the quality and quantity of the candidate's scholarly output is sufficient to justify the recommended action.

Service. Service to the University is an obligation of every regular faculty member. Service to one's professional discipline and, in a number of disciplines, to the broader public is important and sometimes essential in terms of job definition. The proportions of each will vary widely, however, not only from school to
school and department to department, but among candidates as well. Quality and effectiveness of service are difficult to assess. The effort must nevertheless be made. In certain disciplines, strong external service can appropriately be given substantial weight in the tenure evaluation process. And, in all schools, genuine contributions to institutional governance, through committees and otherwise, are a part of the obligations expected from faculty. Service is, therefore, a qualification for tenure, even though its relative weight will vary. In no case, however, can it stand alone to justify the award of tenure nor can devoted service compensate for inadequate student instruction or research.

**Institutional Qualifications for Promotion**
A concurrent recommendation of promotion and tenure will generally be considered under the standards set forth for tenure recommendations. For promotions within tenure, each school for whom such promotions are contemplated must have written standards concerning the criteria for promotion, including guidelines as to when promotion is ordinarily considered (i.e., after how many years of tenured status). In general, the criteria for promotion within tenure are similar to those for the granting of tenure, except that there should be substantially increased attention to the candidate's (a) national prominence (with international recognition desired wherever possible) and (b) sustained demonstration of distinguished performance in student instruction, research, and service. As before, outside letters should be gathered in the assessment of scholarship, and (where appropriate) teaching and service.

An issue occasionally arises as to whether a different standard for promotion (not tenure) might be used to reward individuals who have significantly contributed to important University goals and missions and who have had distinguished academic careers, but whose work has not progressed or sustained itself sufficiently to warrant promotion under the standards of the prior paragraph, fairly applied. In rare cases, following a substantial period in rank after the award of tenure, a school may advance for approval the promotion of a tenured faculty member who has made distinguished contributions to the University over a sustained period of time that warrant special recognition outside the normal criteria for promotion. Promotion under this provision is to be reserved only for the rare situation in which a strong special case can be made. In no instance is length of service itself to be a sufficient criterion for promotion.

**Actions in the Office of the Provost**
The vice president and provost of the University maintains a Provost's Promotion and Tenure Committee which is chaired by the vice provost for faculty recruitment and retention. The Provost's Promotion and Tenure Committee reviews the files of promotion or tenure candidates referred to the committee by the provost and reports its recommendations to the provost for action.

**Affirmative Recommendations.** Affirmative recommendations by the deans for promotion or tenure must be supported by adequate investigation, review, and written documentation. All affirmative recommendations will be reviewed with care in the provost's office. Those thought to warrant further discussion, whether on process or on substantive grounds, will be sent to the Provost's Promotion and Tenure Committee for further consideration and advice to the provost. A proposal for an outside hire without term must be made in essentially the same form as that employed for internal grants of tenure, but the Provost's Promotion and Tenure Committee will not ordinarily review it.

Should the Provost's Promotion and Tenure Committee wish additional information on any case, that fact will be reported promptly to the dean. Each dean will be asked to discuss any cases from her or his school where the provost, in consultation with the Provost's Promotion and Tenure Committee, has concerns regarding the substantive recommendation, the process used to reach it, or the quality and thoroughness of the written data gathered to support the recommendation.

**Negative Recommendations.** Negative recommendations by the deans for promotion or tenure must be supported by adequate investigation, review, and written documentation. All negative recommendations at the departmental level must be reviewed at the school-wide level and by the dean. The report to the provost on such action should include the date on which the candidate was notified of the school's decision.

The provost will review negative recommendations on promotion or tenure only if a written request for such review is made by the candidate within 30 days of being notified of the school's decision. Such requests should be accompanied by adequate documentation and with a statement of reasons as to why the recommendation is believed to be inappropriate. In order to ascertain when that period begins, the Provost requires that the Dean provide the Provost's Office with a copy of the communication to any candidate which notifies him/her of the negative recommendation for promotion or tenure. The provost may refer such appeals to the Provost's Promotion and Tenure Committee for its consideration and advice.

The provost generally will not review decisions that decline to accelerate a particular candidate along the tenure track. The appeal process outlined here assumes that the negative recommendation was made at the "normal" time for consideration of tenure in that school.

Given the reality that promotions within tenure may occur at substantially different times, even within a school, and given the possibility of multiple considerations of such promotion over a career, there is a limit to the "appeal of right" to the provost in cases where faculty with tenure are denied promotion. Each school should
establish a reasonable period within which promotions within tenure will ordinarily be considered. A person passed over for promotion one year may be reconsidered the following year. Negative decisions on promotion within tenure will be reviewed by the provost only if no previous request has been made by the same candidate within a five-year period.

In all cases in which the provost reviews negative promotion or tenure recommendations, such review will be limited to procedural grounds or to the possibility of unfairness or bias at the school level, with the candidate ultimately having the burden of demonstrating material procedural irregularity, unfairness, or bias leading to the conclusion that the negative tenure recommendation was affected. Normally, the substantive judgments of the school on the quality of student instruction, research, and/or service will not be reversed when adequately supported and in accordance with University policy.

**Final Action.** As soon as practical after the February 1 deadline (or after a special promotion or tenure action has been initiated), the provost will report to the dean the results of the promotion and tenure reviews at the provost’s level and will forward approved recommendations to the president and, with her or his approval, to the Board of Visitors for action. Promotion and tenure decisions are effective upon approval by the Board of Visitors.

*Peter W. Low*

*Vice President and Provost of the University*

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