

# College of Arts and Sciences

## Tenure and Promotion Workshop

Spring 2004

### Expectations for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

The decision about tenure is one of the most important decisions that we make. It is a decision that combines an assessment of the record to date and a projection of a career into the future. The precise opportunities and expectations vary widely over the units within the College and across the University, but they all involve some measure of quality, quantity, and trajectory in the record. There is no single scale that can be used even within a unit, as the possible combinations of quantity, quality, and trajectory are innumerable. However, there are general principles that are applied as uniformly as possible across all cases, by the College Council and the Dean.

### Scholarship

As a premier research university, our expectations regarding the independent scholarly record of our faculty are high. In general, quality is more important than quantity, although there must be sufficient quantity to provide evidence of a significant level of scholarly productivity. Several factors influence the assessment of the quality of a scholarly record.

- At more senior levels, quality is often measured by citations or other indicators of the impact of scholarship. At the junior level, quality is most often demonstrated by the quality of the journals or presses in which the individual publishes or the quality of the exhibit or performance venue.
- Outside funding of research from prestigious foundations and institutes (in those disciplines where it is available) can be viewed as a significant part of the scholarly record, depending on the relative size of the grant and the significance of the questions posed.
- The impact/significance of the scholarship is most often determined by the comments from outside reviewers, but often reviews of the work are available as well.
- The composition of the portfolio of published works also matters. A collection of good but unconnected articles may not produce the same sense of impact that a set of articles advancing a coherent line of scholarship would. It is not unprecedented, though, for faculty to shift scholarly areas of focus, even at the junior level. The personal statement provided by the candidate is a very important guide to the significance of each scholarly piece and their connections to each other.
- Another issue is the connection of the published work to the dissertation. Highly regarded articles from the dissertation do count—but not as much as highly regarded articles reflecting scholarship beyond the dissertation. For those disciplines where a book is considered standard for tenure, a book based on the dissertation that shows significant extensions and revisions is regarded more highly than one that does not.
- In the creative and performing arts, tenure portfolios will reflect the faculty member's creative work—including exhibitions, performances, and reviews thereof. As with all faculty members, the significance of the work and career trajectory are of paramount importance.

- The scholarly record should provide clear evidence of independent thinking and research/performance. Thus, although many junior scholars continue to do some collaborative work with a former Ph.D. or postdoc advisor, it is important to establish a record of growing independence from former advisors.
- Invitations to talk at other universities and prestigious events add to the scholarly record but generally play a relatively minor role independent of other measures of the scholarly record.
- We do encourage collaborative work; thus coauthored articles and creative works are given important weight by the Council. It is, however, necessary to identify the contributions of the candidate to these articles and works. In general, if the contribution of the candidate is primarily technical, it does not count as much as if the contribution is of a more substantial nature. A significant portion of the overall research record should include articles and works to which the candidate has made the primary contributions.

Given that the decision regarding tenure is very much about future expectations, the trajectory of scholarly productivity is carefully considered. The acceptance/publication of articles or the exhibition of work or performance just before tenure is carefully scrutinized in order to determine the extent to which it reflects a genuine timely outcome of a growing scholarly record as opposed to a belated effort to increase its quantity.

### **Teaching**

A good teaching record is a necessary part of a successful tenure and promotion case. Tenure will not be granted in the College of Arts and Sciences without evidence of good teaching. An exceptional teaching record can compensate for a more limited scholarly record, but it cannot substitute for an unacceptable scholarly record. Teaching is viewed broadly, including curriculum planning, course design, student reactions and success, and mentoring. Evidence of success in these areas will be judged using the following materials.

- Student evaluations. Candidates are expected to have course evaluations for a large percentage, if not all, of the courses taught at the UW. At a minimum, candidates are expected to have numeric scores above 3.0 (good) on the typical 5-point scale. Special interest is placed on evaluations of the instructor's contribution to the class, the overall quality of the class, and, especially, the amount students learned.
- Peer reviews. The Faculty Code calls for peer review each year for Assistant Professors, and these are an important part of the candidate's record. Ideally the reviewer will be provided with a full portfolio of the course being reviewed, including a statement of course objectives and philosophy, before visiting a class—though classroom visitation is not formally required in the peer evaluation process. It is best if the file includes peer reviews from several different faculty colleagues. Especially in cases of interdisciplinary courses, it may be useful to have peer reviews by faculty in different disciplines. Constructive criticism is expected in most peer reviews.
- Mentoring record. A very important part of our teaching responsibilities takes place outside of any specific course. The advising of students, both undergraduate and graduate, is a significant contribution to the teaching mission of the university.

- Personal statement. The personal statement provides a great opportunity to explain the overall teaching record and steps taken to improve the quality of teaching in response to feedback.

As with scholarship, there is a fundamental interest in the trajectory of teaching quality. Most faculty show marked improvement during their first years as they gain experience and support.

### **Service**

Communities thrive when all members contribute to the common good. Thus we expect that candidates for tenure and promotion will have been involved in the life of their department and, hopefully, in the life of the University and their national associations. The University and the College have also made engagement with the broader public one of our institutional goals. It is desirable to show evidence of contributions to or engagement with the broader community (and in some cases may be part of the job expectations), but this is usually much less important to the evaluation than is service to the department and University. It is understood that junior faculty will commit less of their time to service than tenured faculty members.

### **Conclusion**

The College and the University seek to appoint individuals who will be intellectually independent and capable of fulfilling leadership roles in their fields and in the University. We provide additional resources during the pre-tenure years to support career development, and we hope and expect it will lead to a successful decision of tenure and promotion based on the principles outlined in this document. It is important to stress, however, that ultimately individuals are responsible for their own professional success.

### **Resources**

Guidelines and specific instructions regarding promotion and tenure in the College of Arts and Sciences can be found on the College's Web site at [www.artsci.washington.edu](http://www.artsci.washington.edu). Go to Administrative Services and click on the Administrative Index. There are topics on promotion and tenure, promotion and tenure documentation, and other related areas.

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