

Promotion & Tenure Guidelines
Department of Composition - now called Writing Studies

Required by Section 7.12 of the Regulations Concerning Faculty Tenure

I. Introductory Statement

This document describes with more specificity the indices and standards which will be used to evaluate whether candidates for promotion and/or tenure in the Department of Composition meet the general criteria in Section 7.11 of the University of Minnesota Regulations Concerning Faculty Tenure, July, 1985. For a complete perspective, the reader is advised to review Section 7.11 and 7.12 in its entirety.

II. Departmental Mission Statement

The Department of Composition concerns itself with teaching, research and service in writing, rhetoric, and discourse. The department is responsible for providing instruction in and encouraging the development of student and faculty competence in written discourse. However, in developing such competence the department recognizes a broader concern it shares with the other units in the College of Liberal Arts. We are committed to teaching literacy in all its aspects. To teach students to write well we must teach them to read and think critically and to listen and speak thoughtfully. In this sense our departmental focus is at once disciplinary and interdisciplinary.

III. Criteria for Tenure

The basis for awarding indefinite tenure is the determination that the achievements of an individual have demonstrated the individual's potential to continue to contribute significantly to the teaching, research, and service missions of the department and the university over the course of the faculty member's career.

The department does not arbitrarily define the degree of importance which should be attached to each of the different criteria for promotion and tenure. Ideally, a candidate should demonstrate distinction in teaching, research, and service. A candidate lacking distinction in teaching and research would not be considered a prospect for tenure or promotion.

A. Teaching

Effectiveness in teaching is determined by consideration of items such as the following:

1. the numbers of courses and students taught.
2. the number and types of advisees assigned and the quality of advisement.
3. the difficulty beyond numbers, of the individual's teaching load.
4. teaching performance as measured by student and/or peer evaluations.
5. teaching performance as evidenced by the subsequent performance of students or by the comments of graduates.

6. the improvement of existing courses or development of new courses.
7. the individual's activity in improving the quality of teaching in the department or across the campus.
8. professional activity that demonstrates commitment to high quality teaching.
9. teaching awards won.
10. the individual's contribution to the development and maintenance of a graduate program in professional communications.

B. Research, Scholarship, and Artistic Production

Admission to the faculty and advancement within its ranks depend on the development and dissemination of knowledge. Serious commitment to and participation in the scholarly activity is expected. While there will be variation in the specific forms individuals choose to express such commitment no faculty member will be tenured without providing evidence of scholarship and/or artistic production.

Seeking mastery of one's field and sharing one's knowledge with other members of the academic community – colleagues and students – constitute the essence of scholarly and creative work. Original contributions to the knowledge in and interpretation of one's own field are the most focused and enduring products of one's scholarship. Similarly, published writing in a variety of literary forms demonstrates artistic achievement. Evidence of such work can be various. Scholarly books and articles and diverse types of artistic writing published by reputable presses and journals provide the most obvious evidence. Production in non-print media, editing, reviewing manuscripts for established journals and presses, translating scholarly or artistic work for publication, participation as speaker or discussant in the programs of professional organizations, and unpublished manuscripts or reports, can, when accompanied by competent outside evaluation, provide supplemental evidence of scholarly or creative work.

C. Service

The department recognizes that successful functioning of the University depends on faculty participation and leadership. Service of unusual distinction should receive substantial emphasis in evaluating applications for promotion and tenure. It is important that the documentation of service in a faculty member's file be very explicit. The department will regularly make an effort to secure information about the quality of service outside the department.

Recognition of service is based on accomplishments in three areas:

1. University Service:

Faculty members are expected to participate in the work of committees and similar agencies and in the management functions of their departments. Committee chairpersons are expected to provide a specific account of especially valuable service by committee members.

2. Professional Service:

Participation in the ongoing professional activities on one's discipline is evidence of professional commitment and often of standing within the profession. Membership in professional societies, attendance at professional meetings, and participation in such meetings are expected. Holding an official position such as an officer, or program or section chairperson is recognized as significant service and should be encouraged. A faculty member's contribution as a consultant to press, journal, institution, or government because of one's expertise may be regarded as important service.

3. Community Service:

Community service that is reasonably related to the professional role of a faculty member or to the cultural outreach of the University can be an important aspect of faculty service.

IV. Promotion

A. To Associate Professor

1. Promotion to Associate Professor with tenure is based on the determination that the achievements of an individual have demonstrated the individual's potential to continue to contribute significantly to the mission of the University and to its programs of teaching, research, and service over the course of the faculty member's academic career.

2. Letters from authorities in the candidate's field assessing the candidate's contributions to scholarship are required to support departmental recommendations.

B. To Professor

1. Promotion to Professor with tenure is based on effectiveness in teaching and professional distinction in research. A strong service record will strengthen a promotion request.

2. Letter from authorities in the candidate's field assessing the candidate's contributions to scholarship are required to support departmental recommendations.

V. Procedures

The Department complies with the procedures for promotion and conferral of indefinite tenure set forth in Section 201.000 of the collective bargaining agreement between the Regents of the University of Minnesota and the University Education Association.

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