

REPORT
OF THE
ACADEMIC SENATE AD HOC COMMITTEE
ON
TENURE AND PROMOTION
SUBMITTED MAY 2, 2007

BY

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STATEMENT OF MISSION AND AIMS

Background

The Executive Committee of the Academic Senate appointed this ad hoc committee with the charge “to study tenure and promotion processes at YSU and at other universities ... and to present its recommendations, including any minority position, to Student Government and the Academic Senate for discussion ... this committee is formed with neither the intent nor the desire to circumvent the authority of the collective bargaining process.” The full text of the establishing Resolution for the promotion and tenure committee may be found in the October 4, 2006 Academic Senate Minutes with the appointed members and the elected chair being listed in the November 1, 2006 and December 6, 2006 Minutes. The ad hoc committee on tenure and promotion will hereafter be referred to as the Committee.

It is worth reiterating that recommendations by the Committee are purely advisory and have no authority in any way over the process of negotiation between the Association and the University regarding the tenure and promotion processes. Nevertheless, being constituted by the Academic Senate, the Committee hopes that its recommendations will be considered in any future negotiations. In discussions with the Senate President, it was determined that this report would be presented at the May 2, 2007 Senate meeting.

The Appointees met initially to select a chair, who was elected unanimously. The full Committee then commenced a process that encompassed a number of face-to-face meetings and hundreds of e-mail communications. The first task of the Committee was to establish a scope for its activities and aims, within the limits established by the Resolution.

Scope

Issues regarding tenure and promotion processes are complex and controversial, and the Committee’s work could very easily have grown far beyond that suitable for an advisory body and the available time. Thus, the Committee decided to concentrate on a subset of issues that may be described as Core Issues and Procedural Issues. Obviously, these subsets are interwoven. Nevertheless, the Committee found it valuable to structure its work in this way.

Core Issues to be considered were identified as:

1. Should there be some form of university-wide review of applications beyond the college and department levels? If so, what form should that review take?
2. What should be the role and/or weight of previous practice for tenure and promotion processes?
3. The demands on faculty differ significantly from college to college; should these differing demands be recognized by the creation of Clinical Faculty positions?
4. Should there be more than one chance to apply for tenure?

Procedural Issues to be considered were identified as:

1. Should Department and College Tenure and Promotion Committees be required to provide supporting documentation along with their recommendations?
2. Should the contract clarify the definition of “outstanding” as applied to early applications for promotion?
3. Should the role of the Provost in the tenure and promotion process be better defined?
4. Are there other specific procedural issues that were apparent in the appeals process from 2006?

Committee Process

The initial charge empowered the Committee to consider tenure and promotion processes “at YSU and at other universities.” The Committee obtained tenure and promotion documents from eleven of the thirteen other public four-year institutions of higher education within Ohio.

The Committee also recognized that communication between Faculty and Administration is extremely important. Thus, the Committee unanimously agreed to prepare, distribute and evaluate a survey of tenure-track and tenured faculty to provide a direct mechanism by which those faculty could inform the Committee of their opinions and concerns.

The Committee evaluated these resources in comparison with the Agreement prior to formulating its Recommendations. This resulting report is submitted with unanimous consent by the Committee members.

FACULTY SURVEY

General

The Survey was prepared by the Committee for its use and the survey questions were unanimously agreed upon by the members. The questionnaire was intended to be as neutral as possible in not advocating any particular position on any issue. The hope was that both Likert and open-response questions would stimulate valuable and lively responses.

The cover letter to the Survey indicated that responses themselves were to remain anonymous, but had to be returned in labeled envelopes. This process was similar to that employed by the Association in conducting faculty votes, in that the goal was to ensure at most one response from each surveyed faculty member. A total of 377 Surveys were sent out, usually being hand-delivered to each academic department. Labels for return envelopes were provided by Human Resources based on its list of tenure-track and tenured faculty. The cover letter and Survey are appended hereto.

Eighty-three Surveys were returned according to the instructions. These Surveys were separated from the labeled envelopes, which were shredded. The properly-returned Surveys were then numbered so that open-ended responses could be correlated, if desired, with the Likert responses; these numbers could not be related in any way to individual faculty members.

Thirty-eight Surveys were returned improperly and were separated from those returned according to the instructions. Since it could not be confirmed that these Surveys were independent responses, they were not analyzed for this report. The following section summarizes trends in the responses and the term “faculty” therein refers to those tenure-track or tenured faculty members who provided Survey responses according to the instructions.

Evaluation of the Likert questions was performed using a numerical value of 2 for a response of “Strongly Agree” and a numerical value of -2 for a response of “Strongly Disagree.”

Likert Results

1. A number of questions in the Survey explored faculty opinions regarding the relative roles of departments, colleges and the university as a whole in clarifying (and therefore establishing) standards for tenure and promotion. Separate questions were provided for tenure and promotion, and for departments, colleges and the university.

Faculty strongly support the idea that standards should be established at the department and college level for both tenure and promotion. Faculty are slightly more supportive of a department-level role than a college-level role.

Faculty are overall neutral toward the idea that standards for promotion should be clarified at the university-wide level. Faculty are slightly more supportive of a university-level role for tenure than for promotion.

Faculty strongly support the idea that both tenure and promotion, by nature, affect the institution on a university-wide basis. Faculty support the idea that standards for tenure and promotion should “consider institutional needs and perspectives at all levels.”

2. A number of questions in the Survey explored faculty opinions regarding whether and how standards for tenure and promotion should reflect concerns at department and college levels vs. the university-wide level.

Faculty strongly support the idea that standards for tenure and promotion need to reflect inherent differences between disciplines and the kinds of activities associated with those disciplines.

Faculty support the idea that standards for tenure and promotion should balance requirements of department, college and university levels.

Faculty support the idea that a general statement of standards based on a university-wide perspective should be available.

Faculty support the idea that the current standards for tenure and promotion are “too vague or inconsistent.”

3. Two questions in the Survey explored faculty opinions regarding whether there should be a “university-wide committee to review” the merits of applications for tenure and promotion or whether such review should concentrate on determining whether department and college guidelines were followed.

Faculty do not support the idea that there should be a university-wide committee to evaluate the merit of applications for tenure and promotion.

4. A question in the Survey explored faculty opinions regarding the standards for early promotion.

Faculty support the idea that the current standards for early promotion are “too vague and/or inconstant.”

5. A question in the Survey explored faculty opinions regarding the college Dean’s and the Provost’s roles in the tenure and promotion process.

Faculty are neutral toward the idea that the Provost’s role should be to ensure university-wide consistency between college standards. Faculty are slightly more supportive of the idea that the Dean’s role should be to insure college-wide consistency between departmental standards.

6. A question in the Survey explored faculty opinions regarding the establishment of Clinical Professorships.

Faculty support the idea of exploring the possibility of creating Clinical Professorships.

7. A question in the Survey explored faculty opinions regarding whether tenure should be granted along with promotion to Associate Professor.

Faculty support granting tenure with promotion to Associate Professor.

Open-ended questions

Responses by the faculty to the open-ended questions were extremely varied. Some particular points are discussed below in the context of the Core and Procedural Issues mentioned previously.

1. Faculty expressed strong support for the position that department members are best positioned to evaluate the suitability of applicants for tenure or promotion. It is worth noting, however, that the human condition may prevent this vantage point from being utilized objectively. A minority of responses to the open-ended questions addressed this issue:

“Faculty on the DPC or CPC who have their own agendas can cause very unfair results.”

“It is 99% buddy based, is rarely done on the true merit of the person on a nationally comparable level. Much too much chance for ganging up.”

“If you are ‘in’ you slide by easily, but if not, easy for someone to kill you.”

“It is not (in practice) based on merit. Departmental & inter-personal politics play important roles.” (under weaknesses in the present promotion system)

In addition, a Committee member has been informed that in a recent tenure case, department faculty voted to recommend tenure not on merit, but because to fail to do so “would ruin that individual’s life.”

2. Many faculty remarks stressed that differences in expectations between departments and colleges remain a critical issue. Seeking ideas on how to address this issue, remarks included:

“Make guidelines more specific, easy-to-understand and implement/review by outside peers.”

“Work to create a system that promotes equity in achievements and decision-making across colleges and departments. Tenure should be decided from a similar set of standards across colleges and departments by a panel of faculty representatives from all colleges.”

“University-level committee with Provost as one member.”

“Must clarify scope of review at U-wide level; must require justification at recom. by DPC & CPC.”

3. Many faculty indicated their concerns that the present process culminates in a decision being made, based on department and college recommendations, by a single individual. Most related remarks concentrated on the need to avoid the introduction of different standards for tenure and promotion than are documented for use by candidates.

“Vague & inconsistent policy at university level.”

“Must clearly define expectations at department, college, and university levels so that new faculty are informed as to what is expected of them.”

“Require Provost input and discussion with CPC and/or DPC before any changes in recommendations are made--either way.”

“University wide standards are unknown.”

4. Many faculty expressed concerns about specific areas of the process, making the following suggestions for changes to the current system:

“Must require justification at recom. by DPC & CPC.”

“Annual faculty review of untenured faculty don't leave in solely in the hands of the Department Chair.”

“External review of scholarship.”

“Make sure that no one on a DPC can serve on the CPC of someone from their department so that there is a tiny chance for fairness.”

“Promotion should be granted simultaneously with tenure.”

“Faculty should be promoted based on the guidelines they are hired under.”

5. The majority of open-ended responses indicated dissatisfaction at some level with the present tenure and promotion processes, with rare exceptions:

“The system was working very well at YSU, why ‘fix’ something was not broken.”

OTHER RESOURCES

General

The Committee obtained tenure and promotion documents from eleven of Ohio's thirteen other four-year public colleges and universities as listed by the Ohio Board of Regents. These eleven institutions were:

Institution	Faculty Union
Bowling Green State University	No
Central State University	Yes
Cleveland State University	Yes
University of Cincinnati	Yes
Kent State University	Yes
Miami University	No
Ohio State University	No
Ohio University	No
Shawnee State University	Yes
University of Toledo	Yes
Wright State University	Yes

It was decided not to include information from the North East Ohio Universities College of Medicine (NEOUCOM), which has a structure that is based on many clinical positions and is, therefore, quite different from Youngstown State University. Information could not be obtained from the University of Akron prior to preparation of this report. Documents were taken primarily from the school's web site, but telephone conversations were also used to clarify specific provisions and/or questions.

The documentation obtained from Ohio State University was by far the most extensive, running to more than 100 pages. After examination of the available information from all the institutions tabulated above, the Committee selected four universities for closer scrutiny as providing comprehensive and specific information relevant to the Committee's charge and the Core Issues identified above. These institutions seemed to represent "best practices:" Miami University, Ohio University, University of Toledo and Wright State University. Analyses of the related documents and processes were provided by subcommittees, whose reports follow.

Ohio University and Miami University

The subcommittee focused primarily on how these institutions deal with the question of university-wide review of the merits of applications for tenure and promotion.

There is no university-wide tenure and promotion review process at Ohio University except in the case of an appeal, whereupon a Faculty Senate committee reviews the case (see below). Recommendations for tenure or promotion are made first from the department, the dean involved and the Provost. The Provost recommends to the President who confers tenure and promotions.

Both institutions generate criteria used to make decisions on tenure and promotion that originate at the department, school or division in consultation with the dean. University-wide criteria at Miami University are listed, and include:

- A. High-quality teaching and academic advising;
- B. Research, scholarly and/or creative achievement of high quality and its prospective continuation;
- C. Productive professional service; and,
- D. Professional collegiality within the department, division, campuses, and University community.

These institutions have department committees that oversee the evaluation/tenure process. At both, the process begins with an evaluation of faculty which is done by the chair in conjunction with a departmental evaluation committee consisting of tenured faculty. That committee reviews all probationary faculty annually as well as any tenured faculty eligible for promotion. The annual evaluation of faculty by the departmental committee is advisory; however, all awards of tenure and all promotions in rank must originate in a positive recommendation by the departmental committee. At Ohio University, this committee recommends to the tenure candidate when he/she should go up for tenure. There is no

“timetable” except a statement that candidates have seven years to apply for tenure. Under this system there is no “early” concept.

Both institutions have university-wide committees: that at Ohio University is for appeal only, while that of Miami University provides a level of approval between the Deans and the Provost. This Miami University committee is comprised of deans, the provost and five tenured faculty appointed by the President. This committee gets recommendations from the College dean and forwards its recommendations to the Provost. At Ohio University, a faculty member denied at the Provost level may appeal to the Standing Committee on Promotion and Tenure of the Faculty Senate.

At Ohio University, a decision to deny tenure or promotion can be appealed by the faculty member beginning at the level at which that decision was made. Should the appeal be denied at that level, it may be taken to the next level. The grievance can involve one or more of the following allegations: inadequate consideration, denial of due process, or denial of academic freedom. If denied at the Provost level, the faculty member may appeal to the Standing Committee on Promotion and Tenure of the Faculty Senate. If not satisfied at that level, faculty may petition the Faculty Senate Promotion and Tenure Committee to recommend that a formal proceeding be conducted where the burden of proof rests with the grievant.

There was no evidence of Clinical positions at either Ohio University or Miami University.

Wright State University and the University Of Toledo

At the University of Toledo, the recommendation of each committee was given to the next committee in the hierarchy, proceeding to the President; each recommendation included the reason(s) why the recommendation was made. There was a lot of variation as to the make up of committees at the department, college and university level.

The standards area is most problematic – who sets the standards, and who decides if they have been met by an applicant. Toledo has a top-down mechanism, with a series of standards set for the entire university that everyone must meet. Each college can then set their own standards, as long as they conform to the overall university requirements. Each department can then set their individual standards within the scope of the college and university standards.

Wright State has a bottom-up mechanism for defining standard. The standards are set at the department level (and a department can have several sets of standards to accommodate different types of faculty within that department). All subsequent review committees in the approval process must abide by the department standards: nothing added, changed or ignored. The assumption is that there is a mechanism for college/university review and prior approval of the department standards, but that was not evident in the faculty union agreement.

There are completely different ways to approach the issue of standards which all seem to work when applied in a consistent and clear manner. It is important that there be specific standards that are well-known. The subcommittee asked the question whether other schools

were utilizing a process that was better than what is currently used at YSU: the answer was a definite “Yes.” Most universities that were evaluated had a university committee that reviewed the tenure and promotion candidates and made recommendations, in contrast to YSU’s procedure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made after evaluation of all resources described above, plus experience of the Committee members themselves in matters related to the tenure and promotion processes at Youngstown State University. The recommendations are submitted with unanimous consent of the Committee members.

1. The present tenure and promotion processes at YSU do not serve the faculty or the institution as they deserve. Standards acceptable at all levels of investment are not sufficiently clear by which the merits of applications are determined. The Committee strongly recommends that the present tenure and promotion processes, as described in the Agreement, be significantly improved during the upcoming negotiations.
2. The Committee recommends that the focus of any revision to the processes be on the processes themselves, not on disagreements with individuals.
3. The Committee recommends that upcoming negotiations consider a definition of standards for tenure and promotion that include both bottom-up and top-down aspects. One possibility is that general statements of what constitutes the level of accomplishments/effort appropriate for tenure and faculty ranks be developed at the university-wide level. Specific standards would then be developed beginning at the department and then college levels.
4. The Committee recommends that every body that makes recommendations regarding applications for tenure or promotion be required to provide reasons for that recommendation rather than a simple “yes” or “no.” This recommendation could and should be implemented immediately.
5. The Committee recommends that some form of university-wide review committee be instituted in the future. The university-wide committee could include the Provost and would then make recommendations for tenure or promotion to the President. The role of any university-wide committee in reviewing the merits of applications and/or the proper application of the process should be clearly defined.
6. The Committee recommends that standards for early promotion be significantly improved, so as to clearly define the level of achievement/effort required. If standards for early promotion cannot be clarified, early promotion should not be allowed.

7. The Committee recommends that the chairs and deans make recommendations regarding tenure and promotion separately from the department and college promotion committees. Chairs and deans would then not serve on either department and college promotion committees.

APPENDIX – COVER LETTER AND SURVEY

Date: February 19, 2007

To: Full-time tenured and untenured faculty

From: Academic Senate ad hoc Committee on Tenure and Promotion

The Executive Committee of the Academic Senate has appointed an ad hoc committee with the charge “to study tenure and promotion processes at YSU and at other universities ... and to present its recommendations, including any minority position, to Student Government and the Academic Senate for discussion ...” Clearly these recommendations will be purely advisory, since “this committee is formed with neither the intent nor the desire to circumvent the authority of the collective bargaining process.” The full text of the establishing Resolution for the promotion and tenure committee may be found in the October 4, 2006 Academic Senate Minutes and the list of appointed members and elected chair may be found in the November 1, 2006 and December 6, 2006 Minutes.

The committee plans to consider material from a variety of sources, but has decided that a critical step is to obtain input from individual faculty members regarding their perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of the current processes. Many of the procedures in-place reflect implicit philosophical perspectives regarding the roles of departments, colleges and university-wide assessments of applications for promotion. There are, however, ambiguities that can contribute to confusion in some areas. One striking case is that the scope of the Provost’s review of applications is undefined in the Agreement while some degree of university-wide review is implied by the Agreement’s language regarding the scope of review for appeal panels. A number of other issues arose during the appeals conducted last year.

The survey begins with questions designed to assess philosophical and procedural perspectives on specific points, but the more open-ended questions are no less important. Feel free to add other comments as desired. We strongly encourage each of you to review the Agreement (e. g. Articles 10a and 12) as it pertains to tenure and promotion prior to responding.

The committee requests that all interested faculty members respond to this survey at their earliest convenience, but no later than Monday, February 26, 2007. Completed surveys should be returned to the committee chair, Jeff Carroll, Physics and Astronomy. Note that this survey is not affiliated with any questionnaires related to the accreditation process. Responses will be considered in the aggregate and anonymously, but surveys must be returned in the labeled envelopes in order to be included in the results. The surveys will be separated from the envelopes prior to evaluation.

Thank you for your assistance.

FACULTY SURVEY ON TENURE AND PROMOTION

Part I: Please circle the response closest to your own judgment: “SA” if you strongly agree; “A” if you agree; “U” if you are unsure or neutral; “D” if you disagree; and “SD” if you strongly disagree.

SA A U D SD	1. Tenure is, by its nature, an issue affecting all academic areas of the University and is not limited in scope to any specific department or college.
SA A U D SD	2. Promotion is, by its nature, an issue affecting all academic areas of the University and is not limited in scope to any specific department or college.
SA A U D SD	3. The standards for tenure need to consider institutional needs and perspectives at all levels.
SA A U D SD	4. The standards for promotion need to consider institutional needs and perspectives at all levels.
SA A U D SD	5. The standards for both tenure and promotion need to recognize the inherent differences between disciplines and the kinds of scholarship and activities associated with those disciplines.
SA A U D SD	6. The standards for tenure and promotion need to balance the requirements within and across departments, colleges, and the University as a whole.
SA A U D SD	7. Granting of tenure and promotion to Associate Professor should be performed simultaneously.
SA A U D SD	8. A general statement as to what renders a faculty member worthy of tenure and promotion from an institution perspective, would help to frame both departmental and college guidelines.
SA A U D SD	9. The current standards for early promotion are too vague and/or inconsistent.
SA A U D SD	10. The current standards for tenure are too vague and/or inconsistent.
SA A U D SD	11. With regard to promotion, any vagueness and/or inconsistencies should be identified and clarified at the departmental level.
SA A U D SD	12. With regard to tenure, any vagueness and/or inconsistencies should be identified and clarified at the departmental level.
SA A U D SD	13. With regard to promotion, any vagueness and/or inconsistencies should be identified and clarified at the college level.
SA A U D SD	14. With regard to tenure, any vagueness and/or inconsistencies should be identified and clarified at the college level.
SA A U D SD	15. With regard to promotion, any vagueness and/or inconsistencies should be identified and clarified at the university level.
SA A U D SD	16. With regard to tenure, any vagueness and/or inconsistencies should be identified and clarified at the university level.
SA A U D SD	17. The Association and University should explore the idea of Clinical Professorships (i.e. tenure-track faculty positions for those with significant clinical duties, with publication expectations aligned with their practicum work).

SA A U D SD	18. There should be a university-wide committee appointed to review and approve the applications for promotion and tenure following department and college reviews.
SA A U D SD	19. Promotion and tenure decisions are best departmentally based and administrative and committee review beyond that should be only to determine whether the guidelines have been followed.
SA A U D SD	20. The Provost's role in promotion and tenure review is to ensure university-wide equivalency among the standards from different colleges.
SA A U D SD	21. The Dean's role in promotion and tenure is to ensure a college-wide equivalency among the standards across the departments.

Part II: Please provide us your thoughts on the following (feel free to add attachments with more detailed and extended responses):

1. What do you consider to be important strengths in the current tenure system?
2. What do you consider to be important strengths in the current promotion system?
3. What do you consider to be important weaknesses in the current tenure system?
4. What do you consider to be important weaknesses in the current promotion system?
5. What changes would you suggest to the current tenure system?
6. What changes would you suggest to the current promotion system?

DEMOGRAPHICS (OPTIONAL):

COLLEGE	RANK	TENURED