

February 11, 2015

Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on P & T Standards

Recommendations for Department P & T Guideline Documents

Introduction

The Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on P & T Standards reviewed university-wide departmental P & T guidelines and reported their findings in their 2011 committee report. The UNH ADVANCE Career Progression Committee program conducted a similar study of a smaller sample of departments in CEPS and COLSA in 2014. Both studies concluded that departmental P & T guideline documents vary tremendously in form and content, and range in length from one page to over 20 pages.

During the 2014/15 academic year, the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on P & T Standards considered the 2011 report and the findings of the UNH ADVANCE Career Progression Committee. The Committee concluded that there may be too much variation in Department P & T guidelines, resulting in inconsistent practices across the campus. Some troublesome differences include, for example, whether or not only faculty at the same aspirational rank can be included as members of a review committee; who decides when a potential candidate is “ready” to go up for promotion to full professor how departments deal with cases where disagreement exists; and whether or not review letters can be ignored or excluded. Wide variation in practices could create problems, especially at the college level where decisions could be reversed due to differences in guidelines and expectations among departments in a college. The Committee was charged with developing recommendations on the content of Departmental P & T guideline documents. This document contains those recommendations, with the caveat that departments cannot deviate so much from their college norms as to prejudice a case going forward.

1. Determination of Readiness

Current Practice:

For promotion from assistant to associate professor, the CBA Section 13.9.1 stipulates that a tenure-track faculty member will be notified in writing at the time of initial appointment that a decision on tenure in his/her case will be reached no later than the end of a certain number (usually 6) of years of full-time service.

For promotion from associate to full professor, practice varies widely across the university. In some departments, P & T committees meet in the spring, review the annual reports of all eligible candidates, and recommend that

those who are deemed ready go forward. Other departments leave it entirely up to the individual to decide when he or she is ready.

Recommendation:

Department documents should address how decisions are made with respect to when a candidate must, or is expected to, 'come up' for promotion and tenure or promotion. If it is decided that a department committee will recommend whether or not a case should go forward, department guidelines should be clear about this evaluation process, how it will guard against potential bias, and what to do when a faculty member decides to go forward without the department's recommendation.

2. Composition and Role of Department P & T Committee

Current Practice:

In practice, department P & T Committees range from a "committee of the whole" to a subcommittee selected from among the members of the full department, reflecting the wide range in the size of UNH departments from several faculty to over 40 faculty. For promotion from associate to full professor, some departments restrict P & T Committee membership to full professors only, opting for full professors from outside the department when necessary, while other departments allow associate professors to participate in the decision for promotion to full professor.

Recommendation:

Department documents should clearly state how department P & T committees are to be constituted.

3. Process and Schedule

Department documents should provide a clear timeline of the entire review and promotion process, including annual, third-year, and post-tenure reviews as well as a detailed schedule of the promotion and tenure review process itself.

(a) Periodic Review Process

Current Practice:

The CBA , Sections 11.1 and 11.2, requires that the performance of non-tenured faculty be evaluated annually and that the performance of tenured faculty be evaluated regularly, at a rate established for each college. In practice, the review process is rarely mentioned in department promotion and tenure documents. On the other hand, in a few departments, both pre- and post-tenure faculty are reviewed annually by the P & T committee, with the committee deciding whether a case can be made for proceeding with the promotion

process (in the case of post-tenure faculty).

Recommendation:

Both pre- and post-tenure reviews can play an important role in preparing faculty for promotion and in laying expectations for success. Reviews that are not directly tied to the promotion process and criteria risk being overly positive, thereby raising false positive expectations and laying the groundwork for future disappointment, grievance and litigation. Department documents should contain a clear statement about the pre- and post-tenure review process, including the role of key personnel and the importance of objective, empirically based, periodic reviews in P & T decisions.

(b) Promotion and Tenure Process

Current Practice:

The letter from the Provost's Office to tenure-eligible candidates and Department Chairs (see <http://www.unh.edu/provost/promotion.html>) stipulates that the department P & T committee and department chair are charged with evaluating the candidates' performance, seeing that they prepare a Promotion and Tenure Statement, and providing a recommendation regarding promotion and/or tenure to the Dean by December 3rd. The process and schedule up to that point is left up to the department. Practice ranges from department documents containing very little detail on the department process and schedule to others being relatively clear.

Recommendation:

Department documents should provide a clear schedule of all P & T process activities and identification of all key personnel and their role in the process (i.e., department chair, candidate, mentor, department committee, department, external reviewers, internal letters).

4. Scholarship Performance Criteria

Current Practice:

A clear statement of P & T scholarship expectations is helpful in guiding P & T decisions as well as in providing a roadmap for pre- and post-tenure faculty to follow and a performance standard for the candidate to meet, thereby improving the overall success rate. In practice, few departments stipulate explicitly the quality and/or quantity of scholarship expected for promotion from either assistant to associate professor or associate to full professor.

Recommendation:

Department documents should be sufficiently explicit, without being overly limiting, about criteria for the quality and quantity of scholarship needed for promotion at each rank so as to provide a roadmap for pre- and post-tenure faculty and to allow a careful and fair performance assessment in context. Statements should address the following, as applicable to each specific department:

- Clearly articulated scholarship quality, quantity, and impact expectations and method of assessment for each rank;
- The importance of research trajectory and research focus and how these will be assessed;
- The importance of national and/or international impact;
- The importance of having obtained research funding and weight given to various types and sources of funding as indicators of long-term success;
- Selection of external reviewers and weight given to their input;

5. Teaching Performance Criteria

Current Practice:

A clear statement of teaching performance expectations is helpful in informing P & T decisions. Practice ranges from department documents containing no guidelines to specific guidelines with respect to teaching and advising, including the levels at which candidates are expected to have taught and the amount and level of advising they are expected to have provided.

Recommendation: Because these may vary for individuals, based on the nature of their appointment and their expected contribution within their home department, letters of appointment and annual evaluations by the chair should contain a description of the courses that are expected to be taught by the candidate. Department documents should contain clearly articulated teaching performance expectations and methods of assessment, including the method for soliciting letters from current and former students, teaching evaluations, and peer review if appropriate.

6. Service Performance Criteria

Recommendation: Department documents should contain clearly articulated performance expectations for service and engaged scholarship at each rank, method of assessment, and process for soliciting letters.

7. Consideration of Leave

Current Practice:

In practice, some department documents contain expectations regarding time in rank while others do not. One department's guidelines stipulate that individuals who "come up early" for promotion and tenure should be held to higher standards than those who come up at the expected time.

Recommendation:

Promotion and tenure decisions should be based on a candidate having achieved a certain level of performance. With the exception of mandatory dates by which a tenure decision must be made, time should not be a factor in promotion and tenure decisions. Department documents should contain a clear statement that, other than for mandatory tenure decisions, time in rank and any leave time are to be considered irrelevant to promotion and tenure decisions.

8. Voting Process

Recommendation: Should be clearly articulated.

9. Role of the Department Chair

The Department Chair's role in P & T decisions is clearly described in the CBA, Section 13.15. The Chairperson's recommendation, including the qualifications of the candidate in relation to the programmatic objectives of the department, must be included in the P & T statement.

10. Notification

The CBA, Sections 13.15.5, 13.16.5, 13.18.2, and 13.19.1 governs the process of notifying the candidate of decisions made at each step in the P & T review.