

**SCHOOL OF MASS COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM  
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**

**TENURE AND PROMOTION POLICY**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at The University of Southern Mississippi is to prepare students for careers in advertising, broadcasting, film, journalism, public relations, and the entertainment industry. Because of the make-up of the USM student body, the faculty specifically recognizes the school's opportunity to give voice to groups who have been historically underrepresented in the mass media, and the school embraces the opportunity to educate students who are the first from their families to attend college or are from demographic groups that have lacked representation in the mass media. In addition, the school strives to:

- Make sure that students receive a broad liberal arts educational foundation and benefit from a mass communication and journalism curriculum that develops appropriate and current professional skills as well as an understanding of the ethical responsibilities faced by media professionals.
- Create opportunities for students to practice newly acquired skills and training in preparation for real-world application through the Student Media Center and through internships.
- Graduate a highly qualified pool of media professionals who are ready to enter the workforce and prepared to make valid contributions to the profession and society at large .
- Support faculty members who produce important scholarly and creative work that contributes significantly to the academy and the profession.
- Maintain healthy relationships with alumni and media professionals through the school's professional advisory board and other networking opportunities.
- Serve the community at large by creating 1) opportunities to teach individuals and organizations how mass media can be utilized for the purpose of empowerment and 2) service learning experiences for

students and faculty to contribute to regional interests through the media.

- Promote the school, its outstanding students and dedicated faculty and consistently work toward the improvement of the school in terms of facilities, technology and reputation.

## **Introduction**

The University of Southern Mississippi's School of Mass Communication and Journalism [MCJ] operates within the College of Arts and Letters. MCJ's mission is defined within the context of three major functions: teaching, research/creative activity, and service. MCJ places the highest priority on teaching in terms of annual evaluation, promotion, and tenure. MCJ faculty members are expected to engage in research/creative activity either through traditional scholarly research and publication or through publication in professional venues, including presentation and/or publication of original productions in print and non-print media. Finally, MCJ faculty members must contribute service to institutional and public/professional sectors.

## **Annual Faculty Evaluation**

Annual faculty evaluations, covering the calendar year preceding the annual evaluation, normally will be conducted between February 1 and March 15. The School, with the approval of the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, may extend the time schedule for annual evaluation. Annual evaluations of faculty members will be conducted by individual[s] elected under the governance option chosen by the School's faculty. University policies regarding annual faculty evaluations are set forth in the USM Faculty Handbook, Chapter VIII.

At the time of annual faculty evaluation, MCJ faculty members must provide the director with a mini-dossier [portfolio] that includes a revised curriculum vitae and documentation of teaching, research/creative activity, and service activities during the previous calendar year along with any other additional information the faculty member believes is relevant. These materials serve as the basis for annual review for untenured faculty members and contribute, ultimately, to third-year review, promotion, tenure and merit salary increases. For tenured faculty members, these materials are the basis for merit salary increases, and ultimately, for promotion. MCJ faculty members are advised to consult the USM Faculty Handbook and the

MCJ policy on “Faculty Assessment and Evaluation” [adopted 1 December 2004].

### **Criteria for the Evaluation of Teaching**

Because teaching is MCJ’s highest priority, effective teaching is essential for successful annual evaluation and for promotion and for tenure. Documentation of effective teaching may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- [1] student evaluation of courses and grade point average for courses evaluated;
- [2] copies of syllabi for all courses taught during the evaluation period;
- [3] evaluations made by faculty members who have worked in team teaching settings or have directly observed classroom teaching;
- [4] development of innovative courses, teaching materials, or instructional techniques;
- [5] direction [chair or committee member] of students’ work, e.g., independent studies, academic planning committees, theses, or dissertations;
- [6] consultation with degree applicants and former students;
- [7] recognition or awards for distinguished teaching;
- [8] books, articles, or scholarly papers that reflect the candidate’s contributions to teaching;
- [9] letters from *former* students and accomplishments of present and former students;
- [10] any other evidence of excellence or innovation in the area of teaching that the faculty member may wish to submit.

Note: MCJ faculty members should consult Peter Seldin, “The Teaching Portfolio Concept” [1993], attached to this document, for guidance and suggestions relevant to documenting teaching effectiveness.

### **Criteria for Evaluation of Research / Creative Activity**

For purposes of tenure and promotion, faculty members must be engaged in scholarly research/creative activity that generates a body of work that goes beyond the doctoral dissertation and has been rigorously peer reviewed. Documentation of research/creative activities may include, but is not limited to, the following:

[1] books, monographs, articles, chapters, essays, reviews, and other scholarly works published by reputable professional/scholarly journals, presses and publishing houses that accept works only after rigorous review;

[2] presentation and/or publication of original productions in print and non-print media;

[3] presentation of scholarly papers before learned societies;

[4] publication of meritorious articles, reviews and commentaries in newspapers/magazines or other popular media that demonstrate high standards in the practice of mass communication and journalism. In the areas of graphics/visual arts, photojournalism, film, and television production, original works made available for public presentation meet the creative activity standard. In general, original works in the professional areas of mass communication and journalism that advance the state of the art or break new ground and presented in a public venue are considered creative activities;

[5] submission and receipt of competitive grants and contracts to finance research and/or creative activities;

[6] invitations to deliver lectures or to participate in research seminars or colloquia;

[9] prizes and awards reflecting outstanding achievement in the discipline.

### **Criteria for Evaluation of Service**

Service typically comprises two areas: institutional and public/professional. Institutional service at the School, College and University level may include:

[1] membership and/or leadership roles in deliberative bodies charged with the formulation or implementation of academic or other policies, including ad hoc and standing committees;

[2] advisement/counseling of students;

[3] advisor to student organizations;

[4] assistance to colleagues, including consulting about educational problems, reading manuscripts;

[5] academic leadership in an administrative post.

Public/professional services includes:

[1] non-funded professional advisory services to community, governmental, religious, social or professional groups [e.g, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Mississippi Press Association];

- [2] consultation and technical assistance to public service projects, private industry and other agencies;
- [3] submission and receipt of grants and contracts to finance development and delivery of service innovations;
- [4] testimony on professional matters to governmental and other agencies;
- [5] public lectures to non-professional and professional groups or radio and television appearances on topics relating to the discipline.
- [6] participation in professional organizations or meetings as officer, member of major committees, chair, or commentator;
- [7] editorial service to a professional journal and/or membership on editorial boards reviewing publications or panels judging grant/contract proposals;
- [8] service as consultant to state, national, and international public and private groups engaged in scholarly and/or professional endeavors;

### **Standards for Promotion and Tenure**

Standards for tenure and promotion are set forth in the USM Faculty Handbook, 9.6.8, “Standard of Evaluation for Tenure”:

The award of academic tenure is a privilege. Tenure is awarded after a thorough review that culminates in the University acknowledging the faculty member’s professional excellence and the likelihood that excellence will contribute substantially over a considerable period of time to the mission and anticipated needs of the University. *Professional excellence is reflected in the faculty member’s teaching, research, and service, including the faculty member’s ability to interact appropriately with colleagues and students.* A faculty member might meet the criteria for a given promotion in rank, and achieve promotion, but fail to merit the privilege of tenure. Promotion in academic rank does not necessarily imply that one merits academic tenure.

Candidates for academic tenure typically will hold an earned doctorate (Ph.D.) or other discipline-appropriate terminal degree (for instance, an MFA) from a regionally accredited institution in an appropriate field (e.g., communication, mass communication, fine or applied arts, journalism, law, media studies, political science, history, etc.). The school may choose to occasionally hire a faculty member into a tenure-track position with distinguished professional experience that is deemed equivalent of a terminal degree. No more than 20 percent of the school’s tenure stream positions will be filled with faculty members without terminal degrees. The scholarly work of “professional-track” faculty members will be expected to be highly regarded professional work in the realm of their professional orientation (film-making, photojournalism, public relations, recording industry, etc.) described

above as “creative activities” in the Criteria for Evaluation of Research/Creative Activities.

Tenure will normally be recommended in the candidate’s sixth year to take effect at the beginning of the seventh full-time year of contractual employment. In no case may consideration be deferred beyond the seventh full year of service. At the conclusion of seven years in a tenure-track position, a faculty member normally will be recommended for tenure or awarded a terminal contract for the eighth year. Typically, tenure or a terminal contract will be awarded for the seventh year of service.

For promotion, the minimum period of time in a given rank is normally five years. Promotion is not automatic or guaranteed upon a given term of service. Recommendations for “early promotion” [before five years in a given rank] require special and compelling justification.

Assistant to Associate Professor: typically, at least five years as assistant professor, documented evidence of effective teaching and substantial contributions in one of the two service categories, and evidence of a developing pattern of research/creative activities.

Associate to Professor: typically five years as associate professor, excellence in teaching and in one of the two service categories, and scholarly or creative accomplishments of high quality and recognized standing in the discipline and profession as attested to by letters from at least three competent scholars/referees from outside the University as well as internal peer evaluation.

### **Standards for Promotion of Teaching Faculty**

For promotion, the minimum period of time in a given rank is normally five years. Promotion is not automatic or guaranteed upon a given term of service. Recommendations for “early promotion” [before five years in a given rank] require special and compelling justification.

Requirements for promotion include:

Instructor to Lecturer – Candidates need to demonstrate a continuous record of teaching and advising excellence. Service and scholarly activities may also be considered.

Lecturer to Senior Lecturer – Candidates need to demonstrate a continuing record of excellent and innovative teaching and advising coupled with notable service and/or scholarly activities.

Assistant to Associate Teaching Professor – Candidates need to demonstrate excellent and innovative teaching and advising coupled with contributions in either service (departmental/collegiate/university or discipline) or notable scholarly activities.

Associate Teaching Professor to Teaching Professor – This promotion is merited by individuals who have met the criteria for Associate Teaching Professor and, following that promotion, demonstrate notable scholarly activities.

[Policy revised and adopted on February 21, 2017, by vote of the tenured and tenure-track faculty of the School of Mass Communication and Journalism]