



# THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

TO: Rodney D. Bennett, President

FROM: Steven R. Moser, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

DATE: January 24, 2019

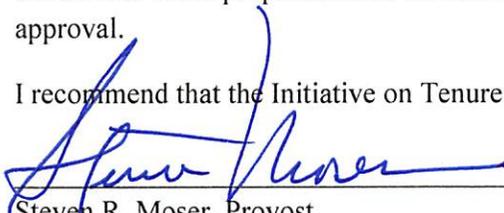
SUBJECT: Initiative #2: Tenure and Promotion

As reported and verified by Academic Reorganization Implementation Committee (ARIC) chair, Jeffrey Wiggins, this initiative has been revised through broad engagement, communication, and feedback from stakeholders, administrators and governing bodies since your initial approval of the proposal framework in February of 2018. Academic Structure and Evaluation Committee (ASEC) and ARIC have collated, discussed, reviewed and modified the document to achieve compromise between stakeholder responses while preserving the aspirational merits of the Phase I proposals. Beyond a brief contextual reference to the University Advisory Committee this document is written as a guide to Tenure and Promotion at the School and College level. The Faculty Handbook Initiative will provide comprehensive guidelines and process through board approval of tenure.

The proposed guidelines meet the aspirational goals of the reorganization by creating a system of promotion and tenure that is designed to be both rigorous and transparent. It maintains significant elements of the current structure for both, providing continuity, but also explicitly takes into account concerns of interdisciplinarity, fairness across units, and junior faculty development. This initiative was submitted to Human Resources (HR) and General Counsel for a full review.

As Provost, I have engaged Deans and Council of Directors in a final review process and adjustments were made to the proposal based on that feedback and my input. The document is ready for your approval.

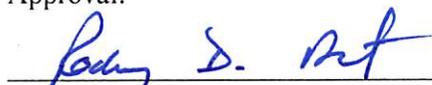
I recommend that the Initiative on Tenure and Promotion be approved.



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Steven R. Moser, Provost  
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Approval:



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Rodney D. Bennett, President  
The University of Southern Mississippi

1-25-19  

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Date

# **Tenure and Promotion**

## **INITIATIVE #2 Academic Structure and Evaluation**

**January 17, 2019**

*Academic Structure and Evaluation Committee*  
Chair: Jacob Breland

**Committee Members: Jonathan Barron, Sam Bruton, Angie Burton, Bridget Hayden, Frank Heitmuller, Joshua Hill, Ann Marie Kinnell, Alisa Lowery, Derek Patton, Bernd Schroder, Lachel Story**

# Tenure Track Promotion

## 1. Introduction and Rationale

There should be a rigorous separation of promotion and tenure for tenure track faculty. Promotion should be an official institutional recognition of meritorious achievement in research/scholarship/creative activities, service, and teaching/librarianship. Specifically, promotion functions to recognize talented faculty members for their records of achievement within their respective disciplines or in interdisciplinary settings. Thus, promotion to the rank of Associate Professor is a necessary condition for tenure at The University of Southern Mississippi. There are inherently different criteria for tenure, such as an individual's potential for long term contributions to the university. Clear and uniform policy is particularly necessary for promotion of interdisciplinary tenure-track faculty who may have responsibility to more than one unit. Schools must establish equitable and clear guidelines for the evaluation of faculty whose appointments are funded by multiple schools or whose research relates to multiple disciplines within a school with a clear breakdown of proportional obligations and objectives.

The following guidelines take into account the need for uniform policies throughout the University, but also recognize that disciplinary variations necessitate a certain level of autonomy within schools.

## 2. Evaluation Criteria

Essential to the University's mission is the recruitment, recognition, and retention of faculty members who contribute to the overall success and vision of the University through excellence in teaching/librarianship, service, and research/scholarship/creative activities. The purpose of these proposed guidelines is to establish a unified University framework for deciding matters of promotion while acknowledging the need for discipline-specific variation.

### 2.1.1. Teaching/Librarianship

High-quality instruction is a requirement for the entire Corps of Instruction. Therefore, promotion criteria in the "teaching" category should be as consistent as possible across disciplines. Schools should set their specific evaluation criteria for teaching with an appropriate combination of meaningful metrics.

### 2.1.2. Service

Satisfactory service to the discipline, school, and University should be a requirement for the entire Corps of Instruction. Therefore, promotion criteria in the "service" category should be as consistent as possible across tracks and disciplines. Schools will set specific evaluation criteria for service. In schools primarily comprised of junior faculty, heavy service loads may be unavoidable and should be taken into consideration when decisions for promotion and tenure are made.

### **2.1.3. Research/Scholarship/Creative Activities**

Requirements for research/scholarship/creative activities should be set by the schools and should be comparable to (or exceed) those of peer units at peer institutions.

## **3. Interdisciplinary Contributions**

Schools should incorporate evaluative measures that encourage interdisciplinary efforts of faculty in teaching/librarianship, service, and research/scholarship/creative activities without punishing faculty for whom interdisciplinary collaborations are not feasible. To reiterate Section 1, schools must establish equitable and clear guidelines for the evaluation of faculty whose appointments are funded by multiple schools.

## **4. Probationary Period for Promotion in the Tenure Track**

In keeping with current University and IHL policy, the minimum five-year probationary period will remain in place for promotion from Assistant to Associate professor with the normal University process being that tenure-track faculty proceed to candidacy for promotion and tenure in their sixth year. Although it may be possible for an individual with qualifications far exceeding school guidelines to receive consideration for early promotion, any exemptions from the five-year probationary period should be considered the exception. In the sixth year of service at USM, unless credit for service prior to joining USM was awarded at the time of hire, the candidate must apply for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor.

### **4.1.1. Exceptions to the Probationary Period**

**Extension of Probationary Period.** Applicants may request an extension of the probationary period by one year for personal circumstances that are not under the control of the University. In recognition of current legal standards, the application for an extension of the probationary period as well as the reasons for such an application shall be kept confidential, although an approval of an extension may be made public. A candidate may request an extension in writing with rationale provided to the school director. After receipt of the letter, the school director shall prepare a letter supporting or declining the application and submit that letter and application to the college dean. From there, the college dean shall prepare a letter supporting or declining the application and submit letters and application to the Provost. A final decision on the request, in keeping with current University policy, will then be rendered by the Provost, the chief academic officer. An example of reasons for such a request follows:

**i. Reasons for Extension of Probationary Period.** Circumstances that warrant an extension of the probationary period include, but are not limited to the following:

- Becoming a parent (birth or adoption)
- Significant responsibilities for the care of an immediate relative (spouse/domestic partner, parent, child)
- Death in the immediate family (spouse/domestic partner, parent, child).
- Serious medical condition(s) or disability
- Professional impediments
- Prestigious external commitments

**ii. Waiver of Probationary Period.** Higher rank can be awarded upon initial employment in certain circumstances. The granting of higher rank upon hire shall be made only in consultation with relevant parties within the faculty member's school(s).

#### **4.1.2. Early Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor.**

The standard probationary period for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor is five years. In the sixth year of service at rank, the candidate may apply for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor. To encourage, stimulate, and aspire to excellence at the national and international level, early promotion may be considered once excellence in achievement is established in the areas of research/scholarship/creative activity, teaching/librarianship, and service, beyond the record of achievement established during the promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor. Generally, eligibility for early promotion may be granted in the fifth year at rank.

### **5. Outside Evaluators for Promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor and for Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor**

External evaluators are strongly recommended for evaluation of tenure and promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor unless specifically required by the School. External evaluators are required for evaluation of promotion from Associate Professor to Professor. When used for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor, the process shall be conducted in accordance with procedures currently in place for solicitation of outside evaluations for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor. *Letters submitted for promotion to Associate Professor also may be used for purposes of tenure.* In cases where promotion to Associate Professor and tenure are separated by more than two years, separate letters must be sought for each process independently.

**i. Eligibility to Serve as an External Evaluator:** Schools will decide an individual's qualifications for serving as an external evaluator. Widely used rules for similar types of eligibility can be found in cognate areas, such as NSF's rules for grant reviewers or similar documents.

**ii. Size and Composition of the Set of External Evaluators:** The decision about size and composition of the set of external evaluators should reside at the school level. All evaluators solicited should be competent to judge the applicant's work within the framework provided by USM's Promotion and Tenure Guidelines, taking into account existing constraints and available resources. Under no circumstance will individuals be responsible for soliciting their own letters, or solely responsible for identifying evaluators. One example of a system that provides a balanced set of reviewers is that the applicant provides a set of four potential external evaluators of whom the school picks two. The school then selects two more external evaluators who are unknown to the applicant.

## **6. Unsuccessful Applications for Promotion**

In the event of an unsuccessful application for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor, the applicant shall not be eligible to immediately reapply for promotion in the following year. The applicant will be eligible to reapply once this year has passed. Exemptions may apply in exceptional circumstances identified by the School Promotion and Tenure Committee or by the school director during the annual evaluations process.

## **7. Promotion and Tenure Committees**

### **7.1.1. School Promotion and Tenure Committee**

Given the importance of the probationary faculty's substantive output in terms of creative activity, research and scholarship, evaluation within the school is mandatory for promotion, including for interdisciplinary faculty.

**i. Minimum Committee Size.** There must be a minimum size of three for a School Promotion & Tenure Committee. If a school does not have three eligible faculty to serve on such a committee, the school, in conjunction with the dean, must invite faculty from a discipline related to that of the faculty under review to serve on the School Promotion and Tenure Committee.

**ii. Committee Composition.** Any tenure track Promotion and Tenure Committee must, for promotion deliberations, be comprised of faculty ranked higher than the candidate, and, for tenure deliberations, of tenured faculty. In the case of large schools or very disparate disciplinary cultures, schools are free to defer the bulk of deliberations to subcommittees.

**iii. Committees for Interdisciplinary Applicants.** Because interdisciplinary applicants, by virtue of their appointments, serve multiple disciplines, all schools that fund the candidate's position must be represented on the candidate's promotion and tenure committee, ideally proportional to the percentage of the candidate's workload.

### **7.1.2. College Promotion and Tenure Committee**

College-level evaluation is mandatory for tenure track faculty promotion, including interdisciplinary faculty. Because promotion and tenure processes often coincide, the composition of the committees may be similar, but all processes should be viewed as separate. The College Promotion and Tenure Committee shall consist of at least 5 members with at least one member from each school within the college. Composition and size of the committee is determined at the discretion of each college, except that all voting members of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee must have higher rank than the candidates under review and be in the tenure-track. For the evaluation of interdisciplinary candidates, the committee shall have a reviewer from each of the disciplines (internal as well as external to the college) with which the candidate interacts.

### **7.1.3. Faculty Recusals/Abstentions from Promotion and Tenure Committees.**

**i. Recusals/Abstentions:** Otherwise eligible faculty serving as University administrative officers in the positions of President, Provost, Associate Provost, Vice-President, College Dean, Associate Dean or School Director must be recused from school, college or University Promotion and Tenure Committees unless they are invited by a majority vote by the committee to participate in which case they still must abstain from voting. Faculty who voted at lower levels of the process will follow the same restrictions.

**ii. Faculty must vote at their lowest eligible level.** That is, when a faculty member from one's school is evaluated for promotion, an eligible College Promotion and Tenure Committee member must vote in the School Promotion and Tenure Committee and recuse him/herself from the College Promotion and Tenure Committee vote for that faculty member. Faculty from lower levels may be invited to consult on the case but will follow the same restrictions as 7.1.3.i.

# Non-Tenure-Track Promotion

*Note: "Promotion and Tenure" committees are referred to in this section. While the award of tenure is not possible for non-tenure-track faculty, the full name of the committee is used throughout for purposes of clarity. However, it is to be noted that, while the promotion of non-tenure-track candidates will be evaluated by the School/College/University "Promotion and Tenure" committees, considerations of tenure are excluded from such deliberations and recommendations when non-tenure track faculty are being evaluated by the committee.*

## 1. Preamble

Promotion in the non-tenure-track corps of instruction is based on institutional recognition of meritorious achievement in both teaching and service. Specifically, promotion functions to recognize talented non-tenure-track faculty members for their records of achievement within their respective disciplines. The following guidelines provide a uniform framework across schools, colleges, and campuses but also recognize that disciplinary variations necessitate a certain level of autonomy within the schools.

## 2. Evaluation Criteria

Essential to the University's mission is the recruitment, recognition, and retention of faculty members who contribute to the overall success and vision of the University through excellence in their assigned duties, which for Teaching Professors, Instructors, Lecturers, and Senior Lecturers, are teaching and service. The present guidelines establish a unified University framework for deciding matters of promotion for this group of faculty while acknowledging the need for discipline-specific variation. Annual evaluations of faculty performance must be closely linked with progress towards promotion at each level. To that end, many of the criteria for evaluation set forth for promotion should be synchronized with the criteria used in annual evaluations.

### 2.1.1. Teaching

High-quality instruction is a requirement for the entire corps of instruction. Therefore, promotion criteria in the "teaching" category should be as consistent as possible across disciplines. Within schools, specific evaluation criteria for teaching should be set with an appropriate combination of meaningful metrics.

### 2.1.2. Service

Satisfactory service to the discipline, school, and University is a requirement for the entire corps of instruction. Therefore, promotion criteria in the "service" category should be as consistent as possible across disciplines. Schools will set specific evaluation criteria for service.

### **2.1.3. Research/Scholarship/Creative Activities**

This criterion should be considered in the context of pedagogical research and teaching currency to meet the institution's aspirational goals in serving students in the teaching and clinical environments.

## **3. Probationary Period for Promotion from Assistant to Associate Teaching Professor, or from Instructor to Lecturer**

A five-year probationary period for a new Assistant Teaching Professor or Instructor provides adequate time to demonstrate excellence in teaching and service. A notable exception to this probationary period applies to candidates whose initial appointment gave them credit for service prior to joining USM. Individuals with qualifications far exceeding guidelines may receive consideration for early promotion. However, non-tenure-track faculty do not have any mandate to move towards promotion unless that candidate so desires. Given the nature of non-tenured positions, promotion should be considered a desirable goal rather than a mandate. In particular, non-tenure-track promotable faculty at the University of Southern Mississippi are allowed to remain at the University even if there is no promotion from Assistant Teaching Professor to Associate Teaching Professor or from Instructor to Lecturer.

### **3.1.1. Early Promotion from Associate Teaching Professor to Teaching Professor or for Promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer for Promotable Non-Tenure-Track Faculty**

The standard probationary period for promotion from Associate Teaching Professor to Teaching Professor is five years. In the sixth year of service at rank, the candidate may apply for promotion. Exceptional teaching and or service may warrant early promotion to Teaching Professor/Senior Lecturer and may be considered for teaching faculty who exhibit exceptional teaching and service as qualified by annual evaluations. Generally, eligibility for early promotion may be granted in the fifth year at rank.

## **4. Unsuccessful Applications for Promotion for Promotable Non-Tenure-Track Faculty**

In the event of an unsuccessful application for promotion, the candidate is *not* required to leave the University. Although promotion is desirable, it can be appropriate to maintain faculty at the rank of Assistant Teaching Professor/Instructor beyond the five-year probationary period. In the event of an unsuccessful promotion, the applicant is not allowed to apply for promotion in the following year with exceptions determined by the School Promotion and Tenure Committee or school director in annual evaluations.

## **5. Promotion and Tenure Committees**

### **5.1.1. School Promotion and Tenure Committee**

Given the importance of the faculty's substantive output, evaluation within the school is mandatory for promotion, including for interdisciplinary faculty.

**i. Minimum Committee Size.** There must be a minimum size of 3 for a School Promotion and Tenure Committee. If a school does not have 3 eligible faculty to serve on such a committee, the school, in conjunction with the dean, must invite faculty from a discipline related to that of the faculty under review to serve on the School Promotion and Tenure Committee.

**ii. Committee Composition.** Associate Professors and Professors in the candidate's school plus any teaching track faculty ranked higher than the candidate evaluate the candidate for promotion. In the case of large schools or very disparate disciplinary cultures, schools are free to defer the bulk of deliberations to subcommittees.

**iii. Committees for Interdisciplinary Applicants.** Because interdisciplinary applicants, by virtue of their appointments, serve multiple disciplines, all schools that fund the candidate's position shall be represented on the candidate's promotion and tenure committee, ideally proportional to the percentage of the candidate's workload spent in each school. Details of the makeup of each interdisciplinary candidate's promotion and tenure committees shall be specified in a letter of agreement to be signed at the candidate's initial appointment.

#### **5.1.2. Promotion Committee Composition – College Personnel Committee**

College-level evaluation is mandatory for faculty promotion, including interdisciplinary faculty. The College Promotion and Tenure Committee shall consist of at least 5 members with each school from the college represented on the Committee. In addition to the representatives from each school, the College Promotion and Tenure Committee will have two at-large members from the Teaching Track holding the rank of Associate Teaching Professor or Teaching Professor. All voting members of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee shall have higher rank than the candidate under review. For the evaluation of interdisciplinary candidates, the committee shall have a reviewer from each of the schools (internal as well as external to the college) with which the candidate interacts. Further details regarding the specific composition of College Promotion and Tenure Committees are at the discretion of each college.

#### **5.2. Faculty Recusals/Abstentions from Promotion and Tenure Committees.**

**i. Recusals/Abstentions:** Otherwise eligible faculty serving as University administrative officers in the positions of President, Provost, Associate Provost, Vice-President, College Dean, Associate Dean or School Director must be recused from School, College or University Promotion and Tenure Committees unless they are invited by a majority vote by the committee, in which case they still must abstain from voting. Faculty who voted at lower levels of the process will follow the same restrictions.

**ii. Faculty must vote at their lowest eligible level.** That is, when a faculty member from one's school is evaluated for promotion, an eligible College Promotion and Tenure Committee member must vote in the School Promotion and Tenure Committee and abstain

from the College Promotion and Tenure Committee vote for that faculty member. Faculty from lower levels may be invited to consult on the case but will follow the same restrictions as 5.2.i.

# Tenure

## 1. Introduction and Rationale

Although tenure and promotion bear a close relationship with each other, the processes serve distinct purposes. Tenure and promotion both function to recognize talented faculty members for their records of achievement within their respective disciplines. However, tenure extends an additional level of protection to the faculty member in furtherance of the mutual desire for a long-term academic appointment. More broadly, by granting tenure the University exercises its belief in academic freedom and recognizes that a faculty member has the knowledge, skills, and professionalism required to make continuing, positive contributions to the discipline, school, and academic community that advance the institution's goals – in short, tenure is critical to the University's mission. The ties between the University and tenured faculty are the strongest that exist in the corps of instruction, and provide the maximum protection for faculty to carry out their roles without undue influence or external pressures. Thus, ensuring the fidelity of the tenure process is essential to the University. Because promotion is viewed as a reflection of the disciplinary competence necessary for tenure, the promotion to the rank of Associate Professor is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for tenure at The University of Southern Mississippi. There are inherently different criteria for the latter, such as an individual's potential for long term contributions to the University. The processes outlined below seek to clarify this point.

The tenure and promotion guidelines that follow recognize that disciplinary variations necessitate a certain level of autonomy at the school-level. This is particularly the case for interdisciplinary faculty who may have responsibilities to more than one school. To ensure that such faculty meet the same expectations and criteria for both tenure and promotion it is all the more essential to distinguish between tenure and promotion and establish uniform procedures for both. To this end, units must establish equitable and clear guidelines for the evaluation of faculty whose appointments are funded by multiple schools. Ideally, a letter of agreement should be signed upon the candidate's initial appointment to an interdisciplinary position, which will set forth the expectations of all relevant units with a clear breakdown of proportional obligations and objectives.

These guidelines aim to provide a unified framework for tenure and promotion while improving the University's ability to attract talented faculty through increased transparency, consistency, and fairness. Moreover, by establishing the additional recommendation of external evaluations, these processes will improve the reputation of the University as the research-based institution we aspire to be.

## 2. Definition of Tenure

Academic tenure is defined as the qualified expectation of a continuation of annual employment that may be awarded to a full-time member of the faculty after completing a probationary period. There is no guarantee that tenure will be awarded at the conclusion of the probationary period. Nor is tenure a guarantee of lifetime employment. Rather, tenure means that no person who has been awarded tenure may be discharged except upon certain grounds and in accordance with specified procedures. An award of tenure requires excellence in performance and the promise of continued excellence in teaching, research, and service. It is the duty of the faculty member to demonstrate that tenure should be awarded. If awarded, tenure is vested within the school or lowest unit of academic appointment (unless otherwise designated by the IHL Board (IHL 403.01)). Achieving tenure does not relieve a faculty member from the standards of professional performance, conduct, achievement, merit, and probity maintained by schools, divisions, colleges, the University, and by the Board of Trustees.

### **3. Evaluation Criteria**

Essential to the University's mission is the recruitment, recognition, and retention of faculty members who contribute to the overall success and vision of the University through excellence in teaching/librarianship, service, and research/scholarship/creative activities. The purpose of these guidelines is to establish a unified University framework for deciding matters of tenure, while acknowledging the need for discipline-specific variation. Although this section specifically addresses the tenure process, there must be a strong nexus between the annual evaluation process and a faculty member's progress towards promotion. To that end, many of the criteria for evaluation set forth must be synchronized with the criteria used in annual evaluations and promotion.

#### **3.1.1. Teaching/Librarianship**

High-quality instruction is a requirement for the entire corps of instruction. Therefore, tenure criteria in the "teaching/librarianship" category should be as consistent as possible across disciplines. Schools should set their specific evaluation criteria for teaching with an appropriate combination of meaningful metrics.

#### **3.1.2. Service**

Satisfactory service to the discipline, school, and University is a requirement for the entire corps of instruction. Therefore, tenure criteria in the "service" category should be as consistent as possible across disciplines. Schools will set specific evaluation criteria for service.

#### **3.1.3. Research/Scholarship /Creative Activities**

Requirements for research/scholarship /creative activities should be set by schools, and should be comparable to (or exceed) those of peer units at peer institutions.

#### **3.1.4. Collegiality and Professional Behavior**

Because they aim to become part of the cadre of faculty that will shape the long-term future of the institution, candidates for tenure must exhibit a clear sense of shared

responsibility for the excellence of the University; this includes collegiality. Collegiality, although distinct from the other criteria for tenure, is interlinked with them and its evaluation should be in those contexts. Accordingly, the separate category of “collegiality” *should not be added* to the traditional three areas of faculty performance. Schools and colleges will instead focus on developing clear definitions of teaching/librarianship, scholarship, and service in which the virtues of collegiality are reflected. Academic freedom does not protect legal or policy violations, including disrespectful speech to students, colleagues, or superiors; classroom speech that is not germane to the course subject; harassment of colleagues or students; research or scholarship misconduct; nonperformance of assigned tasks; or refusal to follow rules and policies. Collegiality is also not to be construed as promoting non-work-related social gatherings or to limiting robust discussion and conversation among faculty regarding topics important to the institution or the academy. Therefore, any concerns regarding a faculty member’s collegiality or professional behavior must be shared in writing with said faculty member as soon as any concerns arise. At a minimum, any concerns about collegiality or professional behavior should be articulated in the faculty member’s annual evaluation review as well as in the pre-tenure review (if applicable).

#### **4. Interdisciplinary Contributions**

All schools should incorporate evaluative measures that encourage interdisciplinary efforts of faculty in teaching/librarianship, service, or research/scholarship/creative activities without punishing faculty for whom interdisciplinary collaborations are not feasible. To reiterate Section 1, schools must establish equitable and clear guidelines for the evaluation of faculty whose appointments are funded by multiple schools. Ideally, a letter of agreement should be signed upon the candidate’s initial appointment to an interdisciplinary position, which will set forth the expectations of all relevant schools with a clear breakdown of proportional obligations and objectives.

#### **5. Tenure Framework**

As tenure is an award granted by IHL upon nomination by the Institutional Executive Officer, which is built around contributions by a faculty member to their discipline and the institution, the framework for tenure has to be one that allows for input at all levels of the institution and that simultaneously allows flexibility across schools. This flexibility is particularly essential in the case of interdisciplinary faculty who may have responsibility to more than one unit. Additionally, although research/scholarship/creative activity is a significant component of the University’s identity, and although it is central to advancement in many fields, the idea that tenure can or should be awarded solely on the basis of outstanding research/scholarship/creative activity is one that does not mesh with the necessity that candidates for tenure contribute to *all* parts of the mission of the University and show the potential for continued long-term contributions. Thus, the process for tenure attempts to balance the needs across schools, the needs within disciplines, and effective academic citizenship within the University. Additionally, although tenure is a separate process from promotion, it is important that the tenure process is informed by the annual evaluation process so that probationary faculty members are not caught unaware if there are concerns regarding any of the evaluative elements within the tenure process.

The criteria for tenure, therefore, are determined in the typical areas of assessment (teaching/librarianship, service, research/scholarship/creative activities) with additional considerations of collegiality and potential for long term contributions to the University. These are outlined more completely in Section 3.1.4.

### **5.1.1. Probationary Period**

#### **5.1.1.1. Probationary Period for Tenure Application**

Because the award of tenure implies a long-term commitment on the part of the University, there shall be a probationary period of six years with an application for the award of tenure a happening within the sixth year; exceptions are made for faculty who are awarded time towards tenure in their original hire negotiations. Additionally, tenure *may* be awarded, pursuant to IHL policy, at the time of hire. This option should be used with care. This option *may* be more frequently appropriate for hires with administrative duties. Regardless, the School Promotion and Tenure Committee for the potential hire shall be consulted regarding the awarding of tenure at the time of hire with adequate time to review the applicant's qualifications. This ensures that individuals will not be placed in the position of evaluating those who have input in probationary faculty's tenure application and maintains the integrity of tenure at the University.

#### **5.1.1.2. Length of Probationary Period for Tenure Application**

In keeping with current University and IHL policy, there shall be a probationary period of six years with the tenure application to be filed in year six of the appointment. This provides adequate time for faculty to demonstrate their ongoing impact within their respective disciplines but equally allows for the University to assess (and, where applicable, assist faculty in improving) collegiality and potential for long term contributions to the institution. In keeping with the University's goal of maintaining and improving the quality of the faculty, outside of cases in which credit for time served at another institution has been awarded in the hiring process, faculty must apply for tenure in their 6th year. Although this will most often coincide with the promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor, these are separate processes, and the evaluation for promotion and tenure should be independent.

#### **5.1.1.3. Extension of Probationary Period**

As there are a variety of circumstances beyond the control of the faculty applying for tenure, as well as beyond the control of the University, in special circumstances an extension can be applied to the faculty's probationary period. This extension shall not

extend the probationary period by more than one year. Circumstances that warrant an extension of the Probationary Period include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Becoming a parent (birth or adoption)
- b. Significant responsibilities for the care of an immediate relative (spouse/domestic partner, parent, child)
- c. Death in the immediate family (spouse/domestic partner, parent, child).
- d. Serious medical conditions or disability
- e. Professional impediments
- f. Prestigious external commitments

#### **5.1.1.3.1. Process for Extending the Probationary Period**

Any request to extend the probationary period shall be made in writing, with attached justification, to the appropriate school director in the semester before the tenure application is due. The school director may support or decline this extension in a letter and will submit the application and the director's letter to the dean of the appropriate college. The dean may also support or decline this extension in a letter and will submit the application and the letters from director and dean to the Provost for a final decision on the extension.

#### **5.1.1.4. Waiver of Probationary Period for Tenure**

The University has a vested interest in attracting the best candidates to all levels of the University. Given that some of these candidates may be tenured at other institutions and in keeping with IHL policy 403.0101, the privilege of tenure *may* be granted to individuals who have held tenure at their previous institution. *There is no automatic course of action*, however, and care should be used in the case of the award of tenure upon hire. Any institutional appointments with tenure must be approved by the candidate's school during the hiring/negotiation process, and, again consistent with IHL policy, tenure for these faculty must be recommended by the President and approved by the Board.

#### **5.1.2. If Tenure is Denied**

As tenure is granted by the IHL upon nomination by the Institutional Executive Officer on the basis of both impact within the discipline as well as institutional considerations, in the event that tenure is denied, a final one-year non-renewable contract at the candidate's rank is to be issued to the candidate.

#### **5.1.3. Associate Professor Requirement**

Satisfaction of the requirements for promotion to Associate Professor should be a requirement for the award of tenure. Therefore, Assistant Professors cannot apply for tenure before or without simultaneously applying for promotion to Associate Professor. Faculty appointed at ranks above Assistant Professor may apply for tenure without applying for promotion.

#### **5.1.4. Credit for Prior Accomplishments**

Credit for prior accomplishments may be awarded up to a maximum of five years towards the probationary period for prior service at other institutions of higher learning if specified in the faculty member's contract at the time of employment. Such credit is granted only to an individual who possesses exceptional professional qualifications and achievements. Generally, that credit is limited to two years for faculty appointed to the rank of Assistant Professor, three to five years for faculty appointed at the rank of Associate Professor, and five years for those faculty appointed at the rank of Professor. Consistent with the idea that credit can be awarded for time served at another institution of higher learning, for the tenure review, it must be permissible to give credit for accomplishments generated while serving at another institution of higher learning. Accomplishments, however, must be part of a continuous record that immediately precedes the appointment at USM.

## **6. Tenure Review Process**

The following are the guidelines for the tenure review process.

### **6.1. Evaluative Bodies for Tenure Review**

Review must be performed at each level of the institution to grant tenure. Thus, peer review of applications for tenure should always include the faculty member's School Promotion and Tenure Committee, the school director (or a joint letter from school directors in the case of interdisciplinary faculty), the College Promotion and Tenure Committee, the dean of the college in which the faculty's school resides (or a joint letter from deans from all affected colleges in the case of interdisciplinary faculty), the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, Provost, and President.

### **6.2. Use of External Evaluators for Tenure Review**

Letters from external evaluators are required for all applications for promotion to the rank of professor and are recommended for applications for promotion to Associate Professor and for tenure. Because of the frequent coincidence of promotion and tenure, *letters submitted for promotion to Associate Professor also may be used for purposes of tenure*. In cases where promotion to Associate Professor and tenure are separated by more than two years, separate letters must be sought for each process independently.

Schools will drive the requirements for these letters as well as be responsible for soliciting them, respecting a faculty member's disciplinary requirements and individual differences in faculty roles and responsibilities. Thus, external evaluations will generally focus on research/scholarship/creative activities, but, if possible, should also take into account the candidate's whole body of work, including teaching/librarianship and service duties.

**i. Eligibility to Serve as an External Evaluator:** Schools will decide an individual's qualifications for serving as an external evaluator. Widely used rules for similar types of eligibility can be found in cognate areas, like NSF's rules for grant reviewers, or similar documents.

**ii. Size and Composition of the Set of External Evaluators:** The decision about size and composition of the set of external evaluators should reside at the school level. All evaluators solicited should be competent to judge the applicant's work within the framework provided by USM's Promotion and Tenure Guidelines, taking into account existing constraints and available resources. Under no circumstance will individuals be responsible for soliciting their own letters, or solely responsible for identifying evaluators. One example of a system that provides a balanced set of reviewers is that the applicant provides a set of four potential external evaluators, of whom the school picks two. The school then selects two more external evaluators, who are unknown to the applicant.

### **6.3. Amending/Updating Application Materials**

Because there can be situations during the course of the tenure application process that could positively affect the applicant's chances of success (e.g., an additional article accepted for publication), the applicant can provide updates via written memo to the evaluative body currently reviewing the tenure dossier. These updates are generally limited to the material already mentioned in the original application.

### **6.4. Evaluative Bodies' Roles and Responsibilities**

To clarify expectations for all parties involved in the review processes for tenure and promotion, the following are the reporting and confidentiality requirements for the evaluative bodies in the tenure and promotion processes.

#### **6.4.1. Advisory role of evaluative bodies**

Every evaluative body in the tenure and promotion review process serves in an advisory capacity to subsequent reviewers.

#### **6.4.2. Written recommendation**

Every evaluative body will provide a written recommendation including rationale for the recommendation and (committees only) vote count (for-against-abstain) to the subsequent reviewers. In cases when votes are not unanimous, the written evaluation must reflect within the same document the opinions and votes of both positions. For interdisciplinary applicants appointed to multiple units, the school director's (dean's, if candidate is appointed across colleges) recommendation will be created by all involved school directors (deans) and signed jointly. With the exception of letters from external reviewers, copies of these written recommendations will be provided to the applicants by the respective evaluative body.

### **6.4.3. Confidentiality of Review Proceedings**

Because of the sensitivity of the reviews in question, all evaluative bodies' deliberations must be strictly confidential with access limited only to academic staff and administrators involved directly in the proceedings.

### **6.4.4. Confidentiality of External Evaluator Identities**

To assure candid external evaluations, the identities of external evaluators and, except for references to it in other evaluative bodies' letters, the content of their evaluations must be kept confidential. To this end, letters from external evaluators are to be disposed of in a secure fashion before application materials are returned to applicants.

## **7. Tenure Committee Composition**

### **7.1. School Promotion and Tenure Committee**

Given the importance of the probationary faculty's substantive output in terms of research and creative activities, school-level evaluation is mandatory for tenure, including for interdisciplinary faculty.

**i. Minimum Committee Size:** There must be a minimum size of three for a School Promotion and Tenure Committee. If a school does not have three eligible faculty to serve on such a committee, the school, in conjunction with the dean, must invite faculty from a discipline related to that of the faculty under review to serve on the School Promotion and Tenure Committee.

**ii. Committee Composition:** Because the award of tenure will allow the applicant to join the institution's tenured faculty, the School Promotion and Tenure Committee will include all tenured faculty in the applicant's school. In the case of large schools or very disparate disciplinary cultures, schools are free to defer the bulk of deliberations to subcommittees. To allow further perspectives for the evaluation, the invitation of tenured faculty from other schools to serve as advising or voting members of the School Promotion and Tenure Committee will be at the school's discretion, except in cases of such presence being essential to successfully evaluate a candidate for tenure as in the case of interdisciplinary appointments. In keeping with the preceding, untenured faculty shall not be eligible to serve on or advise School Promotion and Tenure Committees.

**iii. Committees for Interdisciplinary Applicants:** Because interdisciplinary applicants, by virtue of their appointments, serve multiple schools, all schools that fund the candidate's position must be represented on the candidate's promotion and tenure committee, ideally proportional to the percentage of the candidate's workload spent in each school. Because of the wide variety of possible interdisciplinary appointments, details of the makeup of each interdisciplinary candidate's tenure

committees must be specified in a letter of agreement to be signed at the candidate's initial appointment.

**iv. Conflict of Interest:** In the case of a potential conflict of interest, all involved parties shall recuse themselves from the proceedings. As one example, an untenured Professor who applies for tenure would technically be eligible to review a tenured Associate Professor's application for promotion to Professor and that same Associate Professor would technically be eligible to review the Professor's application for tenure. However, such instances occur within the same application period, such a reality imposes a conflict of interest whereby neither party should formally review the other.

## **7.2. College Tenure Committee**

College level evaluation is mandatory for tenure track faculty, including interdisciplinary faculty. Because the tenure and promotion processes often coincide, the make-up of the committees may be similar but all processes must be viewed as separate. Therefore, College Promotion and Tenure Committee consists of at least five members, including at least one tenured faculty member from each school within the college with an applicant for tenure or promotion. Further, all members of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee must have already achieved tenure. For the evaluation of interdisciplinary candidates, the committee shall have a tenured reviewer from each of the schools (internal as well as external to the college) with which the candidate interacts. Further details regarding the specific composition of College Promotion and Tenure Committees shall be at the discretion of each college.

## **7.3. University Promotion and Tenure Committee**

University-level evaluation is mandatory for the tenure of faculty, including interdisciplinary faculty. The University Promotion and Tenure Committee must receive from the Provost the dossiers of applicants for tenure, as well as the written documents prepared by unit and college committees, school directors, deans, and external reviewers. The University Promotion and Tenure Committee reviews and evaluates all materials and then votes, the chair of the committee tendering written recommendations and rationale for the vote to the Provost. The chair of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee will simultaneously forward to the applicant a copy of the committee's letter to the Provost.

## **7.4. Faculty to be Recused from Tenure Committees**

Because there is substantial ex-officio involvement of administrators in the process and to assure that the School, College and University Promotion and Tenure Committees provide peer evaluation of faculty by faculty without the perception of a conflict of interest, the following are mandatory recusals.

**i. Recusals/Abstentions:** Otherwise eligible faculty serving as University administrative officers in the positions of President, Provost, Associate Provost, Vice-

President, College Dean, Associate Dean or School Director must be recused from School, College, or University Promotion and Tenure Committees unless they are invited to participate by a majority vote by the committee in which case they still must abstain from voting. Faculty who voted at lower levels of the process will follow the same restrictions.

**ii. Faculty must vote at their lowest eligible level.** That is, when a faculty member from one's school is evaluated for tenure, an eligible College Promotion and Tenure Committee member must vote in the School Promotion and Tenure Committee and abstain from voting at the College Promotion and Tenure Committee for that faculty member. Faculty from lower levels may be invited to consult on the case but will follow the same restrictions as 2.8.4.i.

## **8. Pre-Tenure Review**

Pre-Tenure Review is intended to evaluate the progress of tenure-track faculty towards the award of tenure and to determine areas for improvement of performance as necessary. It is typically performed in a faculty member's third year in a tenure-track position. A successful pre-tenure review is neither a promise nor a guarantee of tenure nor of continued employment of any type or duration. Negative pre-tenure reviews constitute notice that progress toward tenure is unsatisfactory and may justify the issue of a terminal contract at the discretion of the President upon the recommendation of the Provost and the Vice President for Research.

### **8.1. Pre-Tenure Review Application Materials**

In keeping with current policy, and in order to better assist the faculty member applying for tenure in being successful, for the Pre-Tenure Review the candidate must compile the same application materials as for a tenure review.

### **8.2. Pre-Tenure Review Evaluative Bodies**

To facilitate the process of pre-tenure review, and to gain some efficiency at the University level, Pre-tenure review must involve the same evaluative bodies as a full tenure review with the following exceptions.

- i. Letters from external evaluators will not be solicited for Pre-Tenure Reviews.
- ii. The University Promotion and Tenure Committee will not review Pre-Tenure Review materials.
- ii. The Pre-Tenure review stops at the Provost's level.

### **8.3. Pre-Tenure Review Criteria**

Criteria for Pre-Tenure Review are the same as for tenure but will take into account that applicants did not have the full probationary period to build their record of achievements. A principal task of the School Promotion and Tenure Committee is to identify areas in which

the candidate needs to improve to eventually merit tenure and, at the school level, help the candidate identify strategies to improve. This must be closely associated with the annual evaluation process so that candidates can monitor their progress in areas that were deficient and additional strategies can be developed to improve.

#### **8.4. Pre-Tenure Review for Candidates with Credit for Prior Accomplishment**

Candidates who were hired with three or more years credit towards tenure for prior accomplishments will not be subject to Pre-Tenure Review. Candidates with zero, one, or two years credit towards tenure for prior accomplishments will proceed through Pre-Tenure Review in their third, second, or first year at USM, respectively.