

College of Arts and Sciences Tenure Guidelines

Decisions about tenure and promotion are critical to the long-term health and success of the college and university. Tenure is ultimately not a reward for past accomplishments but an investment in the faculty member's future career. This important decision is based on three fundamental criteria: scholarship, teaching, and service. The precise opportunities and expectations vary widely over the units within the college and across the university, but they all involve some measure of quality, quantity, and trajectory in the record. There is no single scale that can be used even within a unit, as the possible combinations of quantity, quality, and trajectory are innumerable. However, there are general principles that are applied as uniformly as possible across all cases at the college level.

Timing

The pre-tenure probationary period is six years, which may be augmented under various conditions (FMLA, e.g.). Faculty may, however, decide to be considered before the sixth year without prejudice. While an initial decision to be considered early is the faculty member's, it should be informed by candid discussion with the chair about progress towards tenure and promotion and the department's and college's expectations for it. After an unsuccessful consideration of tenure and promotion prior to the mandatory year, a subsequent consideration prior to the mandatory year can be initiated only by the dean.

Scholarship

As a research university, our expectations regarding the independent scholarly record of faculty are high. In general, quality is more important than quantity, although there must be sufficient quantity to provide evidence of a significant level of scholarly productivity. At the time of being considered for tenure, the faculty member should have established him-/herself as a researcher, scholar, or creative artist at the (inter)national level. A faculty member's entire scholarly career is evaluated, but with greater attention paid to work developed while in rank at the University of Miami. Several factors influence the assessment of the quality of a scholarly record.

- Quality is often measured by citations or other indicators of the impact of scholarship. The prestige of the journals or presses in which the individual publishes or the exhibit or performance venue also indicates the work's standing. In some fields the impact of journals is quantified.
- Outside funding of research from prestigious foundations and institutes (in those disciplines where it is available) will be viewed as an important part of the scholarly record, depending on the relative size of the grant and the significance of the questions posed. In some areas external research support is essential to a successful tenure case.
- The impact/significance of the scholarship can be measured by the evaluations from outside reviewers.
- The composition of the portfolio of published works also matters. The career assessment provided by the candidate can serve as a valuable guide to the significance of each piece and the connections among them.

- The scholarly record should provide clear evidence of independent thinking and research/performance. Thus, it is important to demonstrate a record of independence from former advisors and work originating in graduate study and post-doctoral appointments.
- While it is common for a first book or initial series of articles to reflect work originally developed in the dissertation, subsequent publications will be different from or advance significantly the earlier work and scholarly growth beyond the dissertation project is important in the tenure evaluation.
- In studio art and theatre arts, tenure portfolios will reflect the faculty member's creative work – including exhibitions, performances, and reviews thereof. As with all faculty members, the significance of the work and career trajectory are of paramount importance.
- Invitations to talk at other universities and prestigious events add to the scholarly record but generally play a relatively lesser role independent of other measures of the scholarly record.
- The college encourages collaborative work; thus coauthored articles and creative works are valued. It is necessary, however, to identify the contributions of the candidate to these articles and works. A significant portion of the overall research record should include articles and works to which the candidate has made the primary contributions.
- Consistent work as seen in conference participation, publications, grants, performances and exhibitions demonstrates scholarly engagement and attainment more readily than the sudden appearance of work after years of undocumented activity.

Teaching

A strong teaching record is a necessary part of a successful tenure case. Tenure will not be recommended in the College of Arts and Sciences without evidence of this level of success in teaching. An exceptional teaching record can compensate for a more limited scholarly record, but it cannot substitute for a slight one. Teaching is viewed broadly, including curriculum planning, course design, and mentoring. Evidence of success in these areas can be judged using the following materials.

- Student evaluations. Candidates are expected to have course evaluations for all of their courses taught at UM. At a minimum, candidates are expected to have evaluations in which a strong majority of students answer “strongly agree” or “agree” to the questions on the standard course evaluations.
- Peer reviews. The *Faculty Manual* calls for peer review at least twice before tenure evaluation. Ideally the reviewer(s) will be provided with a full portfolio of the course being reviewed, including a statement of course objectives and philosophy, before visiting a class. It is best if the file includes peer reviews from different faculty colleagues. Especially in cases of interdisciplinary courses, it may be useful to have peer reviews by faculty in different disciplines. Constructive criticism is expected in most peer reviews.
- Mentoring record. A very important part of our teaching responsibilities takes place outside of any specific course. The advising of students, both undergraduate and graduate, is an essential contribution to the teaching mission of the university. The demonstrated success of one's students (both

- undergraduate and graduate) can be valuable testimony of a faculty member's contributions.
- Career assessment. This narrative provides a great opportunity to explain the overall teaching record and steps taken to improve the quality of teaching in response to feedback.

Service

We expect that candidates for tenure will have been involved in the life of their department, and at times in the life of the college, university, their national associations, and the broader community. It should also be noted that service contributions are given the least weight of the three criteria for tenure considerations.

Conclusion

Faculty members can take various paths of scholarship, teaching, and service. The College of Arts and Sciences values the many and varied contributions made by faculty and evaluates each promotion case on its own merits. The recommendation of tenure will be consistent with the expectations of a research university. The college is eager to work with faculty towards tenure and promotion, but it is important to stress, however, that ultimately individuals are responsible for their own professional success.

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