

P2001-F2

University of Massachusetts/Amherst

Office of the Provost

September 1, 2000

MEMORANDUM TO: Deans, Directors, Department Heads and Chairpersons, Chairpersons
of Department and School/College Personnel Committees (cc: Faculty)

FROM: Cora B. Marrett, Provost

SUBJECT: Promotion and Tenure Recommendations

Annually, the Office of the Provost circulates information regarding the criteria and procedures for recommendations of tenure and promotion. Once again, I continue that tradition with this memorandum. Let me note first the emphasis on professional standards, as contained in Section 4.1 of the Academic Personnel Policy:

High professional standards must be the basis for all personnel decisions. Personnel recommendations and decisions shall be made only after a review of all the qualifications and all the contributions of the individual in the areas of teaching; of research, creative or professional activity; and of service. All three areas must be considered, but the relative weight to be given to each may be determined in light of the duties of the faculty member.

Tenure

Section 4.9, which describes the standards and criteria for tenure, elaborates even more on the importance of excellence:

The award of tenure can be made only by the President with the concurrence of the Board of Trustees. Consideration of a candidate for tenure shall be based on the following:

- a) Convincing evidence of excellence in at least two, and strength in the third, of the areas of teaching; of research, creative or professional activity; and of service, such as to demonstrate the possession of qualities appropriate to a member of the faculty occupying a permanent position.
- b) Reasonable assurance of continuing development and achievement leading to further contributions to the University.

Clearly, "high professional standards," "convincing evidence" of achievement and "reasonable assurance" of continued progress, describe the expectations on the campus, at the system level, and by the Trustees, for all personnel actions and recommendations. These expectations require supporting and sufficient evidence – in the letters of the departmental faculty recommendation, the recommendation of the head/chair, the recommendation of the school/college personnel committee and the recommendation of the dean. Each recommendation should clearly state whether the faculty member has shown convincing evidence of excellence in each of the areas of teaching, service and research, creative or professional activity. The assessment of a candidate's accomplishments in research, creative or professional activity is made against the expectation of growing independence from the dissertation work or training. Recommendations should address the substance of the scholarly work, the program of inquiry, theme, or intellectual agenda that charts the course of research as well as the basis for projection that the professional achievements will continue. Letters from established scholars in the field are most helpful when those letters comment on the quality of the work and its importance to an area of inquiry. Letters that provide mere summaries of the record are less useful. The consideration of teaching should attempt to capture the total contribution of the candidate to the instructional mission. The review could examine and document teaching effectiveness in the formal classroom setting and beyond. The classroom-based review might cover the range of courses taught and their importance to the curriculum; the currency of course content as revealed in course syllabi; evaluations from students; and evaluations of pedagogic innovations or improvements. Beyond the classroom, the roles played in academic advising, the mentoring of students, the supervision of students engaged in independent study or graduate work, and the development of curricular materials could be considered. Although not required, a teaching portfolio can be an effective document to connect teaching activity with the personal statement of the candidate. In a parallel manner, the consideration of service could include that provided in governance or management (to the department, college/school, University or profession) and that representing outreach to extend knowledge beyond the University/professional community.

Academic Personnel Policy, Section 4.2, requires that positive tenure recommendations relate the proposed award of tenure to:

- a) program plans at the department, college, campus, and University level;
- b) flexibility as affected by rank and tenure distributions and anticipated retirement dates;
- c) departmental affirmative action goals, considering the nature of the positive contribution that affirmative action is able to make to the diversity of perspective that is essential to the well-being of the department and the University community.

Most tenure cases also involve a recommendation for promotion to Associate Professor. In these cases, section 4.6 (b) also applies and should be addressed at each level of review.

Promotion

Let me turn now to the standards and criteria for promotion. In addition to the standards and criteria for all personnel decisions contained in Section 4.1 of the Academic Personnel Policy, the standards for promotions are further defined in Section 4.6. Recommendations at all levels should make explicit reference to these standards and criteria.

Recommendations for promotion shall be based on qualifications and contributions in the areas of teaching; of research, creative, or professional activity; and of service; and on the following considerations:

- a) For promotion to Assistant Professor, the faculty member must possess the appropriate terminal degree, or equivalent professional experience, and have a record of achievement in the field of academic specialization. In addition, the candidate must show promise of continuing professional development and achievement.
- b) For promotion to Associate Professor, the faculty member must have a record of achievement sufficient to have gained recognition on and off campus among scholars or professionals in his or her field; and must show promise of continuing professional development and achievement.
- c) For promotion to Professor, the faculty member must have a record of achievement sufficient to have gained substantial recognition on and off campus from scholars or professionals in his or her field; and must show significant potential for continuing professional achievement.

The process is as follows. For promotion to the rank of Associate Professor accompanying a recommendation for the award of tenure, positive cases proceed through review at the level of Provost, Chancellor, President and Trustees. Responsibilities for other promotions, specifically promotion to full professor, rest with the Provost. For all cases, however, thoroughness and rigor of presentation remain paramount.

Procedures

Section 6.4 of the Academic Personnel Policy and Articles 11 and 12 of the MSP Agreement, detail the timelines and steps for recommendation of tenure and promotion.

- A. Beginning the process - The process begins when the department head or chair informs the faculty member of the tenure review. The notice must be given by the end of the third calendar week of the semester prior to the semester in which the tenure decision by the Board of Trustees is scheduled. For faculty members for whom 2000-2001 constitutes

the tenure decision year, September 22, 2000, is the deadline. The Board of Trustees must act by August 15, 2001.

Notice of a promotion review should be sent as early as possible in the semester in which a department plans to conduct such a review. A faculty member not scheduled for promotion consideration may request such a review; under no circumstances should promotion reviews of an individual be conducted more often than once a year.

B. Compiling the file - A "basic file" should be created in connection with each promotion and tenure recommendation and should include:

1. All materials submitted by the faculty member for inclusion which he or she believes will be essential to an adequate consideration of the case.
2. Letters from outside reviewers as described in D. below; a description of the professional standing of each writer and of his or her relationship with the faculty member, and an indication of who suggested each name.
3. Tables of contents, as described in F. below.
4. A curriculum vitae, including a bibliography or comparable list of professional accomplishments.
5. Copies or reviews of published works or evidence of other professional accomplishments.
6. Evaluations of teaching effectiveness, including but not limited to those of students.
7. Evaluations of service and outreach activities.
8. Recommendations of committees and administrators, as described in E. below.

The basic file should be reviewed and supplemented as appropriate at each successive level of recommendation or decision. The materials in the basic file should be accessible to the faculty member, with the exception of letters to which he or she has voluntarily waived access, as described in C. below.

C. Waiver Form - Before any on- or off-campus reviews are sought, the tenure or promotion candidate signs, in the space he or she chooses. I have attached a copy of the waiver form.

D. Letters from Outside Reviewers - For tenure recommendations and for promotions to Associate Professor or Professor, the department head or chair should solicit outside letters of

reference from scholars and professionals. The list from whom letters are sought should include some scholars suggested by the faculty member and some not suggested by the faculty member. At least three should be from persons not close to the faculty member. The request to referees should include a statement about whether the faculty member will have access to their letters.

E. Recommendations – Typically, the process moves through these stages. At the department level, the department personnel committee (or another appropriate mechanism chosen by the faculty)* reviews the basic file and makes a recommendation. That committee submits its written recommendation, its numerical vote on the recommendation, and the basic file to the department head or chair. The department head or chair reviews all of the materials, adds his or her written recommendation, and forwards all of the documentation to the school/college personnel committee. The chair simultaneously sends to the faculty member the recommendation from each level of review. The school/college personnel committee assesses the file, adds a written recommendation and a report of its numerical vote, and forwards these materials to the dean. The committee also sends a copy of its recommendation to the faculty member and the department. If the school/college personnel committee does not distribute the specified copies of its recommendation, the dean does so. The dean completes a review, and adds his or her recommendation. The dean forwards (1) the recommendation to the faculty member, the school/college personnel committee, the department, and (2) the complete documentation to the provost.

*[herein referred to as the department personnel committee]

Contrary Recommendations - Before rendering a recommendation contrary to that of the department personnel committee, the department head or chair consults with the committee. This principle holds at other levels, too: any recommendation counter to the one from the preceding level is reviewed with the key sources at that level. All such requests and all information received in response should be added to the basic file.

A department head/chair or a dean must provide compelling reasons for a recommendation that is counter to that of a department personnel committee. The action must be explained against the backdrop of professional and University standards and criteria.

It is important that the letters from departmental and college level committees report not only the results of the vote but also important considerations related to the vote. Those considerations are essential in cases where votes show divisions in the assessments by members of a personnel committee.

F. Table of Contents - At the time of his or her recommendation, the department head or chair should compile a table of contents of the basic file, add it to the file, and send a copy to the faculty member. Similarly, when the school/college personnel committee acts, it should update the table of contents, add it to the file, and send copies to the faculty member and the

department. If the school/college committee does not do so, the completion of the table becomes the responsibility of the dean. In any event, the dean must assure that the table of contents has been updated and distributed prior to submitting the file to the Provost.

G. Forms - All files, when submitted to the Provost's Office, should be accompanied by the appropriate personnel action form, if any, and a completed checklist (sample enclosed). Tenure files should also be accompanied by a completed "Summary of Tenure Recommendation" form (sample attached).

H. Timelines - As indicated in the master calendar, faculty members to be reviewed during the current academic year are those whose tenure decision year is 2000-2001, second semester and 2001-2002, first semester. We are required to submit tenure cases to the President's Office six weeks prior to meetings of the Trustees' Committee on Academic and Student Affairs. A recommendation from this committee is then forwarded to the Board of Trustees. Since the Trustees meet only four times a year, failure to meet campus deadlines can jeopardize timely action. Recommendations in tenure cases and associated promotions are due as follows:

Tenure Decision Year	Due in Dean's Office	Due in Provost's Office
2000-01 II	11/10/00	1/5/2001
2001-2002 I	3/16/2001	4/21/2001

Recommendations concerning promotions not associated with tenure are due in deans' offices on January 19, 2001, and in the Provost's Office on February 23, 2001.

Adherence to all of the relevant provisions of this policy is essential. Hence, faculty members and administrators should examine the guidelines carefully and ensure their clarity and use. Observance of the requirements helps promote the high professional standards that the University endorses. If you have any questions about these or related matters, please let me know.

Let me again reiterate the commitment the institution - from the campus to the Trustees - has expressed in high quality scholarship, teaching and service. I seek your counsel on efforts my office can make to help us realize our collective dedication to excellence.

Enclosures: Waiver Form
Check List
Summary of Tenure Recommendation Form