

Department of American Studies Rank and Tenure Criteria

Faculty and the Department Mission

The role of a tenure and promotion committee is to evaluate the contribution of a particular faculty member to the fulfillment of the department's mission and the achievement of its goals. In the framework of the great Jesuit humanist tradition and of the university mission, which includes seeking truth through innovative research, effective teaching, free inquiry, pursuing social justice, and nurturing community, the Department's faculty are enjoined to pursue excellence in every class and seminar, every committee meeting, and every project of research and publication.

Promotion and tenure are judgments about a faculty member's past achievements and expected future accomplishments.

Evaluation of Promotion and Tenure Applications

The department evaluates faculty for promotion and tenure following the procedures described in the Faculty Manual and in Section II.A.6 of the College of Arts and Sciences Policy Binder.

Each applicant's committee consists of all the fulltime faculty in the department at or above the rank or position that the applicant seeks to attain. For example, a committee evaluating an application for promotion to associate professor comprises the associate and full professors in the department.

The faculty member must inform the Chair of his or her wish to apply for tenure and promotion before April 1. He or she must provide the dossier to the Chair by September 1. The committee will make its recommendation by September 20. The Chair will forward his or her recommendation by October 1, as mandated by university procedures.

By April 15 the candidate shall furnish the names of 4-6 external referees qualified to comment on the candidate's scholarship, teaching, service, or other matters pertinent to the quality of his or her professional accomplishment. The Chair will add further names to the candidate's list, and will request letters from 4 outside evaluators, with at least two of the four selected from the candidate's original list. In addition, as is provided for in the College's procedures, one faculty member in the department will submit a letter of evaluation. All letters will be held in confidence.

Criteria

Promotion to Associate Professor with tenure

Teaching

Faculty teaching responsibilities extend beyond classroom and seminar to encompass mentoring, supervision of graduate assistants, guidance for student interns, and judicious participation on students' examination, thesis, and dissertation committees. Evidence of excellent teaching will have been compiled on an annual basis by the faculty member in accordance with department and college procedures for annual review. Faculty will submit a teaching portfolio as part of their dossiers. The portfolios may vary in scope but must contain syllabi, handouts, student evaluations, written reports of classroom visits by the Chair and other department faculty, and reflective statements about teaching philosophy as well as about

particular courses. It is the responsibility of the committee to make considered, qualitative professional judgments about teaching and not rely exceedingly on numbers generated by student questionnaires.

Scholarship

American Studies adheres to widely accepted norms of scholarship in the Humanities. Research conducted in archives, interpretation of texts, and assessment of extant scholarship characterize the bulk of American Studies scholarship no less than in other Humanities disciplines. American Studies scholars, however, tend to investigate questions that demand interdisciplinary approaches and methods. Criteria of scholarly achievement in the field of American Studies include: publication of a book with a reputable press, publication of an edited volume or special issue of an academic journal, publication of an article in a refereed journal, and publication of an essay in a scholarly edited volume. Evidence of scholarly achievement in American Studies is equally demonstrated through participation as curator or contributing artist to public humanities and art exhibitions, and through the performance, production, and publication of poetry, films, videos, plays, photographs, and other creative works.

Candidates must have engaged in substantial research resulting in a book manuscript or other major work. A substantial record of publication of articles, essays, poems and creative writing, or a substantial record of curating or contributing to public humanities or art exhibitions, or a substantial record of public performances or film screenings, may also meet the expectations for scholarship. Plans for publication or public presentation should be secured before the candidate's application. Work will be evaluated on the quality of scholarship and creative endeavor. It is the committee's responsibility to judge this quality themselves rather than rely on proxy indicators such as the prestige of a press or exhibition space.

Service

In any academic unit, but especially in a small department, service is essential to the carrying out of the department mission. Candidates must show evidence of responsible and constructive service on department and college committees and projects, and may also present evidence of service to the university and the profession.

Collegiality

Constructive, civil, and trustworthy relations with faculty, students, and administrators are critical to effective advancement toward the collective goals of the department. Colleague letters and other indications of collegial actions will be given their due weight by the committee.

Promotion to Professor

Teaching

The kind of evidence to be submitted is the same as that for promotion to associate professor. The evidence should show outstanding instructional achievement and meritorious contributions to exam and dissertation committees. The candidate must show evidence of excellent service as a student mentor and advisor.

Scholarship

The candidate will show evidence of an ongoing record of research and publication, normally but not necessarily resulting in the publication of a monograph with a reputable academic press since the time of the last promotion. He or she will have attained a reputation of distinction in the field.

Service

Continued constructive service on department committees and projects, and substantial service at the college and university levels, must be demonstrated, as well as service to the profession, by such activities as leadership in the professional associations, refereeing of books and articles, participation in conference organizing and panel discussions, and consulting.

Collegiality

The candidate will furnish evidence of continued trustworthy and productive relations with members of the university community which are indicative of leadership and respect beyond the department.

Annual Review and Third-Year Review

Pursuant to college and university policy, the Chair conducts annual performance reviews of faculty. These evaluations are intended to be both constructive and forward-looking. They are not simply backward looks at the faculty member's work, but also proactive planning sessions in which the coming year's goals for teaching, research, and service are laid out. The Chair should review the progress the faculty member is making toward tenure and promotion during the evaluation meetings. However, tenure or promotion is not merely an automatic result of prior adequate annual performances.

By November 15 of their third year, untenured faculty will submit to the fulltime tenured faculty of the department a document summarizing their accomplishments in teaching, research, and service since the time of their appointment. The third-year review does not have to include all the elements of a tenure application, such as external letters. The tenured faculty will write a report to the faculty under review summarizing their evaluation. The Chair may write a separate report. The Chair will meet with the faculty member to discuss the report or reports. This meeting is separate from the annual merit-pay evaluation session.