

TO: Steering Committee
FROM: Committee on Faculty Affairs
RE: Final Recommendation on Joining Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor
DATE: May 7, 2014

Background:

In January, 2014, Governor Christie signed into law a statute changing the tenure process at New Jersey state colleges. According to the statute, the review of candidates for tenure at TCNJ now must take place in the candidate's fifth year, rather than in the fourth year, as is our current practice.

In a February 14, 2014 memo to the faculty, the Provost noted her intention to put into governance a charge asking the College to consider whether, given the new statute, the processes for tenure and for promotion to associate professor should be linked.

Charge:

Steering asked CFA to consider whether the processes for tenure and promotion to associate professor should be joined into a single process and decision, except in cases when a faculty member chooses to apply for promotion to associate professor before he or she is eligible for tenure.

Note:

This recommendation is made independently of any questions regarding the role and composition of the currently denominated College Promotions Committee, or of what the timeline should be for the joint tenure/promotion process. These issues will be addressed in separate recommendations at a later date.

Testimony:

Open discussion of the process forward in implementing the tenure law was held at the February 19, 2014 Faculty Senate meeting. The comments and concerns voiced at this open discussion were reviewed by CFA at its February 26 meeting. After consultation with the Faculty Senate leadership, CFA invited Faculty to comment by e-mail specifically on the question: Given that new faculty will have a longer period before applying for reappointment with tenure, should we merge the two separate application processes for tenure and for promotion to associate professor into one process? The comment period was open from March 14 through 27, 2014. An Open Forum was subsequently co-sponsored by CFA and the Faculty Senate on April 16, 2014. Comments from the Open Forum were incorporated into the final recommendation, which was distributed on the Faculty List for an open comment period lasting from April 25 to May 7, 2014.

At the April 16, 2014 Open Forum, it was suggested that faculty might be given the option of applying for just tenure in the 5th year and for promotion in the 6th, or for tenure and promotion both in the 5th year. However, the majority of faculty currently apply for promotion in the fifth year. Figures were requested but not received from Academic Affairs on the percentage of faculty who currently apply for and receive promotion in their 5th year. Faculty suggested that CFA make explicit that the intent of its recommendation is to link the process and the tenure and promotion decisions. Faculty also suggested that departments develop carefully reasoned standards for tenure and promotion that take into account the additional year that faculty would have before applying for tenure under the new law. Some departments, for example the English Department, reported that they have already developed and

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unanimously approved such standards.

Librarian responses asking for e-mail comments did not favor merging tenure and promotion into a single process because the process is substantially different for Faculty and Librarians. These concerns were reiterated at the April 16 Open Forum.

In its e-mail comments the School of Nursing also indicated concerns that: “In order to automatically promote to associate the bar for tenure would have to be significantly raised, something which would necessarily negate any slight easing of the process for the pre-tenure faculty.”

However, the majority of testimony gathered to date supports joining the processes for tenure and promotion to associate professor because it would provide junior faculty with more time to have articles published, it is best practice nationally, it will significantly reduce the amount of work we engage in when applying for tenure and promotion, and when reviewing the records of our colleagues, and it will eliminate situations in which faculty are awarded tenure but are not promoted to the rank of Associate Professor.

A search of public web-pages and documents for 19 institutions considered to be TCNJ comparators was made on 11 March 2014. The first 14 are the College’s official peer list: Carnegie Mellon, Chapman U., College of William and Mary, Fairfield U., James Madison U., Lehigh U., Loyola U. (MD), Miami U. (OH), St. Joseph’s U., Santa Clara U., SUNY Geneseo, Truman State U., U. Pennsylvania, and Villanova U. The other five are institutions that three or more of the five School of Science departments had on their lists of peers and aspirants: Bucknell U., Carleton College, College of Charleston, Harvey Mudd College and St. Mary’s College of Maryland.

In summary, of 19 comparators, information could be obtained for 13 concerning the linkage of promotion to Associate Professor. Of those 13, eight always link promotion and tenure, four usually do and only one indicates separate decisions are the norm. Eight of them normally do the promotion and tenure review in the 6th year, one does this in the 5th year, and the date is flexible or indeterminate for the other four.

Information could be obtained from 15 websites as to whether there was an institution-wide committee that normally considered promotion and tenure decisions. Of those 15, 11 had such a process, one had one invoked, but only when there were disagreements at other levels, one had school- (or college)-wide, but not institution-wide, committees and three only had departmental reviews (aside from reviews by administrators).

We can reasonably conclude that the majority of comparator institutions do link tenure and promotion, though most of them follow a time-line where this occurs in the 6th, not 5th, year. An even larger majority of these colleges and universities have an institution-wide faculty committee assessing P&T decisions.

The AFT was also repeatedly consulted. Any aspects of joining the tenure and promotions processes that present issues of “terms and conditions of employment” or that in any way violate the *Agreement* will have to be negotiated between the union and the college.

Final Recommendation: CFA recommends that the application for tenure and promotion to associate professor be joined into a single process, except in cases when a faculty member chooses to apply for promotion to associate professor before he or she is eligible for tenure. CFA recommends that the tenure and promotion decisions be joined, except in cases when a faculty member chooses to apply for promotion to associate professor before he or she is eligible for tenure.

CFA cannot make a recommendation at this time for Librarians.

CFA wishes to reiterate that this recommendation is made independently of any questions regarding the role and composition of the currently denominated College Promotions Committee, or of what the timeline should be for the joint tenure/promotion process. These issues will be addressed in separate recommendations at a later date.

Should merging the processes for tenure and promotion to associate professor into a single process conflict in any way with our *Agreement*, CFA also recommends that terms be negotiated between the AFT and the College.