African American Studies
The College of New Jersey
Disciplinary Standards for Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion

The attached disciplinary standards have been reviewed and approved by the Committee on Faculty Affairs, the Council of Deans, and the Provost.

To avoid creating a moving target for candidates for reappointment, the disciplinary standards in effect during a faculty member's first year of employment will be used for reappointment and tenure applications in years 1-4. Candidates for promotion will use the disciplinary standards in effect in the year in which they apply for promotion.

[Signatures and dates]

The Department of African American Studies will next review its disciplinary standards in Academic Year 2018-2019.
AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT

DISCIPLINARY STANDARDS FOR REAPPOINTMENT, TENURE, AND PROMOTION:

February 9, 2014

African American Studies (AAS) at The College of New Jersey is an interdisciplinary department committed to the discovery, preservation, and dissemination of African and African Diaspora cultural, intellectual, political, and economic traditions. AAS bridges TCNJ’s various disciplines and sub-specialties and enhances students’ multicultural awareness; as such, whether exclusive to the field or jointly-appointed, AAS faculty hold complex professional identities and responsibilities. This document acknowledges the unique nature of AAS faculty commitments and establishes the expectations for fulfilling the department’s mission and meeting the standards for scholarly performance in the faculty’s respective sister disciplines, programs, and departments.

A. Alignment with Key Institutional Documents and Values

I. Purpose

This document articulates disciplinary standards for the evaluation of scholarly, creative or professional activity of faculty in the African American Studies Department. In particular, it serves the following functions: 1) as a guide for faculty in planning, executing and seeking recognition for their scholarly, professional, and creative endeavors; 2) as a guide for the AAS Promotion and Reappointment Committee’s (PRC) task of evaluating faculty progress towards reappointment, tenure, and promotion; 3) as a vehicle for establishing transparent, consistent, and equitable standards for reappointment, tenure, and promotion; and 4) as a means of ensuring a healthy and supportive environment for faculty as they work to achieve the AAS, School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), and College’s goals and missions.

II. Foundations

The College of New Jersey Mission Statement describes the institution as a “community of learners, dedicated to free inquiry and open exchange, to excellence in teaching, creativity, scholarship, and citizenship, and to the transformative power of education.” Towards that end, the African American Studies Department has developed a series of discipline-specific goals and objectives that honor TCNJ and HSS’s mission “to prepare students for lifelong learning and responsible democratic citizenship.” As a program that exclusively offers undergraduate courses, the department honors The College’s identity as a primarily undergraduate institution with targeted graduate programs. The African American Studies
curriculum promotes the skills essential for leadership in many fields: the ability to read thoughtfully, write persuasively, and think critically and compassionately about questions of power and difference.

Because the African American Studies Department is comprised of faculty with diverse disciplines and sub-specialties from across The College, and because AAS faculty share either appointments or affiliations with other departments and programs, TCNJ must consider the breadth of faculty assignments and disciplinary differences in the application of scholarly standards. Faculty diversity is essential to our conception of intellectual community, and as stewards of TCNJ’s diversity, we strive to uphold principles of fairness and flexibility in evaluating faculty contributions to the goals and missions of the department, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), and The College.

III. Range of Scholarly Activities

TCNJ’s 2011 Promotions and Reappointment document recognizes a broad range of scholarly and creative activities as the foundation of its teacher-scholar model. The document notes that non-traditional production can embody “a serious and continuing commitment to scholarship” that “complements and enriches teaching of the first order.” The Promotions and Reappointment document highlights five areas as scholarly production or its equivalent—Scholarship of Production, Scholarship of Integration, Scholarship of Application, Scholarship of Pedagogy, and Artistic Expression. Because of its interdisciplinary core, the African American Studies faculty engage the stated categories in diverse and complex ways. As such scholarship, professional, and creative activity in African American Studies may reflect practices and outcomes of traditional academic disciplines, such as the production of peer-reviewed scholarly articles, monographs, and books. It may also include the production of textbooks, edited volumes and curricular materials.

The African American Studies Department also recognizes non-traditional work as consonant with the categories listed in the Promotions and Reappointment document, such as consulting with business, government, and community partners; artistic performance; exhibitions; recordings; publication in popular and trade venues; successful completion of academic grants; and the creation of digital artifacts as analogous to scholarly production in the traditional disciplines. Non-traditional scholarship must be grounded in theory, applicable to other contexts, or demonstrate methodological rigor. If it involves parties outside TCNJ, faculty must undertake the project in collaboration with partners who help set research questions, determine methodology, and participate in collecting data and/or evidence. Consistent with The College’s promotions guidelines, African American Studies considers “consulting work resulting in the creation rather than application of knowledge that impacts significantly one’s discipline” equivalent to traditional scholarship. Faculty development of curricula may be considered scholarship if it is subject to peer review and disseminated beyond TCNJ. Grant proposals are also eligible if they are subject to academic peer review, involve the creation or preservation of knowledge (e.g., professional curation), or are designed to have a demonstrable impact on the discipline.
Evaluating Scholarship Quality

Shared Standards

The College has delineated four overarching standards for evaluating faculty work: quality, scope of recognition, consistency of production, and impact on the field. African American Studies embraces these standards as the foundation of its discipline-specific standards and the requirements of the faculty’s adjoining discipline(s).

1. Quality

As the 2011 Promotions and Reappointment Document notes, it is generally expected that scholarly, creative, and professional work “will be submitted to an appropriate jury of peers for rigorous evaluation. The quality of work is defined by its significance in one’s field of inquiry and necessarily requires such peer review to validate the work’s significance.”

The African American Studies Department values peer-reviewed work in the forms of journal articles (both print and electronic), academic press books, juried exhibits and conference presentations. The AAS Department recognizes, however, that high-quality work may appear in forms not subject to traditional academic peer review. These include, but are not limited to, invited publications and presentations, commercial publications, community-based research, digital media, artistic productions (e.g. performances, recordings, and installations). In assessing the quality of grant proposals the African American Studies PRC may consider panel reviews of competitive grant applications, as well as independent evaluators’ reports, as evidence of the scholarly merit of such proposals.

In each of these instances, the candidate is responsible for explaining the significance of the works in question. This should include information on the review and selection processes, as well as evidence of the relevance, selectivity and authority of the venues in which the works appear.

2. Scope of Recognition

Individuals may demonstrate the scope of recognition of their work through evidence such as reviews, citations, republication in anthologies, reissuing of editions, translations, circulation figures, book sales, and online metrics indicative of a work’s credibility, authority and reach. Invitations to speak or present at important venues within the field may also be considered. Invitations to offer expert testimony before governmental bodies or similar important regional, national or international policy-making bodies may also be considered.
Awards for scholarship, holding office in a professional organization or serving as an editor of a professional journal are considered evidence of the faculty member’s reputation and standing in the field, but are not considered scholarly outcomes in and of themselves.

3. Consistency of Production

Faculty in African American Studies are expected to establish a continuous and carefully planned program of scholarship or production; they are expected to maintain an ongoing program of scholarly, creative, and/or professional activities and to disseminate the results of these activities. A clearly articulated and mapped out plan for future scholarly/creative/professional activity will be a crucial element of all personnel reviews.

4. Impact

African American Studies faculty may choose a variety of outlets for dissemination of scholarly, creative and professional work, as articulated in their stated goals. Examples may include, but are not limited to, publication in peer-reviewed journals, scholarly and trade books, exhibitions, performances, and the creation of digital artifacts.

Faculty members who employ digital technologies in their scholarship or creative activity are responsible for documenting and demonstrating the rigor, relevance and impact of their work. As the MLA guidelines of evaluating work in digital media and the digital humanities specify, they should:

- describe how their work may blend, redefine, or render obsolete the traditional boundaries between teaching, research, and service
- describe the process underlying creation of work in digital media (e.g., the creation of infrastructure as well as content) and their particular contributions
- describe how work in digital media requires new collaborative relationships with clients, publics, other departments, colleagues, and students

Additionally the MLA guidelines state:

“Documentation of projects might include examples of success at engaging new audiences; securing internal or external funding, awards, or other professional recognition; and fostering adoption, distribution, or publication of digital works, as well as reviews and citations of the work in print or digital journals. In framing their work, faculty members should be careful to clarify the context and venue of publications, exhibitions, or presentations (e.g., conference proceedings are among the most prestigious
publications in computer science, whereas they are generally deemed to be a lesser form of publication in the humanities)". 2

Collaborative Work, including Work with Students.

Faculty may be engaged in research collaborations with other faculty, students, or external partners such as non-profit enterprises, government agencies or private industry. In submitting such work for consideration for tenure or promotion, it is important that faculty members document their specific contributions to the research in question, explaining the impact of their contributions on the overall project and to that field of research. Examples of such contributions include participation in the design and execution of a research project, analysis of results, writing, editing and or presenting papers either singly or jointly, and/or mentoring student researchers. While it can be difficult to quantify accurately the specific contributions made by an individual to a project, especially over time, the candidate is responsible for helping the PRC properly contextualize their involvement in a collaborative project.

Artifacts that incorporate the work of mentored student researchers must credit students' contributions to the development and execution of that work.

Individual Differences

The collective expertise of the African American Studies faculty represents the best resource for assessing the overall quality, scope, consistency, and impact of faculty scholarship in the PRC. While external indicators of the quality of disciplinary scholarship, such as those indicated above, provide valuable guidance, African American Studies is unique in its focus on academics and the preservation and awareness of culture. 3

The significance of scholarly activities is highlighted in the TCNJ Promotions and Reappointment document, in particular the importance of research, creative endeavors, professional and intellectual development, and professional service (when they involve the creation of knowledge and demonstrate a significant disciplinary impact). Recognizing that there are multiple models of quality scholarship in the field of African American Studies, the department expects individual variations in the combination and/or composition of scholarly and creative work, as well as the outlets available for dissemination by selected faculty.

The framework described in this document is intended to fit various types of scholarly programs and goals: no one set of evaluative criteria will apply equally to all individuals. Faculty should articulate their research program plan (including short- and long-term goals and objectives, specific outlets for communicating scholarship, and the contexts in which their program is intended to have an impact) to the PRC.
IV. Procedures

Scholarship in African American Studies covers a broad spectrum of intellectual activities. These include, but are not limited to, creative writing, professional writing, journalism, critical writing (scholarly articles, chapters, and books), editing (books and critical editions), review writing, textbook writing, performance, grant-writing, the design and execution of experiments, the development of multi-media artifacts and scholarly resources, expert testimony, and papers presented at conferences, professional meetings, and other academic events.

The variety of activities encompassed by African American Studies and the diversity of its hiring makes it important that the department clearly articulate its scholarly expectations for new faculty members as they join the TCNJ community. While standards of production will remain consistent for all AAS faculty, expectations for the kind of scholarly output may vary because the department hires faculty across a variety of disciplines.

At the beginning of each academic year, the PRC will meet individually with newly hired faculty members to talk about research standards and expectations. These conversations must be a natural outgrowth of the hiring process. The PRC must use the first-year and subsequent reviews to revisit and clarify these expectations. A record of these conversations must appear in the follow-up letters that accompany these reviews.

V. Minimum Standards

All core members of the AAS faculty are expected to maintain a continuous and carefully planned program of scholarly, professional or creative activity. In periodic reviews with the PRC, the candidate is expected to update and clarify the trajectory of his or her work as it progresses. While scholarship may vary given the interdisciplinary nature of African American Studies, faculty must meet minimum standards to be recommended for reappointment, tenure and/or promotion. The following are the minimum standards faculty members must meet for tenure and promotion:

Tenure

Candidates for tenure in the AAS shall, at the minimum, have published two peer-reviewed articles in well-regarded journals (as explained by the candidate and assessed by the PRC), or produced a comparable number of juried or professionally disseminated creative or professional works. In addition, faculty members may participate in conferences or shows to present their work to their professional peers.
Associate Professor

Candidates for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor must show evidence of a continued program of scholarly, professional or creative activity beyond that required for tenure. Candidates for Associate Professor in the AAS shall, at the minimum, have published at least one peer-reviewed article in a well-regarded journal since attaining tenure (as explained by the candidate and assessed by the PRC). Alternatively, the candidate can submit a comparable evidence of creative or professional production in juried or professional venues. Faculty members may participate in conferences or shows to present their work to their professional peers.

Professor

Candidates for promotion to the rank of professor are expected to demonstrate sustained engagement in scholarship, professional activity or creative work beyond that demonstrated at the time of promotion to the rank of associate professor. For some candidates, that will include a scholarly book or a series of articles in peer-reviewed journals or chapters in edited volumes deemed to be equivalent to a book; for other candidates, that could mean a digital ethnography, considered equivalent to a book, accessed by scholars and the general public; or a series of podcasts, also considered to be equivalent to a book, reviewed by scholars and deemed important and innovative for its contribution to an important discussion in African-American Studies.

Additional possibilities include (as explained by the candidate and assessed by the PRC):

- Producing curricula that are peer reviewed and disseminated beyond TCNJ
- Producing exhibitions or creative works in local or international juried exhibitions
- Writing and obtaining competitive grants and/or external funding of significant scholarly merit
- Taking a leadership role in consulting activities or other professional practice, demonstrating recognition of one’s scholarly/creative work at the regional, national, and/or international level.

While the range of activities is broad, all these kinds of evidence of sustained engagement in scholarship, professional activity, or creative work share the commonality of work that is shared broadly, deemed by a community of scholars to be an important and innovative contribution, and recognized as such by the candidate, the PRC, and the external reviewers.