

## FACULTY SENATE TASK FORCE ON TENURE & PROMOTION TASK FORCE RESOLUTION

### Background and History Leading to Resolution:

It is assumed that all faculty hired at UT Tyler will be given the opportunity to develop their professional skills as teachers and researchers, and that they will join in collegial service to the institution. At appropriate times, these faculty should be fairly and objectively evaluated for the purposes of tenure and promotion. In the past decade UT Tyler has doubled in size and has also experienced quite a lot of change in the Office of the Provost. With this growth, and with each new Provost, have come differing ideas about faculty recruitment, retention, and—more specifically—about tenure and promotion standards. The Senate began to receive reports from faculty of the lack of objective, measurable criteria for annual performance evaluations, tenure, and promotion decision-making in some departments.

In an effort to facilitate greater clarity about these issues for the faculty, the UT Tyler Faculty Senate convened a Tenure and Promotion Task Force in Spring 2016 to:

- examine departmental tenure and promotion policies
- evaluate these policies for objectivity, equality and fairness, and,
- more specifically, to clarify departmental guidelines for co-authorship on scholarly/creative endeavors.

The Task Force included a number of assistant and associate professors and was chaired by a full professor. This group determined that annual performance evaluations at UT Tyler are heavily linked to decisions regarding tenure and promotion, but there seemed to be a significant “disconnect” between these two processes. For example, some annual evaluations do not differentiate between what “exceeds expectations” vs “meets expectations vs “does not meet expectations.”

In addition, some annual evaluations do not reflect the HOP criteria for tenure and promotion, so tenure-track faculty are not aware of specific tenure and promotion requirements or the status of their work toward successful achievement of tenure and promotion. Some tenure track faculty do not receive any type of written evaluation that reflects their progress toward a successful tenure and promotion process.

The task force consulted the policy documents of the American Association of University Professors with regard to tenure and promotion. Here is what the AAUP has to say about these matters:

- decisions regarding faculty performance are primarily a faculty responsibility because it is scholars in each field that have the “...chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues....” (p. 121).
- decisions regarding tenure should be made by an appropriate faculty group using procedures approved by the faculty (p. 95, 97)
- a wide “latitude of academic freedom...and standards of fairness” should be observed when an institution is making decisions regarding tenure. (p. 95)
- deliberation on faculty tenure and promotion must avoid judgments based on “arbitrary or...inadequate consideration” (p. 94).

- “Good practice requires that the institution (department, college or university) define its criteria for reappointment and tenure and its procedures for reaching decisions on those matters” (p. 94).
- probationary faculty members (faculty in the first 7 years of employment) should be informed early in their employment of standards affecting renewal of appointments (p. 95)
- senior faculty members should regularly review, advise and assist junior non-tenured faculty members regarding status toward meeting standards for tenure (p. 95)
- it is important to inform faculty members of “shortcomings” that could affect a negative decision regarding tenure so that they have the opportunity to correct such deficiencies (p.95) and;
- Finally, that following the guidelines discussed above “contributes to the achievement of harmonious faculty relationships and the development of well-qualified faculties” (p. 98).

During the course of the task force’s efforts they discovered that the Provost had requested the Graduate School Dean, Dr. Geiger, to collect and analyze departmental tenure and promotion policies from around the campus. Realizing that this work was in progress and that the Task Force itself has little or no authority over colleges and departments regarding structure and processes for tenure and promotion, annual evaluations and guidelines for co-authorship of scholarly works, it was decided that the Task Force would write a resolution to share with the full Senate. It follows:

Whereas retention of productive and scholarly faculty is tantamount to promoting excellence in teaching and effective learning

Whereas The University of Texas at Tyler (UT Tyler) recognizes the importance of facilitating a culture of productivity through significant contributions to scientific knowledge, public policy, economic opportunity, and artistic expression

And Whereas the faculty expect the university to adhere to AAUP best practices with regard to faculty retention, tenure and promotion, be it

***Resolved, that the UT Tyler Faculty Senate requests that faculty within individual departments work with department chairs to develop written procedures and implement processes across colleges and departments to:***

1. ensure all departments have annual evaluations for tenure track and promotion-eligible faculty that reflect HOP criteria of scholarship, teaching, service and collegiality;
2. ensure criteria for annual evaluations reflect criteria for tenure and promotion for relevant faculty;
3. ensure criteria for performance evaluation, 3<sup>rd</sup> year review for tenure track faculty, and tenure and promotion are specific, measurable, objective and fair given resources available for faculty;
4. ensure faculty are aware of evaluation and T&P criteria early in their appointment;
5. ensure a workable plan is in place for mentoring of new and junior faculty;
6. make available to the greatest extent possible resources for faculty to achieve T&P goals;
7. adopt and enforce standards and for determining co-authorship on scholarly works (publications, creative art productions, presentations); and

8. ensure periodic evaluation of T&P procedures, mentoring processes and implementation of standards for co-authorship of scholarly works.