

Post-Tenure Review Policy in the Department of Geography
(Approved by Geography Faculty on 2/1/2017)

Preamble

The Department of Geography conducts Post-Tenure Review to support the professional development of the tenured faculty. We, the Faculty of the Department of Geography, perform Post-Tenure Review to maintain the scholarly, educational, and leadership contributions of our colleagues.

The purpose of this department's post-tenure-review policy is to set clear, yet flexible, standards of satisfactory performance, and to define the manner in which performance is evaluated. In this policy the standards of satisfactory performance must be understood as minimal conditions of tenure. These conditions gain their meaning from the tenure system (see Appendix I), and should not be confused with aspirational goals or measures of merit. The department will certainly hope to see all tenured faculty members performing at a significantly higher level in all areas, but will accept performance at these minimal standards as satisfying the conditions of tenure.

Conditions of Tenure

(1) A tenured faculty member will teach what is specified in the annual letter of appointment.

(2) A tenured faculty member will give evidence of intellectual engagement by regular publication of scientific, scholarly, or creative works, periodic attendance at academic conferences, and ongoing engagement in the intellectual life of the department. The word "works" is intentionally vague to allow a range of acceptable products, and should not be taken to refer exclusively to scientific papers, presentations, and books.

(3) A tenured faculty member will carry out all service roles to which he or she is appointed.

Measures of Performance

University Rule 12.06.99.M0.01 is concerned primarily with the outcomes for post-tenure reviews that result from sub-standard performance. As such, this document outlines the distinctions between the Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory performance ratings. Levels of performance that exceed the Needs Improvement rating are considered by definition to be satisfactory. No effort is made in this document to distinguish among those ratings; instead, the criteria for a rating of "Outstanding" or "Exceeds Expectation," versus merely "Satisfactory," are set forth in the Annual Review Policy.

Measures of Teaching Performance

Needs Improvement – Underperforming on student education relative to standard expectations of a tenured faculty member. Evidence includes but is not limited to (1) repeated negative teaching evaluations or a persistent decline on key measures; (2) inattention to university requirements, including timely posting of current course syllabi, curricula vitae and student grades; (3)

complaints regarding out-of-date or incorrect information; and (4) unresolved student complaints.

Unsatisfactory – Culpable negligence in student education. Evidence includes but is not limited to (1) persistent negative teaching evaluations; (2) regular and unresolved student complaints; (3) indifference to teaching; (4) disorganized presentation of course materials and poor communication of course requirements; (5) persistent lack of progress to degree on the part of students being mentored; (6) unwillingness to mentor students; (7) persistent inattention to university requirements including timely posting of current course syllabi, curricula vitae and student grades; (8) routine refusal to teach courses central to the departmental mission; and (9) excessive cancellation of class.

Measures of Research Performance

Needs Improvement – Underperforming in the specific field relative to standard expectations of a tenured faculty member. Evidence includes, but is not limited to (1) few submissions or publications of peer-reviewed journal articles, research proposals, chapters in books, edited volumes, monographs or special papers and (2) limited other scholarly activity such as attendance at scientific meetings, authorship of review articles or electronic publications.

Unsatisfactory – Culpable negligence in research. Evidence includes but is not limited to (1) Lack of publication in peer reviewed journals, chapters in books, edited volumes, monographs or special papers and (2) the absence of other forms of scholarly activity.

Measures of Service Performance

Needs Improvement – Underperforming on service to the department, college, university or community at large commensurate with rank. Evidence includes but is not limited to (1) minimal contributions to departmental, college and/or university committees; (2) limited participation in professional societies; and (3) irregular attendance at faculty meetings and participation in other faculty activities such as those for student and faculty recruitment.

Unsatisfactory – Culpable negligence in service to the department, college, university or community at large. Evidence includes but is not limited to (1) failure to attend faculty meetings regularly; (2) refusal to serve on departmental, college or university committees; and (3) lack of contributions to departmental, college or university committees on which the faculty member is serving.

Conduct of Periodic Peer Review

Periodic Peer Review of tenured faculty members is conducted in accordance with University Rule 12.06.99.M0.01 through the following procedures (see graphical representation in Appendix II):

- (1) Associate Professors are evaluated every six years by all the Professors and Associate Professors (except the one being evaluated) who serve on the departmental Tenure & Promotion Committee. The first review is conducted in the sixth year after appointment to Associate Professor.
- (2) Professors are evaluated six years by all the Professors (except the one being evaluated) who serve on the departmental Tenure & Promotion Committee. The first review is conducted in the sixth year after appointment to Professor.
- (3) Administrative appointees (e.g., Deans, Associate Deans, Department Heads) who step down from their positions will be reviewed after six years of regular faculty service to allow time for adjustment to full academic responsibilities.
- (4) A full CV and a written or oral summary of the faculty member's activities in teaching, research, and service is presented to the members of the Tenure & Promotion Committee who are conducting the evaluation.
- (5) The committee meets with the faculty member and collaboratively reviews the package and submits an evaluation to the Department Head.
- (6) A finding of "Satisfactory" performance in all categories (teaching, research, and service) results in no further action until the next scheduled peer review.
- (7) A finding of "Needs Improvement" in a single category requires a statement explaining the basis of the finding, and results in the development of an Improvement Plan, which follows the guidelines described in University Rule 12.06.99.M0.01.
- (8) A finding of "Unsatisfactory" in any category, or of "Needs Improvement" in two or more categories, requires a statement explaining the basis of the finding, and initiates a Professional Development Review, which follows the guidelines described in University Rule 12.06.99.M0.01.

Appendix I: The Concept of Academic Tenure

The university originated in the middle ages, and to this day retains a number of medieval titles, symbols and practices. Tenure is one of these, the term and concept both derived from the laws under which a vassal held a fiefdom (or feud) from his lord. Knowing that academic tenure originated in the feudal system is not only of antiquarian interest, but also helps to dissipate some common misperceptions of the nature of academic tenure.

A tenured academic holds his or her position in the same way that a medieval vassal held a fiefdom, which is to say securely, but on condition of fealty or sworn terms of service to his lord. His hold on his fiefdom was secure because his lord could not simply *decide* to dispossess a vassal to whom he had granted tenure. A fiefdom would, however, revert to the lord (“escheat” is the legal term) if the vassal failed to show fealty (i.e. to perform the sworn terms of service). So medieval tenure meant that no vassal held his fiefdom in “fee simple,” which means absolutely and without conditions of service, and that any vassal who acted as if he did hold his fiefdom in fee simple would see that fiefdom escheat back to the lord.

“The King himself cannot give lands in so absolute and unconditional a manner as to set them free of Tenure.” (Sir Martin Wright, *An Introduction to the Law of Tenure* [1729], p. 138.)

“Tenure” is, therefore, the legal name of the conditions that surrounded feudal landholding, and that today surround the holding of a tenured academic appointments. Like the medieval lord, the university is bound to honor grants of tenure, and cannot *arbitrarily* dispossess a tenured professor, even when doing so would be in the interest of the university. In other words, no administrator can simply *decide* to terminate you. But tenure also means that you do not hold your position “in fee simple”—that you have not by some past act “bought and paid for” your position. Tenure means you hold your position on the condition of service, and that your security against arbitrary dispossession comes at the price of ongoing “fealty.”

Properly administered, post-tenure review simply ensures that a tenured professor is fulfilling the conditions of tenure, and that when he or she fails in fealty, the forfeited position “escheats” to the university in an orderly and lawful manner. Post-tenure review can only “erode tenure” if, through improper administration, it exposes tenured faculty to arbitrary dismissal.

For a professor, the conditions of academic tenure are satisfactory performance of teaching, research and service. A tenured professor who fulfills these conditions properly enjoys a very high level of “job security,” and has nothing to fear from administrators who might wish to replace him or her with someone who is cheaper, more docile, or better suited to what administrators may see as the present needs of the university.

The difficulty lies, of course, in the definition and evaluation of satisfactory performance, and this difficulty is complicated by mutual suspicion between faculty and administrators. The faculty necessarily (and not without cause) suspect that administrators may grasp after privileges of arbitrary dismissal; administrators necessarily (and not without cause) suspect that the faculty may grasp after privileges of “fee simple” ownership.

The purpose of this department's post-tenure-review policy is to set standards of satisfactory performance, and performance evaluation, that are clear enough to provide guidance, and yet flexible enough to avoid prejudice. This policy should also aim to allay the mutual suspicions of faculty and administrators by explicitly conserving the essential rights and responsibilities of academic tenure.

In this policy the standards of satisfactory performance must be understood as *minimal conditions of tenure*, and should not be confused with aspirational goals or measures of merit. The department will certainly hope to see all tenured faculty performing at a significantly higher level in all areas, and may well employ other means of reward and sanction to push faculty to that level, but will accept performance at these minimal standards as satisfying the conditions of tenure and preventing "escheat" of the position.

Appendix II: A Graphical Representation of Annual Review and Periodic Peer Review

