

To: D. F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters Faculty Assembly

From: Dr. Brian E. McConnell, Chair
Promotion and Tenure Committee
D. F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters

Date: April 19, 2020

Re: Annual Report of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee

The D. F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters Promotion and Tenure Committee put considerable effort into reviewing and assessing seven applications for Promotion to Full Professor, ten applications for Promotion to Associate Professor and Tenure, and ten Third Year Review dossiers from the constituent units of the college. At the time of writing all seventeen applications for tenure and/or promotion have been approved by Provost. The members of the college P&T committee this academic year (2019 - 2020) were: Professor Mary Cameron (Anthropology), Professor Chris Robé (School of Communications and Multimedia Studies), Professor R. Don Adams (English), Professor Mark Rose (History), Professor Myriam Ruthenberg (Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature), Professor Patricia Fleitas (Department of Music), Professor Simon Glynn (Philosophy), Professor Edward Schwerin (Department of Political Science), Associate Professor Patricia Widener (Department of Sociology), Associate Professor Thomas Shorrock (Department of Theater and Dance, Fall semester), Professor Desmond Gallant (Department of Theater and Dance, Spring semester), and Professor Brian E. McConnell (Department of Visual Arts & Art History, Committee Chair).

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The committee salutes our newly promoted colleagues and offers congratulations both for jobs well done and for the promise that the dossiers demonstrated for the strength of our college in the future. Nevertheless, there are some matters that need to be addressed, as it was evinced from the review of the dossiers both at the college and the university level. Our system of review, which is based on the principle of faculty governance and which values the opinions of colleagues both within our respective academic units and across the university, from the constituent units of each college to the representatives of other colleges, requires that the guidelines established by the Provost and by the respective colleges and constituent units be followed to the letter and that every effort be made to make what we do clear to our colleagues. The process of review, which prepares dossiers for examination by the Provost, the President, and the Board of Governors, who make the ultimate decisions, is designed to elicit input from many perspectives, and each candidate has the responsibility to prepare the dossier for such multi-faceted review and merits full and proper mentoring in doing so, both at the levels of assistant and associate professor. Both the college and especially the university committees noticed a degree of unevenness in the preparation of some portfolios, and each committee wishes that this situation

be brought to the attention of those that will be preparing dossiers in the future and those that will mentor them. Some of the specific points will be obvious, some are more subtle.

Here is a brief list of the specific points identified in the course of our college and university meetings:

1) The dossier must document every element of one's employment history while at the institution in the 'Status' section of the Interfolio protocol. Time taken for sabbatical leave, FMLA leave, or any other interruption of the regular contract cycle should be supported by documentary evidence, and individual situations in which the tenure clock has been stopped should be fully documented, as well. There is no stigma attached to stopping the tenure clock, as some colleagues across the university seem to fear, and, at least in the opinion of this committee chair, the option to stop the clock is not exercised enough, when there are many instances in which it is clearly justified. The present disruption to the regular affairs of the university due to the Covid-19 pandemic is universal, and the Provost has recognized it as a reason to stop the tenure clock for one year.

2) External letters of evaluation should be requested from regularly employed faculty of academic rank and presented on official letterhead. There are many instances out in the wider realms of our disciplines in which individuals have made significant contributions to knowledge and the human endeavor without being allied with or supported by an academic institution, but the P&T dossier is an institutional exercise that requires documentation by individuals of suitable rank. It is much better for the dossier to have letters contextualized in this manner than letters, a number of which vary in depth of content and length, from individuals that may be famous to those in the discipline but completely unknown to others, including those that are conducting the review. While the number of external review letters has been reduced from five to three, department chairs would do well to ask for more than the minimum because there are a number of factors that can influence a reviewer's ability to produce the letter that has been requested. Letter writers that are relatives, close associates or other individuals strictly disqualified by the college and university guidelines should not be contacted, no matter who they are or what special perspective they can contribute.

3) It behooves all candidates to make a clear distinction among activities that are categorized as research/creative activity, teaching, and service. These are the key terms of evaluation, and although there are countless areas in which such activities have multiple aspects, there is a need in the P&T exercise to sum up the contributions for each term. The clearer the explanation, the easier it is to understand the relevance of the activity, and attention to explaining the relevance should not be limited to the prose of the self-evaluation.

4) Departmental criteria vary greatly across our college (and this is different from some other colleges, which have one set of criteria for all the constituent units). The wide range in criteria is due to the varied nature of our disciplines, and it is the strength of the Arts, Humanities, and the Social Sciences. Nevertheless, there is a common interest in productivity that is common to all P&T criteria in the college (and across the university) that is built around an understanding of the

significance and acceptance of one's work in professional circles. While our P&T documents request markers of 'peer review', the nature of what we do, particularly in our college, often has more than those binary dimensions (is it peer-reviewed: yes or no). We must find ways to present easily the multiple dimensions of our activities, particularly in the performing and visual arts, so that the full character of the activity may be expressed. Just as examples, an art show may be solo vs. group, invitational vs. curated vs. juried; a musical or theater performance may be selected for scheduling in different 'drafts' so to speak for different kinds of audiences and then reviewed after-the fact. The dimensions of what we do vary by disciplinary unit, and we should not expect our rubrics to fit each and every one. Finding ways to properly express what the specific activities of a disciplinary unit also assuage concerns that faculty are being evaluated by inconsistent or irrelevant standards, and it is part of the P&T rhetoric that is essential to the work of the college and university committees. Luckily, we do not have to address the topic of quantified 'impact factors' in our college, at least not yet.

5) Quantifiable production of academic articles, performances, artwork, etc. remains the prerogative of individual departments in our college. This is very important, but it is equally important the candidates make their rhythms of activity clear in P&T dossiers. The time and level of effort that goes into a multi-year project and/or a multi-draft manuscript can be very different than, for example, a report on the results of a laboratory experiment that addresses a specific hypothesis, even though the common denominator of evaluation is the publication (and this is underscored by the very table that is used to list publications, which is highly constrictive). There are contrasts of this sort among all colleges, and expectations of productivity cannot be entirely 're-educated' at the moment a dossier is being evaluated -- it is a fallacy to believe that our committee system of review simply 'rubber-stamps' the initial, unit-level evaluations of a dossier in terms of unit-level criteria. While it is important for the unit criteria to state explicitly whether or not there are quantifiable levels of production and what those levels are in terms of content and number, it helps evaluators to know also the pace at which a faculty member is expected to work.

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As the university comes to terms with the fully electronic *Interfolio* system for the submission and evaluation of P&T dossiers, there should be some criteria for the preparation and management of the dossiers. Most importantly, the college needs some flexibility for editing the electronic dossiers in the way that it has had for paper dossiers. College guidelines permit the editing of dossiers in the presence of the committee chair:

“(p.5 in bold) Once a portfolio is submitted to the Dean's office, it should not be removed or amended by the candidate for any reason. The unit representative can add pertinent information, but only after securing permission from the chair of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee.”

“(p.6) In the preparation of their portfolios, candidates are required to number all pages in the upper right-hand corner with each prescribed section being in the form 1.1, 1.2, 1.3...2.1, 2.2,

2.3, and so on with the date of the submission of that document to the portfolio inserted directly under the page number. In this way, new supporting documents can be inserted without interrupting the page order or necessitating major revisions of the portfolio, and this will help to ascertain that no documents are missing or out of order. However, insertion of documents into the portfolio once it has been delivered to the office of the Dean must be done in the presence of the Chair of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee.”

“(and again on p.6) Once a portfolio is submitted to the Dean’s office, it cannot be removed by the candidate for any reason. The unit representative may add pertinent information only after securing permission from and in the presence of the chair of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee.”

These texts presume that the dossier is in paper format, and in an electronic context, the expression ‘in the presence of the chair of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee’ remains unclear. But what is more to the point is that artifacts of the development process, like external evaluation letters that were requested but never written, should be expunged before the evaluation committees look at the dossiers. Unfounded suppositions based on the absence of a letter -- the reasons for which may have nothing to do with the candidate or the qualities of the dossier -- can be avoided in this case (it should be said that there were no such instances of this form of ambiguity in the dossiers that were submitted by candidates of the College of Arts & Letters this year). Making revisions to the college guidelines, so that they fit the context of internet delivery and the Interfolio protocol should be an imminent task of the college P&T committee.

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Both the college and the university promotion and tenure committees wish to underscore the need for greater mentoring at the unit level. While it is the responsibility of the candidate to prepare the dossier, it is a prime aspect of collegiality that the department and the college provide helpful assistance whenever possible. That assistance should be experienced and not conditioned by the punditry of the college’s own echo chamber -- candidates should be aware that they are presenting themselves not just to their department, nor to the college, but to the university as a whole. This level of awareness and consideration is expected by our review system, and it is an aspect of what our retired but remembered colleague, Lynn Appleton, referred to as ‘deep tenure’ (an application so good it cannot be denied; quoted by A. Papatya Bucak in an article for the *Chronicle for Higher Education* -- ‘What Tenure Feels Like’, May 26, 2009: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/What-Tenure-Feels-Like/44261>; accessed April 19, 2020). As an example, it is the observation of this committee chair, that while focusing attention on the self-evaluation essay (eight pages only!) is a prime directive for our college, other colleges weight it differently, and therefore the nuances regarding, for example, productivity in research/creative activity, that are brought out in the self-evaluation prose, should be given to other parts of the overall dossier, as well. This approach can only strengthen the dossier in the eyes of its evaluators.

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The college committee wishes to repeat the recommendation from the fall semester that faculty planning to apply for promotion and tenure or promotion to full professor not be unduly burdened with service assignments that take away significant time and energy from the things that are valued most in P&T evaluation. Service is a part of the evaluation triad, and it is valuable in gaining familiarity with the people and activities of the university, but also it can become a short-term convenience to a department and/or a college with long-term detrimental effects for the career of a faculty member. Careful mentoring in this regard by the department chair and whoever serves a mentoring role to a faculty member is of the utmost importance, and such caution should be exercised particularly in recruitment efforts and in representing FAU at intra-mural or extra-mural community events, particularly in the Arts.

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Aside from the comments and advice given above, the A&L Faculty Assembly should know that the university committee considered new wording for the Provost's P&T guidelines and reviewed aspects of P&T in the integration of faculty from the Harbour Branch Oceanographic Institute into the FAU system of colleges (this process does not have a direct impact on our college). Further work by the college committee will be needed following the integration of the School of Architecture and the School of Public Administration into the D. F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters this during the coming summer months.

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In terms of our college promotion and tenure criteria, Wendy Hinshaw has composed new text for consideration by the Faculty Assembly regarding Community Engagement.

This includes the proposed following additions:

1) Insert bullet point in section V.D (Research and Creative Activity): "Community-engaged research (CER), the collaborative process between the researcher and a community partner with the goal of contributing to the discipline and strengthening the well-being of the community, is also included."

e.g.

D. College Guidelines for Promotion to Associate Professor and Tenure: Research and Creative Activity

In line with the American Association of University Professor (AAUP) State of Principles on academic freedom and tenure and the Florida Atlantic University College Bargaining Agreement, the College Promotion and Tenure Committee will use the following guidelines when evaluating a candidate's viability for promotion to associate professor:

- Scholarly productivity must demonstrate scholarly activity through publication of refereed books and articles. The College Committee will defer to the Department/School criteria for the appropriate amount of scholarship, in keeping with the University guidelines.
- Faculty who pursue creative endeavors must demonstrate a consistent and high quality of creative achievement appropriate to the endeavor and to unit criteria. In some cases, there is a direct relationship between the faculty member's creative output and his/her teaching responsibilities (e.g. music conductors, theater directors, technicians, and the like). In such cases, the relationship must be clearly explained in the promotion and tenure portfolio.
- Community-engaged research (CER), the collaborative process between the researcher and a community partner with the goal of contributing to the discipline and strengthening the well-being of the community, is also included.

2) Add to the first bullet point in section V.F (Teaching): "Community-engaged teaching, defined as curricular activities that connect students and faculty with community-identified needs through mutually beneficial partnerships that deepen students' academic and civic learning, are included."

e.g.

F. College Guidelines for Promotion to Associate Professor and Tenure: Teaching

- The Promotion and Tenure Committee will critically review student and (at least two) peer evaluations of the candidate's teaching, along with any other relevant instructional material. The Committee understands that the SPOT evaluation form is a less than perfect and incomplete instrument for the evaluation of teaching, with many subjective factors playing into a student's scoring of a teacher and the course. However, SPOT scores do reveal a pattern of teaching over a period of time (3 to 5 years). To isolate any one semester accentuates the imperfect nature of the SPOT score as a device for the evaluation of teaching. The Promotion and Tenure Committee looks at the mean of the SPOT scores for long term patterns weighed against the long-term patterns of the department mean.
- It is further understood that SPOT scores are only part of the equation of evaluation and that peer evaluation and other structural support materials expand the subjective understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of a teacher. The effectiveness of the teaching profile is a combination of both objective and subjective considerations.
- Community-engaged teaching, defined as curricular activities that connect students and faculty with community-identified needs through mutually beneficial partnerships that deepen students' academic and civic learning, are included.

3) Insert bullet point in section V.G (Service): "The application of one's professional expertise in collaboration with the community that addresses a community-identified need and supports the

goals and mission of the university and the community may be considered as criteria for tenure and promotion.”

e.g.

G. College Guidelines for Promotion to Associate Professor and Tenure: Service

- Service constitutes a series of activities that further the mission of the University. Service includes, but is not limited to, membership on departmental, college and university committees, councils and senates. It also includes service in professional organizations, participation at professional meetings, symposia, conferences and workshops, service on governmental boards, agencies, commissions, service to public schools, and other relevant community service.
- Service assignments: The University’s Guidelines for Appointment, Promotion and Tenure of Faculty state that “although the typical Assistant Professor will have only a modest assignment to service, promotion to Associate Professor requires that the candidate have a record of responsible and conscientious participation in some service activities.”
- This being the case, the College Promotion and Tenure Committee recommends that assistant professors should serve mostly on departmental committees up to the time of the third-year review. Thereafter, as appropriate to the discipline and department, assistant professors will be expected to be assigned to departmental responsibilities and/ or to serve on departmental committees and college committees. Untenured faculty should not chair committees.
- The Committee recommends that individual units should revisit annual evaluation criteria with a goal of creating a sliding scale for service, so that more senior members of departments undertake leadership positions in their respective departments whenever possible. The Committee recommends that, in order to bring the College in line with University norms, more service will be expected for tenured faculty.
- The application of one’s professional expertise in collaboration with the community that addresses a community-identified need and supports the goals and mission of the university and the community may be considered as criteria for tenure and promotion.

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The current Provost’s memo for promotion and tenure (for 2020 -2021) is now available for faculty. It is important to see the section on Undergraduate Research and Inquiry in Section 7:

Undergraduate Research and Inquiry: Supervising an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate that produces an original intellectual, technical, or creative contribution to the discipline or practice, or applied research, where the student uses discipline- appropriate data to address a research question/problem for which no clear answer exists may also meet the criteria. Research involving undergraduates and/or graduates should be identified, as well. Use the table below to summarize your activity in this area. A template of this table can be found on the Provost’s website, here [n.b., this is the same table template that has been in use since 2018].

Semester & Year	Undergraduate Student Name	Z Number	Type of product resulting from mentorship (e.g., Awarded grant, Publication, Patent, Presentation, Performance, Competition, Exhibition, book chapter, student award etc.) NB: UG student must be author/ presenter or co-author etc.	Product citation. Please use an * next to the undergraduate student. (Include full citation, award detail etc.)

College liaisons to the Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry considered this to be a sufficiently comprehensive expression of the importance of undergraduate research/creative activity and research/creative activity supervision and mentoring. Whether specific language regarding the importance of undergraduate research/creative activity should be included in the college guidelines is a matter that can be addressed by the college promotion and tenure committee in the coming academic year.