

To: D. F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters Faculty Assembly
Attn: Dr. Meredith Elis

From: Dr. Christopher Robé, Chair
Promotion and Tenure Committee
D. F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters

Date: March 29, 2021

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 three applications for Promotion to Full Professor, five applications for Promotion to Associate Professor and Tenure, and six Third Year Review dossiers from the constituent units of the college. The members of the college P&T committee this academic year (2020-2021) were: Professor Mary Cameron (Anthropology), Professor Chris Robé (School of Communications and Multimedia Studies, Committee Chair), Professor R. Don Adams (English), Professor Mark Rose (History), Professor Martha Mendoza (Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature), Professor Patricia Fleitas (Department of Music), Professor Simon Glynn (Philosophy), Professor Tim Lenz (Department of Political Science), Associate Professor Patricia Widener (Department of Sociology), Professor Desmond Gallant (Department of Theater and Dance), Professor Brian E. McConnell (Department of Visual Arts & Art History, Fall Semester), Professor Angel DiCosola (Department of Visual Arts & Art History, Spring Semester), Professor Hugh Miller (Public Administration), and Anthony Abbate (Architecture).

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The committee congratulates our newly promoted colleagues for jobs well done that speak to the strength and rigor of the creative work, research, teaching, service, and community engagement of our college. Nevertheless, some matters need to be addressed that were 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. 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 valid reason to delay promotion and tenure for one year for those who need it.

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. Department chairs, directors, or other administrators who solicit letters on behalf of the candidate 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. The P&T committees at both the college and university levels have witnessed many letters written by dissertation advisers, co-editors, and other faculty who have been too closely involved in the candidate's working relationship. We caution that outside recommenders be rigorously vetted by Chairs, Directors, or other supervisors who oversee the process as well as that candidates be fully transparent in their relationship with outside reviewers as these normally come to light within the letters solicited.

3) 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 a report on the results of a laboratory experiment that addresses a specific hypothesis, even though the common denominator of evaluation is the publication. Furthermore, candidates for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor need to clearly demonstrate a coherent trajectory to their research and/or creative activity that not only exhibits a uniform and consistent publication/exhibition/distribution/etc. record, but also exemplifies the continued growth and development of their research and/or creative activities in the future. P&T committees at all levels do not simply "rubber stamp" portfolios for meeting minimum requirements but assess the consistency, coherence, and rigor of the applications under review. Likewise, candidates going up for promotion to Full Professor must exhibit "distinction," which might be a somewhat nebulous term but at least implies how a portfolio demonstrates research, teaching, and service beyond what the candidate has achieved when initially tenured and promoted. This does not simply require producing more articles, books, creative works, etc. than when first promoted, but also through a series of other qualitative differences that include but are not limited to: establishing wider international recognition of their work through citations, reviews, invited presentations, and other venues; expanding their research and/or creative work into new areas and interests; providing more service at all institutional levels as well as chairing committees; developing their teaching by expanding the curriculum, engaging in newer pedagogies, utilizing new forms of technology; and/or exemplifying some additional skills or engagement beyond what they demonstrated when last being promoted.

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As mentioned during last year's P&T report, the university needs to come to terms with the fully electronic *Interfolio* system for the submission and evaluation of P&T dossiers. The college P&T committee will be reviewing revisions to the college guidelines, so that they will better align with electronic delivery of portfolios. Due to a truncated semester and the faculty assembly holding no April meeting, these recommendations by the college P&T committee will have to wait to be reviewed by the college assembly in the Fall term. But it should be a priority to review these documents at that time.

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In a similar vein, the university P&T committee extensively discussed the need to create a more uniform electronic portfolio within each college for the candidates. Part of this responsibility falls to the candidate. But this also requires more mentoring of candidates as well as some training for P&T representatives and administrators at all levels who oversee the Interfolio process. The introduction of Interfolio into the P&T process was uneven at best and requires better training for anyone engaging with the system. P&T representatives all relayed their frustration with the lack of clarity of their roles in engaging with Interfolio and the steps in advancing candidate portfolios in the process. One concrete suggestion was the need to provide models of ideal Interfolio portfolios for candidates within each college. Although it is recognized that candidates from different disciplines have different needs in presenting their materials, the wide variety and unevenness of the portfolios makes the process inefficient and deeply frustrating at times. The university P&T committee made a series of recommendations in regards to making reviewing candidates' portfolios through Interfolio a smoother process.

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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. The college P&T committee is currently reviewing this, will make recommendations, and submit these changes with the additional suggested revisions mentioned earlier.

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Both at the college and university P&T committees, we have witnessed junior faculty incurring a troubling amount of service work, which at times jeopardizes their success in being granted tenure and promotion by deflecting their attention and labor from establishing a vibrant and sustained research and/or creative work trajectory as well as improving their teaching. Although it would be unrealistic and somewhat negligent to suggest that junior faculty engage in no service work since such activities assist in integrating them into the wider community and

train them in the variegated practices and faculty governance that define much university life, excessive service on their part benefits no one in a more holistic sense. Multiple causes produce such excessive demands upon junior faculty. Better mentoring is needed in guiding junior faculty in assessing the level and amount of service they need to do. But mentoring is not enough. Given asymmetric power relations between junior faculty and administrators, chairs, directors, and other unit heads, lower level administration need to be cognizant that what might seem an open inquiry on their part for junior faculty to take on another service assignment often translates into a demand that they do so. Senior faculty should be addressing the bulk of service work. It is incumbent upon chairs, directors, and other unit heads to ensure that senior faculty are doing so. But perhaps one of the most significant causes in offloading significant amounts of service work upon junior faculty is the drastic reduction of tenure track lines at FAU that ultimately depletes the amount of senior faculty available to engage in service work. Furthermore, given FAU's problematic ability to retain faculty long-term, senior faculty lines are further depleted as a result, which causes junior faculty to make up the difference in regards to service work. Such pressures cannot be alleviated by good mentoring or senior faculty engaging in more service work. Ultimately, more hires need to occur at tenure track positions and more efforts need to be made to retain faculty long term so that a significant rank of senior faculty can be available to engage in service work. The more the university assumes that it can increasingly hire non-tenure track faculty, who are valuable in their own right for multiple reasons, the more it places junior faculty at risk for successfully being promoted and tenured as they take up the service work that senior faculty would have performed if FAU was able to retain them. This is a crisis at a systemic level that needs to be addressed if the university cares about creating an equitable workspace and not jeopardizing junior faculty's success.