

Report to the College of Arts and Sciences
Dean's Advisory Committee, 2011-2012

May 30, 2012

Dean's Advisory Committee Members:

Patrick Bartlein, Geography

Miriam Deutsch, Physics

Leah Middlebrook, Comparative Literature

Doris Payne, Linguistics (co-chair)

Jeremy Piger, Economics

Alexander Polishchuk, Mathematics (co-chair)

The DAC reviewed and made recommendations on 40 cases (including one from Honors College), distributed as follows:

Promotion to Full Professor: 21

Tenure and promotion to Associate Professor: 16

Tenure only: 1

Tenure at the rank of Full Professor: 2

All non-recused members of the committee participated in the discussions, voted and approved reports on every case. The voting system with “yes”, “weak yes” and “no” options seemed to work quite well for us. In majority of cases the committee members were in consensus about the case. In some less obvious cases this voting system allowed us to express our evaluations on a finer scale.

Summary

Overall we were happy with the quality of the files, both in terms of the presentation of the information and in terms of addressing issues important for the review process. Also, in many cases we were impressed by the achievements of our colleagues.

Issues and Recommendations

1. We reiterate the need for electronic versions of the promotion files available at the CAS's secure website. This would make the reviewing work much more efficient (see the comments from the last year's report on this issue).
2. We insist on confidentiality of the department head's letter, the department committee report and the letters from external reviewers. In two cases (both from Human Physiology) the department head's letter was signed by the candidate.
3. In some departments the PT criteria are not clear about the expected research output for tenure and promotion (such as a book in print versus certain number of peer-reviewed articles). We understand that some departments may insist that the quality of publications

is the more important requirement, but the question of the expected quantity should also be addressed in the department's PT guidelines, especially if there is no book in the publications under review.

4. We urge department heads to be attentive about adding a copy of a publisher's e-mail or letter to a candidate's main file if a book or refereed article is finally accepted for publication after a dossier has already been sent to external reviewers. In more than one instance, it took some work to get a proof of the status of significant items listed on CVs.

5. Two of the cases we reviewed contained letters submitted by students, and in one case some of these letters were solicited by the candidate. The members of the committee were in agreement that the DAC should not take such letters into consideration since, unlike teaching evaluations, they do not necessarily represent a fair sample.

6. The departments should adhere to Academic Affairs peer teaching evaluations requirement. We often had to deal with the cases lacking the required number of such evaluations.

7. In some cases we had to deal with candidates' statements and CVs that were not very well organized and were hard to decipher. For example, publication lists didn't always make clear which papers were peer-reviewed, research statements were sometimes overly opaque even to educated peers in the relevant humanities/social-science/natural sciences sectors, or failed to sufficiently interpret a candidate's particular contribution to joint work. In one case the candidate's statement was 22 pages, which we thought was counterproductive. In some instances, the department heads need to work a little more with the candidates to strive for more effective and accessible presentation of the information in CVs and personal statements. Also, giving a page limit for candidates' statements would seem reasonable.

8. The candidate's contribution to graduate training should be explicitly discussed in the reports by the department head or personnel committee. We regard graduate training as an integral part of a candidate's teaching portfolio and not a service contribution, and so it should be discussed in teaching section of the dossier.

9. Department heads' reports should explain the culture accepted in their field regarding the order of authors in publication citations. These conventions are sometime opposite in different fields, but they are important in evaluating the candidate's contribution.

10. We would like to observe that the workflow for this committee was very uneven: we had a reasonable number cases to consider in the Fall, but we felt a bit overwhelmed during the Winter term. It would be nice if more cases were ready to be considered in the Fall, so the DAC's work could be spaced out more evenly.

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