

POLICY MEMORANDUM NO. 217

TO: All Faculty
FROM: Charles W. Steger
DATE: August 5, 2002
SUBJECT: Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor

Approved with revisions by the Commission on Faculty Affairs: April 5, 2002
Approved by University Council: May 6, 2002
Approved by the President: May 6, 2002
Approved by the Board of Visitors: June 3, 2002
Effective: Fall 2002

The University Council, on recommendation of the Commission on Faculty Affairs, approved a resolution concerning promotion from associate professor to professor.

Following is the text of the resolution as adopted by the Board of Visitors.

WHEREAS, the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion and Tenure (dated August 15, 2001) found that:

According to the promotion and tenure guidelines issued by the Provost on May 3, 2000, "Promotion to a higher rank and appointment with tenure may be granted to faculty members on a regular faculty appointment who have demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in an appropriate combination of instructional, research, outreach (including Extension), and other professional activities. The Faculty Handbook (August, 2000) further specifies that, Beyond that basic foundation of competence, decisions [for promotion and tenure] will be significantly influenced by signs of genuine excellence in one or two areas. There is an implicit understanding that for promotion to professor, a faculty member must excel in two of the university missions: instruction, research, and outreach (public service or Extension). To effectively uphold this standard, excellence in two areas must be substantiated in the written promotion and tenure guidelines. In addition, if the University is to achieve its goal of becoming a prominent research institution, research and scholarship productivity must be emphasized at all faculty ranks.

WHEREAS, the Commission on Faculty Affairs has considered the report and agrees with this recommendation;

THEREFORE be it resolved that section 2.8.4 of the Faculty Handbook be revised as follows with changes indicated in bold:

2.8.4 Evaluation Procedures for Promotion and Tenure

Promotion to a higher rank and appointment with tenure may be granted to faculty members on a regular faculty appointment who have demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in an appropriate combination of instructional, research, outreach, and other professional activities. Every faculty member should maintain a current curriculum vita, with copies filed

in the department and college (or equivalent academic units, as appropriate). The curriculum vitae together with annual reports, student evaluations, reprints of publications, reference letters, and other similar documents comprise a dossier, which furnishes the principal basis for promotion and tenure decisions.

Faculty members being considered for either promotion or the awarding of tenure will have their dossiers reviewed at as many as three levels: by a departmental committee and the head or chair; by a college committee and the dean; and by a university committee and the provost.

Each candidate for promotion or tenure will be evaluated in the light of the triple mission of the university: instruction, research, and outreach (public service or extension). Although not all candidates can be expected to have equal levels of commitment or equal responsibilities in each of these missions, a high level of general competence is expected, in recognition of the need for flexibility in the future establishment of priorities in academic programs. Beyond that basic foundation of competence, decisions **related to tenure and/or promotion to associate professor** will be significantly influenced by signs of genuine excellence in one or two areas.

Should the candidate's strength be sharply concentrated in only one of these missions, the documentation and evaluation should recognize some significant impact of the candidate's contributions beyond the borders of the university. If the primary strength is in instruction, there should be recognition that the candidate's pedagogical contributions have influence beyond the immediate classroom; if in research, that there is significant impression on colleagues nationally; if in outreach (public service or extension), that the influence of the contributions reach beyond the immediate clientele.

The university's mission and commitment as a major research institution requires high accomplishment for promotion to professor. Faculty members must demonstrate excellence in at least two of the three aspects of the university's mission, one of which must be research, scholarship or creative achievement broadly defined as appropriate for the various disciplines, and reflecting the faculty member's assignment. Promotion to the rank of professor is contingent upon national or international recognition as an outstanding scholar and educator.

The university recognizes and encourages appropriate international involvement of its faculty as a mission of the university that cuts across the three traditional missions of instruction, research, and outreach (public service or extension). Occasionally faculty members are placed on international assignments at full salary from the university, with responsibilities that require their residence far from the campus for a considerable period. Under such circumstances, faculty members should be given the usual consideration for tenure, promotion, and salary advancement, with the recognition that international assignments can be an important stimulus to professional growth. The University Committee on International Programs has developed a guideline on the "Employment and Evaluation of Virginia Tech Personnel on International Assignment," which should be recognized by all evaluation committees.

In cases of tenure recommendation, besides evaluation of the candidate's professional abilities, consideration should be given, at all stages of evaluation and review, to future departmental program directions and concern for maintaining currency and flexibility by preserving opportunities to appoint new faculty members in the various sub-fields of the department.

Levels of expectation will vary, of course, with the level of the decision. Where probationary reappointments will recognize, in part, perceived potential instead of accomplishment,

recommendations for tenure should suggest that the potential is being achieved and should imply few, if any, lingering doubts about the value of the candidate to the department's program for a "lifetime." And promotion to professor, which leaves limited opportunity for further university recognition of professional development, should be reserved for those whose achievements are broad and noteworthy.

Besides consideration of specific professional criteria, evaluation for promotion or tenure should consider the candidate's integrity, professional conduct and ethics. To the extent that such considerations are significant factors in reaching a negative recommendation, they should be documented as part of the formal review process.

CWS:tew