

## CRITERIA FOR PERSONNEL DECISIONS

This document offers clarification of the criteria used for determining personnel decisions in regard to faculty at SUNY Oswego. This document will be helpful to use as a guide for departmental and divisional personnel decisions, including renewal of term appointments beyond second year, continuing appointments, promotions and discretionary salary increases.

The Provost and the appropriate academic dean will make recommendations to the President on renewal of term appointments, continuing appointments, promotions, and discretionary salary increases. The following five criteria, described below, and adopted by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (1989) published in Article XII, Title A of the Policies of the Board of Trustees, are the basis for review:

**I. MASTERY OF SUBJECT MATTER** - as demonstrated by such things as advanced degrees, licenses, honors, awards and reputation in the subject matter field.

Only in unusual circumstances (e.g., an individual who has achieved either a reputation as a distinguished scholar-teacher or creative artist/teacher or professional eminence in a particular area, or in areas where there is a critical shortage of Ph.D.s) will a faculty member be considered for promotion or continuing appointment without having earned the appropriate terminal degree. In recent years, because of the availability of individuals holding the appropriate terminal degree, SUNY-Oswego has in most fields insisted on the terminal degree (for example, a Ph.D. or MFA) as a condition for initial appointment. Where exceptions have been made, individuals are placed on notice that renewal of term appointment will be contingent on the completion of the requirements for the terminal degree within a specified period of time, normally two years.

**II. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING** - as demonstrated by such things as judgment of colleagues, development of teaching materials or new courses, and student reaction (as determined from surveys), interviews, and classroom observation.

Teaching is the primary responsibility of all faculty at SUNY-Oswego. Whether a faculty member is being considered for reappointment, promotion or discretionary salary increase, documented teaching effectiveness is essential. While survey instruments are not without limitations, the literature suggests that they are reliable in identifying faculty who are outstanding classroom teachers and those who are lacking in pedagogical skills, even though they may not always provide clear distinctions among those who fall in the broad middle. Therefore, in addition to the careful and systematic collection of data from student surveys, departments are urged to place strong emphasis on peer evaluation, including classroom observations, and evaluation of teaching portfolios. Every effort should be made to collect and examine information from multiple sources, over a period of time.

Some of the elements to be evaluated are knowledge of subject matter, skill in presentation, experience, interest in students, creativity, ability to stimulate thinking, enthusiastic devotion to teaching, integrity, versatility, and capacity for cooperation with colleagues and administration in the achievement of department and college instructional goals. Most importantly, the teaching portfolio should contain evidence that addresses the issue of student learning.

**A. Student Evaluations:**

It should be emphasized that the primary rationale for, and importance of, most student evaluations is their potential contribution to improved teaching or to revisions of curriculum and programs, and the forms should be designed with this goal clearly in mind. Such evaluations may also constitute useful evidence in considerations of salary increments, reappointments, promotions, and continuing appointment.

While there is some variation among the practices of Oswego's academic departments regarding the administration and filing of student evaluations, ideally the responsibility for the development of one or more appropriate student evaluation instruments and for their distribution, interpretation, and filing rests with the Departments. Student evaluation instruments should include substantial opportunities for essay-type responses. They should be administered toward the end of the term in which they are used. Untenured full-time faculty should be evaluated by their students in at least one regular term every academic year. Except in the cases of new faculty, the evidence

constituted by student evaluations should cover a period of at least two years. Completed instruments should be filed in department offices as confidential documents for a minimum of five years, at the end of which they should be given to the faculty to be disposed of as they see fit. All faculty should be made fully aware of the basis for analysis of each evaluation instrument used. While at certain points in academic life these evaluations may form part of a "summative" evaluation, their most valuable role may be "formative." Therefore, the faculty member who profits most from student evaluations will have frequent access to these results, in order to react and modify teaching approaches, as appropriate.

Again, ideally, department chairs or faculty mentors should review the student evaluations with the respective faculty member, as well as other evidence gathered in regard to his/her performance, before such evidence is presented to administrators and faculty committees beyond the department level. In no case should student evaluations be allowed to constitute the only basis for determining a faculty member's teaching ability. Further, evaluations should be contextualized: it is helpful to know how a candidate's evaluation results compare with those of the rest of the department, or with those of other faculty teaching the same or similar courses. Minimally, the quantitative data should be explained: a "1" in a given rating system might equal a "5" in another, for example. Additionally, evaluations should be accompanied by an analytical summary; it is unreasonable to expect members of personnel committees to perform their own analyses of raw data from student evaluations.

#### **B. Class Materials and Statements of Objectives:**

Faculty members are encouraged to present to their department chairs any materials used in their courses that can provide evidence of their teaching practices and proficiency. Materials such as syllabi, sample tests, writing assignments, sample student responses (with instructor feedback), patterns of enrollments, and the like are important evidence. Candidates may also submit as evidence a statement of their objectives in various courses and an explanation of their teaching methods. Printed copies of statements distributed to students should be included. Evidence of high expectations of student performance—syllabi, student work samples, grading criteria, etc.—and of challenging assignments should be included in all dossiers, and all such materials should be incorporated into a permanent dossier of the individual faculty member.

#### **C. Self-Evaluation:**

A self-evaluation is also appropriate, of course, for including in a teaching portfolio. The self-evaluation should include a record of courses taught, syllabi of those courses (if not included elsewhere in the dossier), the candidate's estimate of his/her effectiveness in teaching, citations of concerns expressed by students in their evaluations and any action undertaken to correct problems or difficulties. It would be appropriate also to include information, including numbers of students, concerning advising duties, with a similar self-evaluation of one's performance as advisor.

#### **D. Peer Judgment:**

In the normal process of considering promotions and/or awarding continuing appointment, it is appropriate for the opinions of faculty in any rank to be considered, if they have been in a position to observe a colleague's teaching performance. Such opinions should be written, and copies should be forwarded with the faculty member's dossier to extra-departmental committees when promotion and/or continuing appointment recommendations are being considered.

Evaluative classroom visitation by colleagues should be considered one of several methods for determining the quality of teaching for individual faculty members of all ranks. Any formal assessment of teaching through classroom visitation must be based on a sufficient number of visits (certainly more than one) to establish a pattern. Classroom visits by colleagues should be announced and be carried out for the improvement of faculty teaching and ordinarily with the consent of the faculty member being visited.

A faculty member may also cite contributions to curriculum development, individual course development work, public lectures, presentations at faculty seminars, team-teaching courses, or offering guest lectures in another teacher's class as evidence of his/her teaching ability. Peer judgments of teaching ability may, of course, be formed by associations between colleagues entirely outside the classroom, such as during work or pedagogical activities or

grants, but as these activities cannot overshadow classroom teaching, neither should their evaluation shift the focus of the portfolio away from classroom teaching.

Peer judgments based on evidence other than student evaluations must constitute a part of the evaluation of teaching ability in every recommendation affecting promotion and/or continuing appointment.

Evaluation procedures must be applied in such a way that the contributions of faculty to interdisciplinary programs and to programs outside the department, both on and off campus, are given full recognition. Exemplary faculty are willing to engage in instructional activities beyond their discipline. In addition to courses in a single area of specialization, faculty should be willing and able to teach courses in support of the General Education program and, where the need exists and department resources make it feasible, courses in support of other majors and programs. Also considered will be evidence of ongoing innovation in teaching, the use of new technology in the classroom, developing new teaching techniques, incorporating diversity content in courses, or developing and teaching courses via distance education technology.

Since teaching also takes place outside the classroom, there are other activities which should be considered. Efforts should be made to identify and document the effectiveness of individuals who are actively involved in sponsoring or advising student organizations or mentoring students, who are accessible to students, and who otherwise give of their time in support of learning activities that take place outside the classroom, such as leading field trips, mentoring discipline-based student clubs, or participating in academic programming in residence halls.

**III. SCHOLARLY ABILITY** - as demonstrated by such things as success in developing and carrying out significant research work in the subject matter field, contribution to the arts, publications and reputation among colleagues.

In order to qualify for reappointment, continuing appointment, promotion or discretionary salary increase, faculty are expected to show evidence of ongoing engagement in scholarly or creative activities, resulting in successful peer review as defined by departmental and disciplinary criteria. It is also necessary to evaluate the quality of these activities by considering peer judgments of, for example, the scholarly journal, the venue of exhibition, performance reviews or reviews of grant proposals.

In addition to providing documentary evidence of scholarly and creative activities (and, where appropriate, peer judgments of such activities), candidates for promotion, continuing appointment or discretionary salary increases should provide a self-evaluation that addresses the question of scholarly or creative development since appointment or since the most recent promotion or discretionary salary increase. In addition to chronicling and providing details of scholarly and creative activities, the candidate should speak to his/her concerns in the work, analyzing scholarly development with an emphasis on describing the progression of his/her professional activities. Most importantly, the candidate should offer an analysis of scholarly development, citing progression from the dissertation topic and approach (for junior faculty) or citing changes as one's scholarly agenda has matured (in the case of senior faculty members).

It is expected that an effective teacher will be continually engaged in study, research, and creative activity and that some of these activities will result in written conclusions or artifacts which are open to evaluation by the faculty member's peers, both within the campus and outside of it. For many teacher-scholars, the development of courses and teaching strategies leads to scholarly reflection, peer review, and dissemination in what has come to be known as the scholarship of pedagogy. This model of scholarship, including the assessment of student learning outcomes, squarely reflects the mission of a comprehensive institution and will be recognized in the evaluation of Oswego faculty.

Although publication of scholarly work is normally regarded as testimony of its worth to the scholarly world, a faculty member's publications must not be evaluated merely by their number or volume. When publication occurs in refereed journals, the caliber of such work is automatically attested to; but, in cases of publication for which there is no evidence of extensive critical review prior to publication, the discipline and department of the faculty member concerned has a clear responsibility for an especially careful review (just as these colleagues are obligated to be open to the emergence of new journals, with new methods and new approaches, alongside older, more established journals in the field). Such cases as these may, in fact, require review by colleagues at other campuses, as part of the

departmental examination of a dossier. The emphasis, in evaluating a faculty member's performance in research, should be on determining whether it shows evidence of truly scholarly and original activity.

The receipt of a grant for the support of scholarly research may be taken as corroborative evidence of one's recognition as a scholar. Grants for curriculum development or for other institutional innovation may provide evidence of a candidate's creative approach to teaching or simply as evidence of success in service to the institution. It is good to remember that many, if not most, grant applications are peer reviewed. Some proposals may be supportable but not fundable (as a result of limited grant or agency funds). The reviews of such proposals may be regarded as peer evaluation of the quality of the proposed scholarship, or in some cases as peer evaluations of the proposer's previous scholarship on a topic.

The public oral presentation of papers or the existence of papers completed but not yet published may be taken as evidence of scholarly activity, but such evidence should be considered only as supplemental or preliminary to works actually published. Again, it is essential when this type of activity is being considered in connection with promotion and/or tenure recommendations that it be evaluated by colleagues. If works have been accepted for publication, but are not yet in print, conclusive documentation must be provided to support commitments for publication.

Participation in professional organizations of a scholarly nature and editorial duties for scholarly journals, including service as a referee, should be illustrated by copies of relevant correspondence, statements in journals (e.g., in the masthead), or programs indicating the nature of one's participation in conferences, etc.

Writings outside one's professional scholarly field should be evaluated on the basis of their impact on the general intellectual community and on the basis of evidence they give of the author's intellectual vitality and knowledge.

"Professional research," for the purpose of faculty evaluations, includes both writing within a particular discipline and writing of a multi- or interdisciplinary nature. It should be recognized that the professional interests and expertise of many faculty members may not be limited to the area of their official academic appointments, and that original research may often challenge what are presently accepted as "the boundaries of a discipline." There are other types of writing which, although on the periphery of a faculty member's professional interests, may nevertheless be of scholarly value. Such writings should be evaluated on their own merit by one's colleagues and should be credited to the extent that these products demonstrate sustained intellectual effort. Some such writing, of course, may be more relevant to the category of service to the institution or profession.

Review articles of other authors' works should be considered indicative of research when they demonstrate the breadth of the reviewer's knowledge and make a contribution to scholarship in the area. A simple summary would not satisfy these criteria. For example, writing textbooks or original reports (such as encyclopedia articles) or computer software may in some fields and in some instances be regarded as scholarly activity, especially if the candidate is asked to perform such work because of his/her reputation as a scholar.

Ordinarily, every faculty member is expected to demonstrate the ability to produce scholarship appropriate to his/her discipline; however, some faculty members may best be judged in the category of research and creative activity primarily on the basis of creative activity. This means that in certain academic areas at SUNY-Oswego, a faculty member's activities in the fields of the creative arts are very relevant indicators of performance. Every effort should be made to evaluate such creative activities rigorously. The quality of musical performances, for example, may be established by published reviews, other forms of outside evaluation, or by peer review. A painter or sculptor may be evaluated in the light of the types of exhibitions (e.g., juried, nationwide, one-person, sponsored) in which the works appear and, again, through critical reviews or peer reviews of such exhibitions. Local performances or exhibitions may be judged by colleagues in the same or related disciplines. A campus play production, for example, should be considered serious evidence of faculty member's artistic and creative abilities, and the written judgments of informed colleagues should be considered. Literary pieces—short stories, poems, novels, etc.—can of course also be judged in ways which are comparable to the judgments applied to published research. A successful grant may be assessed in terms of the competition for funding, the size of the award, and the impact of the grant on the college's programs as well as on the investigator's body of work.

If a faculty member's creative activities form a part of his/her departmental assignments, such as producing a play or conducting a musical group, his/her performance in this area should be evaluated as a portion of the assigned duties, with teaching weighted most heavily (however, exceptional creative performance which goes beyond the requirements of class or performance must be noted).

**IV. EFFECTIVENESS IN UNIVERSITY SERVICE** - as demonstrated by such things as college and university public service, committee work, administrative work, work with students in addition to formal teacher-student relationships, and work with the local community that enhances or requires the faculty member's professional expertise.

The vitality of an institution of higher learning rests in large measure on the commitment of faculty to participate in the governance process as well as to use their expertise by engaging in relevant activities both on and off the campus.

The scope of the University's purposes and activities makes it appropriate for faculty to engage in many activities outside the specific fields of teaching, research, and creative pursuits. "University Service" may include active participation in committee work at the department, college, campus, and university levels; service on task forces for the development and/or evaluating of programs and facilities related to the reshaping or expansion of the campus or university; performance of administrative duties; coordinating the advising of students; initiating constructive additions to curricula; mentoring new or junior faculty colleagues; outreach activities; the creation of college partnerships; and promoting scholarly, creative, or social activities. In an institution in which faculty governance is basic, faculty members should display a willingness and the ability to perform a variety of departmental, college, campus, and university services.

The weight given to committee and task force service should vary according to the degree of an individual's participation in them. A chairperson of a committee should of course receive more credit for his/her work than a general member, and a member who writes a committee or task force report ought to receive special recognition. In all cases, the degree of participation and/or responsibility should be cited in the individual's academic dossier; it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide a narrative which summarizes the nature of the individual service. A report from the committee chair or from the individual to whom the committee reports may be requested and included in the dossier, to substantiate major contributions.

The matter of assigned time and/or administrative assignment—or even "release" time for research—must also enter into the evaluation of one's participation in committee and/or administrative work. The fact that a faculty member has been given an assignment which calls for assigned time and/or an administrative differential is, of course, an indication that he/she possesses at least above average skills, but the precise level of achievement will have to be determined in each instance by evaluators who take into account the nature and amount of assigned time.

Since the university as a whole has an obligation to serve the various communities in which it is situated, certain kinds of extramural professional contributions to society or the wider community, especially those that rely on application of the professional expertise of faculty members, may also be taken into consideration in evaluating a faculty member's performance.

Evidence of university-related service may consist of (1) reports from the committees on which the faculty member has served; (2) judgments by the faculty member's peers on the extent and quality of his/her impact on procedures and policies in the department, college, campus and university; and (3) the faculty member's own description of his/her activities, possibly coupled with relevant correspondence, news reports, etc. As a matter of policy, committee reports should always acknowledge those who wrote or drafted them, and copies of relevant reports should be filed with the dossiers of each committee member. A simple list of committee assignments will not be sufficient to demonstrate effective participation.

Recommendations for reappointment, promotion and discretionary salary increase should document the fact that the individual has accepted service responsibilities and discharged them effectively. Recommendations for senior rank or continuing appointment should include documentation that the individual has demonstrated leadership qualities and assumed increased responsibilities in the area of university service.

**V. CONTINUING GROWTH** - as demonstrated by such things as reading, research or other activities to keep abreast of current developments in his/her fields and being able to handle successfully increased responsibility.

In a community of scholars, professional reflection and development is ongoing. The higher the rank for which one is being considered, the more emphasis should be placed on the cumulative record. Participation in structured study

programs, workshops, and other development activity is evidence of continuing growth. Equally important is evidence of growth in increasing levels of achievement and engagement in teaching, scholarship, and service.

SUNY-Oswego considers teaching, research, service, mastery of subject matter, and continuing growth in all personnel decisions. There is not a single uniform expectation in any area, but notably effective contributions are expected in all areas.

### **CRITERIA FOR THE ADVANCED RANKS**

The qualifications for promotion to the rank of professor differ from those for junior faculty primarily in the expectation of a significantly higher level of leadership in all areas of performance. This means that successful candidates for promotion will have continued their high-level contributions in teaching and scholarly output, showing sustained and increasingly mature effort over a period of years; and that they have assumed demonstrably greater responsibilities in the area of service. As teacher-scholar models for their junior colleagues, they will be visible examples of the ongoing creativity, growth, dependability, and self-motivation which are characteristic of academically and collegially mature faculty members. Under any circumstance, the candidate for promotion must demonstrate a record of realized potential. The implications of these overarching principles are outlined in the paragraphs below.

SUNY-Oswego is foremost a teaching campus; consequently, it is critical that those who hold senior rank demonstrate leadership in teaching and pedagogy. Not only should the most senior faculty be committed to and accomplished in classroom teaching, but they also should seek to improve teaching and learning by demonstrating leadership in such areas as curriculum development, the use of new technologies in learning and teaching, and team and/or interdisciplinary teaching. Their commitment to instruction might also be demonstrated by their willingness to advise student research and independent projects. In addition, they may seek funding that enhances the teaching and learning climate on the SUNY-Oswego campus. It is expected that senior faculty will demonstrate their development as teachers over time through evidence of ongoing innovation and development.

Expectations for research and creative activities for senior faculty are substantially different from those for junior faculty. Junior faculty are at the early stage of their careers and are evaluated on the basis of research/scholarship competence, potential and sustained effort during a relatively short period of time. Senior faculty have a freedom to set their priorities and schedule that most non-tenured faculty do not have. This should be evident in their record, in terms of self-motivation, growth, creativity, and fulfillment of potential. While specifics will vary from case to case and from discipline to discipline, a maturing research agenda may demonstrate the following characteristics: a continual record of accomplishment in a chosen field, new methodologies, new areas of interest, new dimensions of inquiry in old areas of interest, and new applications. The effort will have been sustained across time and will show increasing impact in, and possibly beyond, one's field as evidenced by peer-reviewed publications and other creative work, including the writing and reviewing of grants. Although previous scholarship may inform the review, work completed after the continuing appointment decision will be paramount. Depending on the candidate's discipline, extramural support through grants, contracts, and consulting may also be a defining attribute.

Service has greater weight as a criterion for evaluation in the senior ranks than it does for junior faculty. Senior faculty must demonstrate leadership or substantive participation in activities of importance to the campus and/or external communities. Inside the campus, these activities may include serving as department, program or committee chair, or providing significant time and energy to policy-making committees at the unit or campus level. External service should involve applications of the candidate's professional training or skills in ways that enrich and vitalize one or more communities and enhance the visibility or service mission of the campus. These activities may include vigorous participation in professional or civic organizations through leadership roles, or applications of expertise, which have demonstrated outcomes of value to the community.

Like all universities, SUNY-Oswego is committed to the free exchange and healthy debate of ideas. To this end, it is desirable to engage faculty who possess divergent points of view and styles of expression. Every faculty member has the freedom to criticize and advocate changes in existing theories, beliefs, programs, policies, and institutions; moreover, every faculty member has the right to support any colleague whose academic freedom is threatened. Academic freedom means that truth can be sought and expressed in one's teaching, in one's research and creative work, in one's service to the institution, and in the debate of ideas.

It is also important in such debate for faculty, especially the most senior faculty, to interact with one another in a civil and collegial manner. Therefore, one characteristic of a senior professor is the ability to work with members of the academic community to achieve discipline, department, college and university goals in a professional manner that is respectful of others. Since collegiality is important in all ranks, it is equally appropriate that junior faculty demonstrate these characteristics as well, and it is appropriate that evaluations address the issue of collegiality.

Collegiality is a professional characteristic, not a personal characteristic, and should not be confused with sociability or likeability. Collegiality relates to the performance of a faculty member's duties. When balanced with the faculty member's right to academic freedom, the expectation of collegial behavior cannot license the expectation of conformity to some set of views. Concerns relevant to collegiality must be narrowly construed and might, for example, include questions such as these: Do the candidate's professional abilities and relationships with colleagues enhance the achievement of the department or college's mission and long term goals? Does the candidate show the ability and willingness to engage in the shared academic and administrative tasks of the department or unit? Does the candidate participate with reason and knowledge in discussions of departmental/unit policies and programs? Does the candidate maintain high standards of professional integrity?

The candidate for full professor is one whose teaching effectiveness, scholarly and/or creative contributions, and service to the college, university and the community are (in combination, if not separately) superior to those of the person being considered for promotion to the rank of associate professor. Just as documented teaching excellence over a decade is a more reliable measure of future performance than peer and student evaluations which cover only a few semesters, so is a consistent record of scholarly and/or creative activity and service over an extended period. Similarly, a candidate for the rank of professor is a faculty member who has made significant research and creative contributions, and one whose record of accomplishment clearly demonstrates a commitment to scholarly and creative activity which will be sustained throughout a professional lifetime. It is also necessary to evaluate the quality of scholarly and/or creative activity by taking into consideration peer judgment of the scholarly journal, place of exhibition, and performance reviews.

#### **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

First, while demonstrated teaching effectiveness is a necessary condition for a positive evaluation, teaching effectiveness alone is not a sufficient condition: evidence of accomplishment in all five categories is expected in the review process.

Second, as an organizational aid to the preparation of an individual's evaluative file, inclusion of a curriculum vitae and the Annual Summary of Faculty Activities form is strongly recommended.

Third, as a matter of practice, faculty should be evaluated on their own merits against a standard of excellence. Each promotion and tenure decision is independent of all other decisions.

Finally, it is difficult (and probably ill advised) to attempt to quantify the characteristics of exemplary teacher-scholars, no matter how specific or discursive the context. This document should be taken as an attempt to specify "good practice" in documentation, to spell out minimum expectations in all areas of responsibility, and (one hopes) to help answer frequently asked questions. There is an awareness on the SUNY-Oswego campus, which I hope is reflected here, that we accept and even embrace some variation in the mix of responsibilities for individual faculty members, individual departments, individual academic units. This variation in professional emphasis should be supported by a process of annual planning: it is especially important that untenured faculty and faculty seeking promotion or other recognition (including DSI) meet on at least an annual basis with department chairs to construct a performance plan for the coming year, and that evaluations for the end-of-year, annual report cycle and for longer periods are performed with these plans in mind.

Fall 2000