

Promotion and Tenure

The Why, The When & The How
New Faculty Orientation

August 15, 2017

Why Promotion and Tenure?

- University faculty are communities of teacher – scholars.
- To earn promotion/tenure, a faculty member must show appropriate contributions in both teaching and scholarship (and, as appropriate, in service to the university and community)

Promotion

III.A. Introduction

- Faculty rank and promotion in rank at WKU are based on criteria adopted by the Board of Regents.
- Rank is granted on the basis of academic qualifications, experience and demonstrated achievement. The criteria stated below shall serve as guides in assigning academic rank. Exceptions to these criteria may be made in situations where the candidate shows exceptional credentials in the areas of (a) academic qualifications; (b) experience; or (c) sustained achievement in teaching effectiveness, research/creative activity, and University/public service.

Tenure (and Continuance)

IV.A. Introduction

Tenure is a means to achieve such goals as:

1. freedom of teaching and research/creative activities (for the University's statement on Academic Freedom, see Section II);
2. a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive; and
3. institutional continuity and stability through a substantial contingent of faculty with long-range commitment to WKU.

Tenure is associated with a particular department/school

Promotion vs. Tenure Eligibility

- WKU has two tenure-eligible faculty types – “regular” (assistant, associate, and professor) and pedagogical
- All types regular, “Instructor” (I,II, senior), pedagogical, clinical, research) of faculty can be promoted
- Four ranks – instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, (full) professor

Promotion / Tenure Couplings

- Promotion and tenure are inherently separate concepts !
- Although some units strongly couple promotion to associate professor and tenure; some don't
- However, please note that in general, at WKU,
 - **Rule 1** - No tenured assistant professors
 - **Rule 2** - No untenured (full) professors

Eligibility - Promotion

See Faculty Handbook (23rd Edition), III.C.1, III.C.2 for “criteria for rank”

- Normally a minimum of 5 years in current rank
- Can apply for promotion at any time. If not granted, this is not a denial, but rather a deferral*

*except for promotion to associate professor in mandatory tenure review year -see Rule 1

Withdrawal from Promotion Request

- Can withdraw at any point in the process, except for promotion to associate professor in mandatory tenure review year (see Rule 1)
- *If a withdrawal occurs, all review records associated with this particular application are destroyed*

Tenure - The Probationary Period

- Each tenure-eligible faculty has a defined mandatory year for tenure review. If tenure has not been granted during the “probationary period” prior to this year, the candidate must apply for tenure in the mandatory year
- Continuance reviews occur each year during the probationary period (even in years in which early tenure is requested!)

Length of the Probationary Period

- Usually 5 years + 1 year evaluation = 6 years
+ 1 year “grace” (if needed)
- Can be shorter by mutual agreement, but never longer (AAUP guidelines)
- The “two years of credit” wording used in some past appointment letters – what does it actually mean?
 - Some faculty may have signed 2011 “agreement letter” on mandatory year for tenure consideration to reduce confusion
- Extension of Probationary Period – Policy 1.1240 – for certain qualifying events
 - Automatically granted upon first request, subject to dean’s approval thereafter
 - Maximum two extensions, up to 8 years

Early Consideration/Withdrawal

- Can apply for tenure early. Must also apply for early promotion to associate professor, if not already at that rank – see Rule 1
 - Will be granted only if criteria have unquestionably been met
 - If not granted, this is not a denial , but rather a deferral (BTW, this is not true at all institutions !)
- Can withdraw (except in mandatory review year)
 - If a withdrawal occurs, all records associated with this particular application are destroyed

Criteria for Promotion/Tenure

- University-wide (general) criteria approved by Board of Regents are listed in Faculty Handbook, Sections III and IV
- “Tangible” vs. “sustainable” records
 - see opening paragraphs of Section III
- Requesting tenure is not just a performance review; it is a request for a one-way lifetime contract! The university needs to see evidence of sustainable productivity during the entire probationary period before committing to this

Criteria for Promotion/Tenure

- Department/College criteria provide more specificity (e.g., what is acceptable service, appropriate publications,....)
- If specific goals are established in appointment letter (check!), these will be used by the department committee and others for evaluation purposes

Process / Timeline

- Academic Affairs notifies department heads/deans of all required (mandatory tenure year) applications by May 1
- October 1 deadline for candidate to submit portfolio
- Must apply for tenure/promotion to associate professor (if not already at that rank) in mandatory tenure review year
 - AA checks with colleges/departments that required application materials have indeed been submitted
- Nothing may be added to, or removed from, portfolio (except addition of required letters of recommendation)

Process / Timeline

- Successive recommendation letters written by
 - Department committee
 - typically faculty in home department with rank/tenure status equal to or higher than that sought
 - others added as needed
 - must avoid conflicts of interest, “double jeopardy” (e.g., dean, provost)
 - Department Head
 - Dean
 - Provost
 - President
- Note: there are no college or university committees at WKU!
- All recommendations go forward to next level unless application is withdrawn
- Candidates will be notified at each stage (no requirement to provide rationale)
- Candidate cannot appeal to next higher level but can withdraw

The Board of Regents' Decision

- All actions by university committees/officials are recommendations; the Board of Regents makes the final decision
- The President does not send negative recommendations to the Board of Regents
- Decision on positive recommendations from the President considered by Finance & Budget Committee in March, and moved to full Board of Regents meeting in April
 - Candidate usually notified of outcome by dean

Appeals – Section V, Faculty Handbook

- Appeal possible only after receiving letter from President indicating that action will not be presented to the BOR
- Involves faculty committees appointed by the University Senate
- Committees review documentation, recommendations, and process
- Two levels of possible review
 - Advisory Committee – for preliminary inquiry, consultation, and its reasoned advice and recommendation, and which will seek to settle the matter by preliminary inquiry, consultation, discussion, and confidential mediation.
 - Ad Hoc Committee – to conduct a hearing on the matter. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the committee must accept or reject the complaint by the faculty member. The Ad Hoc Committee must make a written recommendation to the President.
- The President may accept/reject/modify the Ad Hoc committee's recommendation. The President's recommendation is transmitted to the Board of Regents for final action

Benefits

Promotion and tenure are both effective July 1

Promotion

- raise equal to 10% of median university-wide salary at current rank

Tenure

- can be dismissed only for cause, academic reprogramming, or fiscal exigency (see Faculty Handbook, Section VII)

Hints

- Make things easy for the evaluators – **think like a reviewer** !
- Consult with your department head early in the process for advice on what to include and in what form
- Assemble material “as it happens,” then organize in final preparation stages
- Provide brief overviews of each section – “tell your story”
- Consider electronic submission of materials

QUESTIONS?

