

## **Tenure and Promotion Review Working Group**

### **Final Report**

#### **Overview**

Periodic review of the tenure and promotion process ensures that it is fair and equitable, provides clear guidance to faculty colleagues and supports the ongoing development of our faculty. In the spring of 2018, the Executive Committee created a faculty working group and charged them with conducting a holistic review of our current tenure and promotion process. The Tenure and Promotion Review Working Group consists of seven members, six divisional representatives and one associate professor representative. The members are Tim Pett (Business), Dan Crozier (Expressive Arts), Margaret McLaren (Humanities), Stacey Dunn (Natural Sciences and Mathematics), Dexter Boniface (Social Sciences); Jonathan Harwell (Social Sciences-Applied), and Nancy Decker (Associate Representative). The committee is chaired by Dexter Boniface.

Given the wide range of topics contained in the committee's charge, the working group elected to conduct its review in two phases. The first phase of our investigation examines a range of issues relating to research and scholarship. In particular, it addresses the following topics: inequities across departments in the amount of scholarship required; the role of community-engaged scholarship and/or public scholarship; digital publishing and other changes in scholarly publications; and the potential of external evaluation of scholarship in assessing the overall quality of scholarly work (including an evaluation of processes at our benchmark schools). The findings are based on a systematic division-by-division review of departmental criteria in the College of Liberal Arts conducted in the spring of 2018.

The second phase of our investigation and examines a range of issues relating to procedural issues in the tenure and promotion review process. In particular, it addresses the following topics: the role of associate professors in the tenure and review process; the composition of the Candidate Evaluation Committee (CEC)<sup>1</sup>; standardization of criteria for eligibility for tenure and promotion review; and the (annual) evaluation timeline for untenured faculty members. This research was conducted in the fall of 2018. The findings are based on a systematic review of the College of Liberal Arts bylaws as well as data on tenure and evaluation processes at Rollins' benchmark schools graciously compiled by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts conducted in the fall of 2018.

Based on consultation with the Executive Committee and given workload constraints, the working group opted not to investigate two issues in our original charge, namely (item b.) "assessment of teaching quality" and (item c.) "the balance of teaching, scholarship, and service, including advising." It is recommended that these issues be examined by another working group or committee (such as the Faculty Affairs Committee) in consultation with other relevant bodies.

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<sup>1</sup> The decision to focus specifically on the composition and duties of the CEC was based on consultations with the Executive Committee and the Faculty Evaluation Committee in the fall of 2018.

## **Phase One: Research and Scholarship**

### **Inequities across departments in the amount of scholarship required**

*Findings.* The working group found evidence of inequities across departments in terms of the amount of scholarship required for tenure and promotion (to full professor). For the most part the committee did not find wide discrepancies across divisions; rather, most inequities resulted from outliers within particular divisions. When looking at tenure criteria, a common minimal standard at Rollins is that candidates must publish either one book or two peer-reviewed articles (or two equivalent scholarly accomplishments such as a peer-reviewed book chapter or creative work).<sup>2</sup> However, in a minority of departments, just one article (or equivalent) can fulfill the minimal criteria.<sup>3</sup>

When looking at promotion criteria, most departments require more scholarly output than was required for tenure; a common but far from universal standard is one new book or three to five additional articles. However, a handful of departments require the same amount of output for promotion as for tenure and, in one case, the requirement for promotion is actually less than that for tenure.<sup>4</sup> This is problematic given that the bylaws of the College of Liberal Arts explicitly state that “a stronger record of scholarly accomplishment” is required for promotion when compared to tenure.<sup>5</sup> An additional consequence is that the scope of inequities across departments is greater with respect to promotion from Associate to Full Professor than for tenure.

*Recommendations.* The committee recognizes that every discipline has unique features. Given the observed inequities, the working group therefore recommends that those departments on the low end of scholarly output conduct a review of peer departments (utilizing our benchmark list) to determine if their criteria are consistent with peers in the discipline. Second, given our bylaws, the committee urges all departments that have not done so already to establish “stronger” criteria of scholarly accomplishment for promotion from Associate to Full Professor than those required for tenure.

### **The role of community-engaged scholarship/public scholarship**

*Findings.* Most departments do not specifically address the role of community-engaged scholarship and/or public scholarship. Furthermore, in departments such as Business and Chemistry where it is addressed and indeed valued, this type of scholarship is considered a form of service. The History department is one of the few at Rollins that does recognize community-engaged and public scholarship. In particular, the department includes “Scholarly production for a more public audience” encompassing “non-peer-reviewed books and articles, museum exhibits, web pages, public presentations, and documentaries” as equivalent to other scholarly accomplishments such as peer-reviewed books and articles.

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<sup>2</sup> A few departments, including Business, English and Health Professions, require at least three articles for tenure.

<sup>3</sup> I.e., Economics, Chemistry, Biology, Environmental Studies, and Art History.

<sup>4</sup> Same: Economics, Math, Education, and Music. Less: Communication.

<sup>5</sup> Per the CLA bylaws (Article VIII, B., Section 1), “the College has higher [research and scholarship] expectations for candidates for promotion to Professor” [than tenure] including “a stronger record of scholarly accomplishment.”

*Recommendations.* To the extent that the production of community-engaged and public scholarship is a strategic priority at Rollins, departments have an obligation to consider how to promote this type of work. The committee recommends that departments thoughtfully consider whether or not community-engaged and/or public scholarship is equivalent to other forms of scholarship or is better conceived as part of service.

## **Digital publishing and other changes in scholarly publications**

*Findings.* Many, though certainly not all, departments recognize online or electronic journals though most do not specifically address digital publishing and other changes in scholarly publications.

*Recommendations.* While peer review is practiced by reputable scholarly publishers, both in paywalled and open-access sources, the rise of predatory open-access publishing should be a concern for all academics.<sup>6</sup> The committee recommends that departments be explicit about what types of electronic journals, books, and other sources are suitable for scholarly publication in their discipline. Open-access publications in reputable scholarly sources, including journals and books, should be addressed in the criteria.

## **The potential of external evaluation of scholarship in assessing the overall quality of scholarly work, including tenure and evaluation processes at our benchmark schools**

*Findings.* Most departments at Rollins do not *require* external evaluation of scholarship as part of the tenure and promotion process.<sup>7</sup> A survey conducted by the Dean's office reveals that Rollins is not exceptional when compared to our benchmark institutions as roughly half rely solely on internal review.<sup>8</sup>

*Recommendations.* It is important that departments at Rollins develop methods to evaluate both the quantity and quality of research and scholarship.<sup>9</sup> The faculty would benefit from a larger conversation about the potential value of external evaluation as a means of assessing the quality of scholarly work.

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<sup>6</sup> See Gina Kolata, "Many Academics Are Eager to Publish in Worthless Journals," *New York Times* Oct. 30, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> The only departments where external review is required for tenure or promotion are Counseling, Mathematics, Physics, Studio Art, and Theater.

<sup>8</sup> The Dean's office was able to gather data on twenty-three of twenty-five benchmark institutions. Twelve did not *require* external review. Nine utilized both internal and external review and two others indicated they used external review "where appropriate."

<sup>9</sup> Business and Physics are among the few departments that make explicit distinctions among article publications. Business utilizes a list of peer reviewed journals that is widely accepted by AACSB for accreditation purposes and Physics requires that articles be published in professional society journals.

## **Phase Two: Procedural Issues**

### **The role of Associate Professors in the tenure and review process**

*Findings.* The College of Liberal Arts bylaws establish that membership in the Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) is limited to faculty who hold the rank of Full Professor.<sup>10</sup> During the governance reform process (AY 2015-2016), the question of whether Associate Professors should serve on FEC was contemplated but rejected in a straw poll by a majority of faculty. However, a review of Rollins' benchmark schools reveals that Rollins is an anomaly in excluding Associate Professors. In fact, based on data from twenty-six of our peers, Rollins is the only school in our benchmark group that does not include Associate Professors on the FEC or equivalent committee.

*Recommendations.* The working group believes that there are a number of reasons, both practical and philosophical, for including Associate Professors on the FEC. For example, expanding eligibility to include Associate Professors will make it easier for the Executive Committee to staff the committee with a slate of faculty that is appropriately representative as well as provide new service opportunities for Associate Professors. At the same time, the committee recognizes that some faculty prefer that the FEC be composed primarily by Full Professors. Therefore, the working group recommends that the bylaws be changed so that the composition of the FEC is limited to tenured professors with a *preference* for faculty holding the rank of Full Professor.

### **The composition and duties of the Candidate Evaluation Committee (CEC)**

*Findings.* The Candidate Evaluation Committee (CEC) is perhaps the most important body in tenure and promotion decisions and is the only body involved in annual reviews. The College of Liberal Arts bylaws outline the membership and procedures of the CEC.<sup>11</sup> Specifically, the bylaws state, "The CEC normally consists of the Chair of the department (unless the Chair is being evaluated) and a minimum of two additional tenured members of the department who are selected by a majority of all full-time members of the department, without excluding tenured members who wish to serve. In addition, a member of the FEC serves as an ex officio (non-voting) member when the candidate is being evaluated for tenure or promotion. If two additional tenured members of the department are unavailable, non-tenured members may be appointed. If non-tenured members are unavailable, the department Chair, with the advice of the candidate and the approval of the CEC, will select tenured members from outside the department to serve on the CEC." The working group offers the following observations and recommendations.

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<sup>10</sup> Article VIII, Part E., Section 2 (FEC Structure and Evaluation), Part a. (Membership), p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> Article VIII (Faculty Appointments and Evaluations), Part E. (Procedures for Mid-Course, Tenure and Promotion Reviews), Section 1 (CEC Structure and Evaluation), pp. 16-18.

- The bylaws permit CEC members to participate in decisions above their rank. As noted above, non-tenured members may participate on the CEC when insufficient tenured members are available. Similarly, in cases where there are sufficient tenured members available, there is no requirement that any member of the CEC be a Full Professor when evaluating a candidate seeking promotion to Full Professor. The working group was divided on whether this was a good practice or not and therefore offers no recommendation. Indeed, the issue of whether or not faculty should evaluate professors above their rank is complex and requires thoughtful deliberation on the part of faculty governance.
- The bylaws indicate that any “full-time” member of a department can participate on a CEC when insufficient tenured members are not available. This would seem to include Lecturers and Visiting Professors, among others. *Recommendation: The working group recommends a bylaw change such that participation on the CEC be limited to the tenured and tenure-track members of a department.*
- The bylaws indicate that members from outside the department should only be appointed to the CEC when department members (regardless of rank) are unavailable. In situations where there are fewer than three tenured members available to serve on the CEC (not uncommon at Rollins), the bylaws stipulate that non-tenured members of the department “may” be appointed. Furthermore, the bylaws specify that, “*If non-tenured members are unavailable* (emphasis added), the department Chair, with the advice of the candidate and the approval of the CEC, will select tenured members from outside the department to serve on the CEC.” While the use of the word “may” does create ambiguity, the bylaws clearly state that members should only be appointed from outside the department when non-tenured members are unavailable. However, in practice, it appears that many department chairs appoint members to the CEC who are outside the department even when (non-tenured) members in the department are available. This appears to be motivated by a desire to create a more rigorous review than might otherwise be possible. For example, in the case where a candidate is being evaluated for promotion to Full Professor, it might be advantageous to have a Full Professor from another department serve on the CEC rather than a new Assistant Professor in the department. *Recommendation: If the bylaws do not align with optimal practices they should be changed.*
- The bylaws state that the CEC chair is responsible for collecting certain materials, including student evaluations, and making them available to the rest of the committee. However, now that teaching evaluations are distributed digitally, this no longer seems to be the case. *Recommendation: The bylaws should be updated to reflect current practices.*

- An additional concern of the working group is that candidates for Mid-Course Evaluation must submit their materials by December 15. However, based on recent changes to the academic calendar, this deadline often conflicts with the final exam period and, furthermore, does not provide the candidate with an opportunity to reflect on their fall semester teaching evaluations. *Recommendation: The deadline should be moved to later in December or possibly January 1.*

## **Standardization of criteria for eligibility for tenure and promotion review**

*Findings.* The Bylaws of the Faculty of the College of Liberal Arts provide standardized criteria for eligibility for tenure and promotion review.<sup>12</sup> For the most part, the criteria are clear and straight-forward. The working group offers the following observations and recommendations.

- Regarding eligibility for tenure, the statement that candidates “may utilize up to the full seven-year tenure-track probationary period” applies to candidates with visiting experience at Rollins. Presumably this statement would also apply to candidates with prior experience at other institutions as well, since the criteria state that such candidates “may” be awarded tenure sooner without stipulating that they “must” do so. A revision to the bylaws could establish that all candidates with prior experience may utilize up to the full seven-year probationary period (if desired).
- A related question is whether candidates with prior experience should be required to set their tenure clock in advance or be given the flexibility to decide later whether or not to count their prior experience. The working group found merit in taking a flexible approach and therefore recommends that candidates not be required to set their tenure clock in advance.
- Furthermore, a question arises as to whether a candidate who is eligible for tenure sooner than their seventh year would be eligible to apply for tenure more than once if they are denied for tenure before their seventh year. The presumption of the working group is that any and all tenure decisions are final; the working group recommends that the bylaws be revised to make this explicit.
- One potentially confusing aspect of the bylaws is that they set the clock for when faculty are eligible for the “awarding of” tenure and promotion. Candidates *apply* for tenure one year before they are *awarded* tenure. This language can be particularly confusing in the case of candidates for Promotion to Full Professor. The

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<sup>12</sup> Article VIII (Faculty Appointments and Evaluations), Part E. (Procedures for Mid-Course, Tenure and Promotion Reviews): Section 4. (Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor Evaluation), Part a. (Eligibility), p. 21 and Section 5. (Promotion to Professor), Part a. (Eligibility), pp. 23-24.

bylaws establish a minimum probationary period of five years as an Associate Professor (at least three years of which are at Rollins) such that candidates are eligible to *apply* for promotion in their fourth year. For candidates with prior experience as an Associate Professor this implies that they are eligible to *apply* for promotion after two years at Rollins. The working group suggests that this language could be made clearer perhaps by spelling out both when candidates are eligible to *apply for tenure and promotion* as well as when candidates are eligible to *be awarded tenure and promotion*.

### **The (annual) evaluation timeline for untenured faculty members**

*Findings.* The CLA bylaws establish that untenured faculty members, specifically “all tenure-track faculty” and “Visiting Professors of any rank,” will undergo an annual departmental review.<sup>13</sup> For example, an Assistant Professor with no prior experience would undergo a departmental review in their first and second years, a midcourse and departmental review in their third and fourth years (the midcourse typically occurs in the third year but might occur in the fourth year instead), a departmental review in their fifth year, and a tenure review in their sixth year.

A review of Rollins’ benchmark schools reveals that many institutions (11 of 25) follow the Rollins model (i.e., conduct reviews every year of probation) but more than half (14 of 25) conduct reviews less frequently. Looking more closely at the fourteen schools that do not follow Rollins’ practice, none of them conducts a first year review and a firm majority (10 of 14) do not conduct a fifth year review. Two schools conduct only one mandatory review (in year three) and five schools conduct two mandatory reviews (typically in years two and four) before the tenure review in year six.

### *Recommendations*

- The committee recommends that Rollins retain the practice of conducting a review during a faculty member’s first year. Although such reviews operate with limited information and increase the workload for candidates and departments alike, there are also important benefits to addressing potential concerns early in a faculty member’s career.
- The committee recommends that Rollins reduce the total number of mandatory annual evaluations by making optional the annual review which follows a faculty member’s successful midcourse (typically year four or five depending on the timing of the midcourse).

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<sup>13</sup> Article VIII (Faculty Appointments and Evaluations), Part C. (Procedures for Annual Review of Untenured Faculty), p. 15.