# CLAS Personnel Committee Annual Report 2010-2011

20 March 2011

### Activity this year

The CPC’s main task is to evaluate faculty members’ applications for contract renewal, tenure, and promotion, and recommend to the Dean an appropriate action for each.

During 2010-2011 the CPC has so far evaluated 57 contract renewal, 15 tenure, and three full professor applications; within the next three weeks we will complete 9 more recommendations for a total of 84.

The Faculty Handbook says “the Committee will normally be expected to accept the recommendation of the unit.” Over the past four years the “agreement rate” has been above 90%; so far this year it has been 100%.

### Upcoming changes

The University, with the leadership of the Faculty Personnel Policy Committee, has recently made two changes to the personnel calendar for promotions to Professor: it has standardized the “ordinary” wait time so that candidates know they may apply for promotion during their seventh years as Associate Professor, and moved all evaluations for promotion to Professor into the fall semester. The CPC welcomes both these changes. The most important effect will be that units will have one additional week to complete their personnel reviews at the beginning of winter semester. We anticipate that unit materials for contract renewals will be due in the Dean’s office on Thursday of week 6 next winter, and for tenure applications in week 7. We will continue to plead for some early submissions from those units who can oblige, so that we can begin our work a little earlier.

The new CLAS standards for tenure and promotion will go into “partial effect” next year, and into full effect the following year. For CPC this change will not be a large one: we will continue to compare candidates’ records to the unit criteria. The approval process for new unit criteria should ensure that each set is consistent with the CLAS standards, and we hope that every unit will have approved criteria in place by next winter.

To streamline the handling of candidate information at both unit and Dean’s office levels, we plan to suggest a modification of the submission procedures, so that a single PDF file will be submitted for each candidate containing the candidate’s CV and integrative statement and the unit recommendation report.

### Desiderata

The CPC regards itself as an evaluation group, and does not want to set policy. However, in cases where policies are nonexistent or unclear, the CPC effectively sets policy with its recommendations whether it wants to or not. We have identified several conditions where there is no clear university or college policy, and where we would appreciate guidance from either clear descriptions in unit criteria or formal recommendations from university governance.

1. The faculty handbook gives suggested timetables for applications for tenure and promotion with the phrase “ordinarily, at least six years…”. However, early applications are relatively frequent and there is often no clear indication of how they should be handled. Individual faculty opinions about treatment of early cases vary widely. For the past three years the CPC has been operating with the following policy: first, if the unit criteria describe treatment of early applications, we use the approach prescribed there; second, if the unit criteria do not treat early applications but the unit has a consistent approach to them that is spelled out in the unit report, we use that; finally, in the absence of those forms of guidance, we apply the normal unit criteria equally to “ordinary” and early applications.
2. The number of tenure-track faculty with reduced load appointments is slowly increasing at GVSU, and we do not yet have policies in place for clearly defined and fair evaluation of those faculty. We need such policies.
3. It is not always clear to what extent work done before a candidate arrives at GVSU may be used to satisfy requirements for scholarship and professional service. This problem is especially important for candidates who arrive with credit on the tenure clock for previous academic work; for example, should a candidate who was granted two years credit toward tenure be permitted to use papers published in the two years prior to arrival to argue for professional recognition for scholarship? The question also arises when a candidate completes most of the work for a project as part of a dissertation or postdoctoral work, but makes some changes after arriving at GVSU before the work is published. In this second case, common practice varies among disciplines, so the question might best be addressed in unit criteria rather than with a broad university policy. In either case, the CPC sees a need for clearer guidance for both candidates and evaluators.

### Recommendations to units

A few units within CLAS have rarely or never had representatives on CPC. We want to encourage those units to nominate candidates for the committee. Relatively frequent representation on the committee benefits departments. Those benefits do not arise because committee members can act as advocates for candidates from their own departments – in fact, we try hard to make sure that does not happen – but because CPC members can bring back to their departments accurate information about how the CPC operates, what kinds of explanations of unit rationale are clearest and most effective, what characteristics of a case may be obvious to the unit faculty but obscure to the CPC, and so on. If your department has not had a representative on the CPC for some time, please encourage your most thoughtful and hardworking tenured faculty to run for positions.

Service on the CPC requires intensive work over about half a semester. Most committee members spend between 12 and 20 hours per week on CPC work from week 5 through week 10 of the winter semester. (Roughly one week of this intense work will shift to fall semester next year.) It is appropriate for units to offer committee members “unbalanced” teaching assignments, with slightly heavier teaching loads in the fall and slightly lighter ones in winter, to help balance members’ overall workload. It is also appropriate to recognize CPC members’ efforts as part or all of their “significant focus beyond baseline expectations” for winter semester.

### Acknowledgements

The committee members this year are

* Donovan Anderson (MLL, fall only)
* Janet Brashler (ANT, winter only)
* Richard Cooley (HST)
* Mary de Young (SOC)
* Chris Haven (WRT)
* Avis Hewitt (ENG)
* George McBane (CHM, chair)
* Melissa Morison (CLA)
* Senez Rodriguez-Charbonier (PSY, winter only)
* Neal Rogness (STA)
* Francis Sylvester (BMS)
* Akalu Tefera (MTH)
* Kevin Tutt (MUS, assistant chair)

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