

CLAS Personnel Committee Annual Report 2015-2016

21 March 2016

Activity this year

The CPC's charge is to recommend action concerning faculty members' applications for contract renewal, tenure, and promotion to the Dean.

In 2015-2016 the CPC reviewed 16 applications for promotion to Full Professor, 8 for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, and 7 for contract renewal for a total of 31.

The Faculty Handbook states that "the Committee will normally be expected to accept the recommendation of the unit." Over the past five years the "agreement rate" has averaged 96%; this year the rate was 97%.

As the college now normally provides only one contract renewal review before consideration for tenure and/or promotion to associate professor, the CPC provides candidates with feedback on their portfolios when necessary.

The CPC has also worked this year to update our By-laws to align with changes being made to the CLAS Faculty Governance By-laws. The CPC revised the current "Best Practices for Preparation of Personnel Portfolios" into a "Portfolio Guidelines" document. While not crafted as policy, this document provides more specific guidance than in the past regarding candidates' portfolios. This was in response to candidate and unit head requests for more direction and to address a concern that the increasing adoption of electronic portfolios has allowed candidates to include an amount of materials disproportionate to the action under consideration. Finally, the CPC provided a response to the Executive Committee of the University Academic Senate on round 3 recommendations from the USETI Task Force for the new LIFT system.

Desiderata

The CPC does not desire to set personnel policy, an activity that is beyond the scope of its charge. However, in cases where policies are nonexistent or unclear, the CPC in essence does establish policy with its recommendations. We have identified a set of situations where explicit university and college policies are lacking. Written guidance, either in the form of explicit discussion in unit criteria or formal recommendations from university governance, would be welcome.

1. According to university policy, candidates applying for early tenure or promotion must exceed expectations in all categories of evaluation (i.e., teaching, scholarly/creative activity, service). Where unit criteria do not explicitly provide definitions of what it means to exceed expectations, the CPC is forced to rely upon its own definitions. We would encourage unit standards that give us guidance in this area.
2. If units do not regard tenure and promotion to Associate Professor to be linked, we would encourage them to articulate these differences clearly in the unit standards.
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 lack of clarity is especially challenging when evaluating candidates who arrive with credit on the tenure clock. Should a candidate who was granted credit toward tenure be permitted to use work done prior to arrival to argue that scholarship and service criteria have been met? CLAS faculty members disagree on this issue. 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 minor changes as part of the publication process after arriving at GVSU. This issue might be

addressed more effectively in unit criteria than by university policy. The CPC sees a need for clear guidance for both candidates and evaluators in this area.

4. Candidates seeking promotion to Full Professor often have more years at the Associate Professor rank than the minimum required for consideration. Under CLAS standards for Scholarly/Creative Activity, “scholarly growth and achievement must be demonstrated within the most recent seven full-time equivalent years.” However, as the CLAS standard is general and non-limiting beyond “scholarly growth and achievement” and some unit standards refer to the period since the last promotion or provide no guidance, the CPC would welcome units to provide explicit guidance on the time frame candidates have to meet standards for promotion to Full Professor.

Recommendations to units

Service on the CPC requires intensive work over portions of both the fall and winter semesters. Most committee members spend between 10 and 15 hours per week on CPC work for four weeks of the winter semester, and for four weeks of the fall semester. We feel it is appropriate to recognize CPC members’ efforts as part of their “significant focus beyond baseline expectations” for each semester.

We highly encourage units to have representation on the CPC. There are a number of units in CLAS that have had little or no representation on this committee over the last several years. Members of CPC see the critical importance of disciplinary diversity in their work. Unit representation on the CPC not only benefits the committee but it also benefits the departments. Current and former committee members help units understand how the CPC works and can provide important feedback to colleagues on the unit personnel process.

It would be useful for the committee if unit reports could provide a short statement that articulates departmental mentoring practice and describes the mentoring situation for individual candidates.

We continue to appreciate early submissions of dossiers by units, especially during the winter semester. This allows us to distribute cases across a wider period of time and makes it easier for us to meet our April 1 deadline.

Acknowledgements

The committee members this year were:

- Mark Williams (MUS, Chair)
- Rick Rediske (AWRI, Assistant Chair)
- Sigrid Danielson (ART)
- Steven Hecht (BMS)
- Christopher Lawrence (CHM)
- Colleen Lewis (MOV)
- Alexey Nikitin (BIO)
- Ashley Shannon (ENG)
- Shelly Smith (MTH)
- Victoria Veenstra (COM)
- Xandra Xu (PSY)
- Richard Yidana (SOC)
- Gretchen Galbraith (CLAS, Ex Officio, Non-Voting)

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