

Date: July 10, 2003

To: Professor, Robert Wilcox, Chair
Faculty Senate, USC-Columbia

From: Marcia Synnott, Chair
University Committee on Tenure and Promotions

Re: **2002-2003 Annual Report of the University Committee on Tenure and Promotions**

The UCTP reviewed and made recommendations on requests for promotion and/or tenure from 48 faculty members. There were 8 requests for tenure, 20 for promotion, and, 20 for tenure and promotion.

The UCTP approved revised Tenure and Promotion Criteria and Procedures documents from the following units:

- College of Nursing
- Department of Biological Sciences
- Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
- Department of Economics
- Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
- Department of Management Science
- Department of Physical Education
- Department of Sociology
- Department of Theatre and Dance

Revisions to the Tenure and Promotion Criteria and Procedures for the Department of Educational Leadership and Policies, College of Education, are currently under review, which should be completed in the fall of 2003.

Revisions to the Tenure and Promotion Criteria and Procedures for seven departments were received by UCTP in the spring and will be assigned to workgroups for review in the fall of 2003:

- Art
- English
- Geography
- History
- Management
- Pharmacy
- Statistics

UCTP expects to receive revised Tenure and Promotion Criteria and Procedures from other units in the next few months.

Professor Ralph Mathisen, Department of History, was elected Chair of UCTP for 2003-2004.

In collaboration with the Faculty Advisory Committee and the Faculty Welfare Committee, the UCTP nominated ten candidates for consideration by the faculty. The following persons were elected by the faculty to the UCTP for a three-year term, beginning August 16, 2003:

- Dr. Daniel D. Barron, Library and Information Science, College of Mass Communications and Information Studies
- Dr. Kim E. Creek, Pathology and Microbiology, School of Medicine
- Dr. Don Edwards, Statistics, College of Science and Mathematics
- Dr. Harriet G. Williams, Exercise Science, Norman J. Arnold School of Public Health
- Dr. Laura Woliver, Government and International Studies, College of Liberal Arts

The following three members were appointed by the president:

- Dr. William T. (Ted) Moore, Banking, Finance, Insurance and Real Estate, Moore School of Business
- Dr. Patrick D. Nolan, Sociology, College of Liberal Arts
- Dr. Elizabeth G. Patterson, School of Law

The committee made recommendations to the Faculty Advisory Committee regarding proposed rewording of The Faculty Manual in regard to Tenure and Promotion as applied to newly combined units.

An ad hoc committee of the UCTP was formed to draft a letter to President Andrew A. Sorensen with recommendations pertaining to increasing the academic standing of the faculty. The April 29, 2003, letter to the president was the result of our discussion with him during the October 16, 2002 UCTP meeting. The UCTP emphasized that Tenure and Promotion procedures could be made “more effective, equitable, and efficient.” Of particular importance, candidate files should include the minimum mandated number of five letters from referees at peer or aspirant institutions. Faculty in the units should thoroughly justify their ballots, with direct reference to unit criteria. Some units still need to update their criteria to encourage “higher but not unreasonable standards that accurately reflect the stature the unit wishes to foster.” Finally, there should be stricter monitoring of “non-conforming files that do not abide by submission standards.” The UCTP discussed its letter at the May 1 breakfast with the president, the provost and the associate provost. The UCTP hopes to have a follow-up discussion with President Sorensen during the coming academic year.

Two workshops were held on May 1. Marcia Synnott met with about 30 unit Tenure and Promotion chairs at 10:00 am. She was joined by chair-elect Ralph Mathisen for the 11:15am meeting with about 60 faculty members who are potential T&P candidates for 2003-2004.

Increasing the Academic Standing of the Faculty

A Report of the University Committee on Tenure and Promotions to President Andrew Sorensen

In response to President Sorensen's request for comments from the UCTP at our meeting in October, 2002, an ad hoc committee consisting of Co-Chairs Jerrold Griggs (Mathematics) and Ralph Mathisen (History); along with Jerry Hackett (Philosophy); Scott Harrington (Business); Richard Hunt (Medicine); Don Jordan (HRSM); Dan Littlefield (History); Dorothy Payne (Music); Lala Steelman (Sociology); Bob Thunell (Geological Sciences); and Marcia Synnott (History, ex-officio) was appointed for the purpose of identifying issues of concern and possible ways of dealing with them.

The ad hoc committee identified two primary areas of concern:

- 1) The need to identify strategies for making tenure and promotion procedures more effective, equitable, and efficient, and
- 2) The need to make unit criteria more responsive to the issue of "upgrading standards."

In addition, the ad hoc committee identified four possible venues in which problem areas might be addressed:

- 1) the Faculty Manual;
- 2) the UCTP Guide to Criteria and Procedures, aka the "Goldenrod Book";
- 3) Ad hoc revisions to UCTP committee procedures based on ad hoc circumstances; and
- 4) Revisions in college and unit administrative procedures and T&P criteria.

At a meeting on March 26, 2003, the UCTP as a whole discussed and approved the following list of potential problem areas and suggested means of improvement. It also should be noted at the outset that some of these recommendations involve procedures that are already in existence, but are not being adequately observed.

Issues and areas relating to making Tenure and Promotion procedures more effective, equitable, and efficient

1. Dealing with non-conforming files that do not abide by submission standards.

Nature of the Concern: Every year, a number of files arrive for UCTP consideration that do not abide by the stated submission standards. Even though standard forms are available through the Provost's Office website, not all candidates and units use them. Delicts include, e.g. a lack of dividers; non-standard forms that have evidentiary categories added, deleted or altered; and material that is either missing (in particular, insufficient numbers of referees' letters) or put in the wrong place in the file. Non-standard files create at least two problems for the committee: 1) Accessibility: the evaluation of files is time-consuming enough without having to spend needless time hunting for material that should be readily available, and 2) Fairness: when material is missing or when a candidate alters the standard forms, equitable evaluation according to the stated criteria becomes more difficult.

Recommendation: It is the responsibility of the respective deans' offices to validate the formal appearance and organization of T&P files. The UCTP recommends that the Provost stress to Deans that files must be forwarded in the proper format, and that non-standard files will be returned to the Deans by the Provost's Office for correction. Such files must be returned within one week and no new material may be added (except, as now permitted, that which pertains to the status of

manuscripts or grant applications that were already in progress when the file was originally submitted). To assist in compliance, the standard forms are available on the Provost's website.

2. "Truth in advertising."

Nature of the Concern: The status of very recent work sometimes is unclear. For example, book manuscripts, and articles, that are "accepted", "in press", "under contract", or sometimes merely in draft form, are listed as if they were already published.

Recommendation: Candidates must take care to provide accurate information on the status of works that are not yet published or completed.

3. Referees' letters

Nature of the Concern: Many members of the UCTP have expressed concern about various aspects of the procedures for obtaining the letters of outside referees, which have such crucial importance in attesting to the professional reputations of candidates for T&P. In some cases, not even the minimum mandated number of 5 letters is provided in a file. In others, referees are selected from institutions that can be described as neither peer nor aspirant. In addition, and in violation of current policy, letters are often solicited from co-authors and former colleagues. Some members of the committee also have questioned the policy of some units of allowing some of the five referees to be named by the candidate, which at least raised the possibility of potential conflicts of interest. In addition, the unit's letter of request to referees' often is not included in the file, making it difficult for the UCTP to evaluate the grounds on which the candidates were being assessed.

Recommendation: The UCTP submits the following proposals for tightening up the refereeing process:

- a. The minimum standard of at least 5 referees' letters must be met in all but exceptional cases;
- b. In order that letters be received in a timely fashion, the UCTP recommends that referees be solicited in May/June, rather than July/August as is often done. Indeed, it would be helpful if the Provost's Office modified the annual Tenure and Promotions calendar to specify that unit T&P Committees begin soliciting outside letters no later than early June.
- c. The letter of solicitation/instruction sent to referees must be included in the file;
- d. Referees should be provided with a copy of the unit's T&P criteria;
- e. The preponderance of the letters normally should be from institutions that are at least of the status of USC or higher. Some cases this year have as few as one letter from a peer or better institution;
- f. In some cases, of course, and particularly in technical fields, outside letters can be solicited from non-university specialists, but when it comes to the evaluation of scholarship, the committee expects that normally the preponderance of letters will be from persons with academic affiliations;
- g. Rules regarding not soliciting letters from co-authors and former colleagues must be observed;
- h. The referees must be provided a significant sample of the candidate's work if the referee does not have it readily available.

4. Massive *vitae* of referees.

Nature of the Concern: The primary files of some candidates are vastly expanded by the inclusion of 40+ page *vitae* of referees. For the committee's evaluatory purposes, these documents merely provide useless bulk.

Recommendation: The UCTP recommends that referees be asked to provide no more than a 1-2-page summary *vita*. If referees fail to abide by this request, unit T&P Committees should be asked to

reduce the length of massive *vitae* by selective photocopying, if necessary.

5. Justification of votes.

Nature of the Concern: All too often, the written vote justifications, especially for negative votes, are brief in the extreme, sometimes consisting of just a few lines such as "Meets [or 'Does not meet'] criteria for scholarship." Nevertheless, in the numerical tabulations these votes are given equal weight to votes with lengthy justifications.

Recommendation: The UCTP recommends that unit T&P Chairs and Departmental Chairs be responsible for urging that all votes, and negative votes in particular, be fully justified with direct reference to the unit's T&P criteria.

6. Reference to T&P criteria.

Nature of the Concern: Very often, Personal Statements, unit voting justifications, and letters of Chairs, Deans, and outside referees do not make direct reference to unit criteria. This makes it difficult for the UCTP to carry out its own evaluations, which respond specifically to unit criteria.

Recommendation: Both candidates and evaluators should be reminded to couch their statements in terms that relate directly to unit criteria, and the extent to which a candidate has met or not met the criteria. Outside referees in all cases should be supplied with a copy of the unit criteria.

7. Conflict of interest.

Nature of the Concern: The Committee is concerned about cases where a candidate's co-authors and co-PI's on large-scale research projects also serve as their administrative evaluators (as Chairs or Deans).

Recommendation: The UCTP suggests that in such cases, if deemed appropriate by the Provost, an alternative administrative evaluator shall be selected.

8. Multiple voting.

Nature of the Concern: On some occasions, contrary to the USC "Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion," faculty members who serve as Chairs or Deans vote twice, at the unit level, and then again in their administrative capacity.

Recommendation: Chairs and Deans should be reminded to evaluate candidates only in their administrative capacities.

9. College-wide T&P committees.

Nature of the Concern: It has been suggested that colleges might wish to establish college-wide T&P committees that would vet files before they were passed on to the Dean, and serve in an advisory capacity for the Dean. Some suggested that such committees could, at the very least, ensure that files meet all of the formal regulations regarding clerical processes, referees' letters, teaching documentation, and so on, before the file was passed on to subsequent stages of evaluation. In support of such committees, it was suggested that non-academic deans might benefit from the advice of an academic advisory committee. But others felt that such a committee might override unit judgments or criteria, that we already have enough levels of bureaucracy, that such committees

would have no legal means of access to candidates' files, and that clerical vetting could be just as effectively taken care of at the unit level and in the Dean's office.

Recommendation: After extensive discussion and the expression of a diversity of opinion during which many potential problems with such a system were noted, the preponderance of opinion was that, given our current T&P procedures, such committees would not be a good idea.

10. Lack of vetting of "opportunity" and "non-competitive" hires.

Nature of the Concern: When current faculty are promoted or tenured, the file goes through the normal T&P process, but when someone is hired as a full or associate professor with tenure, often as a departmental chair, the elevated status is offered by the dean or the chair of the department and may or may not be presented to the unit T&P committee. The file generally goes no further and the candidate is duly appointed. Even in cases where the unit committee votes negatively, it can be overruled by the Dean. Thus, we can get chairs or senior faculty who may not merit the ranks at which they are appointed. We cannot raise standards if we appoint people at the top (i.e. chairs or full professors) with substandard credentials.

Recommendation: The UCTP, or an available subcommittee, should have the opportunity to advise the President not only on internal T&P cases, but also on those coming from outside USC.

11. Tenure and Promotion calendar.

Nature of the Concern: The current T&P calendar requires files to be completed early in the fall. This places pressures on unit and outside evaluators to produce a detailed assessment in just a few weeks. Files then can take two months or more to make their way through the Deans and Provost. By the time the first files reach the UCTP in mid January, UCTP members have only 2 weeks to schedule sub- and full committee meetings to evaluate and discuss the files, and the UCTP feels considerable pressure to make its evaluations in a relatively short turn-around time. Subsequently, the President then has another 2-4 months to evaluate the files.

Recommendation: The UCTP recommends changing the tenure and promotion calendar as follows:

1. Begin the process at the unit level in the late spring, rather than in the summer, so as to allow units to have more time to solicit letters. Such a change would give candidates more time to put their files together. Although faculty travel in the summer, it is possible to persuade them to evaluate tenure and promotion files, if they are contacted early enough.
2. Submit the first batch of files from the Provost's office to the UCTP office by the end of the first week in January, rather than mid-January, as now is the case. Subsequently forward files at the usual two-week intervals. Doing so would give committee members three rather than two weeks to evaluate each file, a 50% increase in time.

12. Administrative evaluation of T&P process.

Nature of the Concern: Currently, the university has no evaluatory process for assessing the extent of and effectiveness of a unit's conformity with T&P procedures.

Recommendation: The UCTP recommends that at the end of each year the Provost send a letter to the Dean, Chair, and T&P Chair of each unit summarizing how adequately they complied with T&P procedures, noting, e.g., numbers of unjustified ballots, adequacy of teaching evaluations and referee's letters, and observance of clerical procedures. This letter would be in addition to the Provost's report to the faculty at their September meeting on the percentage of cases in which the

different administrative levels and the UCTP agreed with each other.

13. Recognition for UCTP service.

Nature of the Concern: Some units give UCTP members released time from teaching to serve on the committee, due to the heavy burden on their time, while other units do not.

Recommendation: The UCTP recommends that units duly recognize the amount of time that committee members spend on their UCTP responsibilities.

Issues and areas relating to making unit criteria more responsive to the issue of "upgrading standards"

14. Inappropriate expectations.

Nature of the Concern: The criteria of some units seem to "set the bar very low." As just one example of many throughout the university, for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor one unit requires only "evidence of scholarly activities", "good teaching", and "evidence of service." Some units also employ evaluatory terminology, such as "average" or "meets minimum standards," that does not seem consistent with the concept of "upgrading standards." Other units, however, "set the bar too high," that is, expect a candidate to be "outstanding" in all areas of evaluation. The application of unreasonable expectations, that only a very few candidates could realistically be expected to meet, means that candidates are in fact evaluated on other, unwritten, criteria.

Recommendation: The UCTP recommends that a review of all T&P criteria should be undertaken to identify units whose criteria should be immediately updated with a view to encouraging higher but not unreasonable standards that accurately reflect the stature the unit wishes to foster.

15. Undefined and unclear evaluatory terminology

Nature of the Concern: The T&P criteria of many units often use evaluatory descriptive terms such as "excel", "excellent", "superior", "proficient", "average", "satisfactory", "national reputation," that are not clearly defined.

Recommendation: The UCTP recommends that during every unit's T&P criteria review such terminology be clearly and consistently defined.

16. Documentation of "quality" of publication venues

Nature of the Concern: An important consideration is the quality of the venues in which scholarship is published. Yet, it often is unclear to evaluators what the relative reputations of different journals or publishers are in the field. The Committee recognizes that opinions can and no doubt will differ regarding which journals or publishers are "most significant." But that should not keep one from trying.

Recommendation: The UCTP recommends that unit criteria state that the candidate, unit voters, administrative evaluators, and, in particular, outside referees should be asked to evaluate the quality of the venues (and the bases for their assessments) in which the candidate's scholarship is published.

17. Electronic publication and web sites.

Nature of the Concern: An increasing number of candidates include as evidentiary materials electronically produced materials ranging from publications to web sites. In some fields, electronic publication, with equal weight given in bibliographical citations, has become one of the primary means of the dissemination of research. In many cases, however, unit criteria do not deal with electronic publication, or assign to it significantly lesser weight than print publication.

Recommendation: The UCTP recommends that in future evaluations of their T&P criteria, individual units give thought to the role of electronic publication as opposed to traditional forms of dissemination, and be specific regarding the weight that is to be assigned to it in T&P evaluations. The university administration likewise might want to undertake a more broadly based formal study of the role of electronic publication in general, and its potential role in issues of tenure and promotion.

18. Documentation of teaching effectiveness.

Nature of the Concern: Teaching effectiveness often is the most difficult element of faculty performance to assess, and the significance of both the qualitative and the quantitative elements of a unit's student evaluations is difficult to assess.

Recommendation: The UCTP suggests the following ways, as appropriate to each unity, of tightening up assessments of teaching:

- a. More thorough reporting and analysis by peers over the course of time, addressing the effectiveness of the teaching with direct reference to the unit's teaching evaluatory criteria. Too often, peer evaluations have the appearance of having been cobbled together at the last minute;
- b. Quantitative evaluations should be summarized and reported in a manner conducive to assessment (i.e. summaries provided in the primary file as opposed to being buried in the secondary file);
- b. In the reporting of quantified elements of teaching evaluations, units need to make clear just what the numbers mean with regard to their expectations vis-a-vis evaluative terms such as "proficient," "superior," and so on.

19. Use of earlier criteria.

Nature of the Concern: The Faculty Manual states that faculty who came before 1995 have the option of using criteria in effect at the time of their arrival, whereas faculty hired after 1995 must use the current criteria. The opportunity to use older, and usually less demanding, criteria is one of the primary roadblocks to "increasing standards," as it compels the UCTP to evaluate pre-1995 faculty (if they so chose) on often embarrassingly weak standards of a bygone age. It also means that the UCTP often must juggle several different criteria when assessing candidates who come from the same unit.

Recommendation: The UCTP proposes that if all candidates were to use the current criteria, this would not only "set the bar higher" but also permit the UCTP (as well as other evaluators) to assess candidates from the same unit on an equal playing field.

20. Smorgasbords.

Nature of the Concern: Concern has been expressed over the use by some units of teaching, research, and service "smorgasbords" (choose one from section "A", one from section "B", and so on), especially when scholarship can become an "either/or" proposition;

Recommendation: The UCTP recommends that, from the perspective of "upgrading standards," scholarship should never be optional in units where scholarly productivity is expected.

21. Multiple tracks.

Nature of the Concern: Some units provide for faculty the option of being considered for T&P under different criteria for different tracks. Generally, different tracks have arisen as an acknowledgement of the difference between "traditional" kinds of scholarship and "applied", "practical", "creative," or "pedagogical" scholarship. For example, in the History Department, one has the option of being considered under a "Traditional" track or an "Applied History" track. The question sometimes arises regarding the degree to which non-traditional scholarship meets university standards relating to evaluatory criteria.

Recommendation: The UCTP submits that it is important that units that accept "applied," "practical," "creative," or "pedagogical" scholarship state this specifically, and define what is meant by it and the manner in which it is to be assessed as scholarship, in their unit criteria. In cases where a track is clearly non-scholarly, it might be converted into a non-tenure-track position.

22. Multiple authorship.

Nature of the Concern: Nearly all disciplines have traditions of multiple- authored papers, publications, and grant applications, but it is rarely clear to outside evaluators what the significance of multiple authorship is in different disciplines, that is, what degree of credit should one of the several authors receive for his/her efforts? What is the significance, if any, of the placement of the name in the list of authors? To what degree (especially when one's co-authors are graduate students) does one's contribution represent the generation of both initial concepts and grant support? In some fields, nearly every publication and grant application is multiple-authored, yet the committee is often at sea when it comes to evaluating the degree of responsibility that one particular contributor had.

Recommendation: The UCTP urges units to specify their evaluatory criteria for multiple-authored items. As appropriate, it would be helpful for candidates to specify for multiple-authored items some other indication of the degree and nature of their own input, both direct (authorship) and indirect (collaboration, supervision, grant support). Unit voters, Chairs, Deans, and outside referees should specify in their letters the extent and significance of a particular co-author's contribution.

23. Professional visibility.

Nature of the Concern: If USC is to expand its status in the profession, our faculty members must be visible in the profession, and the university must acknowledge activities that promote national and international visibility. Currently, there appears to be an implicit assumption that visibility naturally follows primarily upon such traditional scholarly pursuits as publication, the reading of professional papers, and grant-getting. The role of professional service, and in particular service in major professional organizations, generally receives scant credit.

Recommendation: Even though "service" is generally acknowledged in most units to be of lesser importance than scholarship and teaching, the UCTP encourages units and the university at large to acknowledge the crucial role of professional organization and committee service in enhancing the reputation of the university in the scholarly community.

24. Administrative Staff Assistance.

Nature of the Concern: In the past, there has been a permanent staff assistant whose primary duty was to assist the UCTP. Currently, however, there is only one full-time staff person (Jeanna Luker) whose recent duties include providing staff assistance to the UCTP. Her primary duties are dealing with the Faculty Senate. The UCTP staff person has not been permanently replaced.

Recommendation: Provide a staff person, with computer skills, whose primary responsibility is to assist the UCTP. If it is not possible to have a permanent staff person to assist UCTP throughout the year, it is essential that the Committee have such assistance during the spring semester.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Synnott
Chair, UCTP