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UNO-OASA-University Guidelines on Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Recommendations

UNO Office of Academic and Student Affairs
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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UNIVERSITY GUIDELINES ON REAPPOINTMENT, PROMOTION AND TENURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Revised January 1990

INTRODUCTION

The Bylaws of the Board of Regents for the University of Nebraska System state:

Each major administrative unit of the University shall prepare written standards which shall be used in making all decisions on promotions, awarding continuous appointments and merit salary adjustments. The standards may be applicable to the entire major administrative unit, or to appropriate subdivisions (such as colleges, schools and departments) of a major administrative unit. The Chancellor of each major administrative unit is empowered to approve the content of the written standards and the scope of their applicability. After such approval, the written standards shall be published and disseminated to the faculty and staff and a copy shall be provided each appointee when appointed. Each written statement shall include standards relevant to the following areas of endeavor: Teaching, extension work, research, scholarship, creative activities, and service. Integrity, academic responsibility, and professional development should be included as they relate to these major areas.¹

The Bylaws also contain the following procedure for the evaluation of faculty performance:

Each major administrative unit or appropriate subdivision thereof as stated in Section 4.5 of these Bylaws shall establish procedures for gathering relevant information from all sources, including student evaluations, and peer judgments, as part of an annual review of faculty and performance in relation to the standards established under Section 4.5. The individual faculty member shall have the opportunity to submit materials deemed relevant to his remuneration and status as part of the annual review or as such information becomes available. When appropriate, the judgment of others in the faculty member's specialized field of competence may be included in a review. The faculty members shall have access to all materials submitted for his evaluation and the opportunity to respond in writing. The annual review shall be considered in determining merit salary adjustments, promotions and for awarding continuous appointment. The result of the review will be communicated to the individual faculty member.²

To implement the above and all applicable sections of these Bylaws, used in reappointment, tenure, and promotion decisions at the University of Nebraska at Omaha this policy statement is being distributed. The standards, procedures, criteria, and guidelines presented herein represent the minimum considerations with the full understanding that each administrative unit (college, school, department, etc.) within UNO may desire to, and are encouraged to, establish more exacting guidelines that may more accurately reflect the characteristics of excellence in each subdivision. Such unit guidelines must conform to the Regents bylaws as well as this document and are subject to review by and require approval of the Dean of the respective unit, the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs, and the Chancellor.

¹ Bylaws, Board of Regents, Section 4.5

² Bylaws, Board of Regents, Section 4.6

REAPPOINTMENTS

Appointments for a Specific Term are commonly referred to as "tenure track" appointments. Appointments for a Specific Term shall be on the basis of either academic year or fiscal year, shall be for a term not to exceed three (3) years, and shall carry no presumption of renewal. If the administration decides not to reappoint the Unit Member holding an Appointment for a Specific Term, then written notice of nonrenewal shall be given to the Unit Member.³

Meaning of Reappointment

The rationale for making one year appointments is to afford department chairpersons and cognizant deans an opportunity to evaluate the performance and potential of new faculty members before a subsequent decision on tenure must be made. The provision of the reappointment is tantamount to a probationary period in which the faculty member can assess existing circumstances at this institution, and the University administration upon appropriate recommendations can evaluate the continued demonstration of professional competence of the individual faculty member.

Criteria

Since the process of reappointment will eventually lead to a decision on tenure and/or promotion, it is essential that department chairpersons and deans exercise the utmost discretion in evaluating an individual for reappointment purposes. Each reappointment should be given the same scrutiny as afforded the hiring of a new faculty member. The primary determinant should be the evidence and evaluations pertinent to this basic question: How effectively does the faculty member in question contribute to the current or anticipated objectives of the department, college and university? Although emphasis must be given to the current level of performance, each department chairperson *and dean* must exercise judgment in evaluating the appointee in terms of potential for future contribution.

The same general criteria that are applied when faculty members are being considered for tenure and/or promotion should be used insofar as pertinent in making evaluations for reappointments. The initial evaluation may place greater emphasis upon the individual's performances relative to teaching, advising, working with students in some other professional capacity, and service to the University; but as time parameters approach the maximum period of service before a tenure *decision* must be *made*, the evaluations should be more extensive and incorporate all the criteria outlined in this document and developed by the respective departments and colleges.

Procedure and Notice of Reappointment

All recommendations for reappointment must be substantially documented and carefully scrutinized by the respective department chairperson and dean. All recommendations shall be sent forward by the department chairperson to the cognizant dean for evaluation and recommendation and then sent to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs for review and recommendation. When such reappointments include individuals currently participating or scheduled to participate in a graduate program, the graduate dean at UNO must be allowed sufficient time to review the recommendations, before they are forwarded to the Senior Vice Chancellor.

Recommendations for reappointment receiving the concurrence of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs and the Chancellor will be forwarded to the Board of Regents. A letter of recommendation will then be sent to all individuals whose reappointment has received Regental approval.

³ Collective Bargaining Agreement, 3.3.1.2

Procedure and Notice of Non-reappointment

Notice that the appointment for a specific term will not be renewed shall be given in accordance with the following standards⁴:

- (A) If the term of the appointment expires at the end of the first academic year of service, notice shall be given by an appropriate administrative officer or by the Board of Regents *on or before the ninetieth (90th) day prior to the expiration date of his/her current appointment.*
- (B) If the term of the appointment expires after two or more years of service at the University, notice shall be given by an appropriate administrative officer or by the Board of Regents twelve (12) months *prior to the expiration date of the appointment.*
- (C) Notice by an appropriate administrative officer may be signed by the dean, the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs, or the Chancellor. Notice, by action of the Board, shall be signed in the manner directed by the Board. In the absence of specific direction, said notice shall be signed by the Corporation Secretary. Notice shall be deemed to have been properly given when sent by U.S. mail by certified or registered letter, properly addressed, postage prepaid, and return receipt requested.
- (D) If written notice is not given to the appointee by the appropriate administrative officer or by The Board in the manner herein provided within the time specified, the appointment shall be extended *at least for a period of time to allow full notice of nonrenewal in accordance with the notice procedures of the Collective Bargaining Agreement 3.3.1.2.*

To encourage careful deliberation of these important decisions, *recommendations of reappointment and non-reappointment* should be forwarded to the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs *according to the dates identified in the Administrative Calendar.* All faculty should be notified as soon as feasible if they are not going to be recommended for reappointment.

PROMOTION AND CONTINUOUS APPOINTMENT

Meaning of Tenure and Continuous Appointment

The acquiring of a continuous appointment is a special recognition that the University can confer. Tenure must not be considered a guarantee of life-time employment. It may be defined as a right to continuous employment, subject to satisfactory performance of assigned duties, acceptable professional and personal conduct, and the financial condition of the institution.⁵ Tenure should also obligate the faculty member to continue performance at a high level of professional competency. Since the students and other members of the academic community are entitled to competent performance on the part of the professors, every effort must be made to prevent tenure from becoming a shield to protect incompetence or indifference in the classroom or in other professional activities.

Promotion is not to be viewed as a matter of professional right based merely upon length of service, but instead must be treated as a reward for outstanding contributions to the department, college and university. It is imperative that each department and college exercise extreme discretion in evaluating faculty for promotion purposes. All departmental recommendations to the cognizant dean must be substantially documented. Evidence must be included to demonstrate that the faculty member's capabilities and potentialities are commensurate with the recommended rank.

⁴ Collective Bargaining Agreement, 3.3.1.2

⁵ Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Tenure

Criteria for Acquisition of Tenure or Consideration for Promotion

Before continuous appointment is awarded to a member of the faculty the quality of his/her performance must be examined at the departmental, college, and university levels. However, because of the widely varying objectives and functions of academic departments within a large university, the major responsibilities in recommendation of a tenure appointment or promotion will necessarily rest with the department chairperson and dean. Rather than establish only one set of continuous appointment and promotion criteria for all departments, each department may detail and publish its criteria for recommendation for continuous appointment and/or promotion. These criteria should be approved by the Dean of the College involved and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs.⁶ In no event should these criteria stipulate the granting of continuous appointment or promotion merely as a reward for serving on the faculty a specified number of years.

The minimum period of service before an individual can be awarded tenure shall be three years of full-time teaching (or service of professionals such as librarians and research professors) at the college or university level. At least two years of this service normally must be at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.⁷

Persons holding academic rank below Assistant Professor are *not* eligible for a continuous appointment.⁸ A continuous appointment will never be granted in the absence of substantial documentation demonstrating consistently outstanding contributions to the University with consideration given to teaching and to other professional contributions including scholarly research and other service within and outside the University. Regental policy calls for either continuous appointment or termination at the end of seven years of specific term service at the rank of instructor or above, with notice of termination in every case to be given no later than the end of the sixth year of service.⁹ The period of service required for the granting of a continuous appointment will normally approach the seven year maximum.

The educational requirement which ordinarily is expected of any person being recommended for a continuous appointment is a terminal degree as defined by the appropriate accrediting agencies in each academic field. Exceptions may arise where other qualifications clearly outweigh the lack of a terminal degree. Special considerations must be taken in academic disciplines (such as art, music, etc.) where unique experience customarily weighs heavily in the evaluation of the individual faculty member's professional competence and where the attainment of a doctoral degree is customarily an exception rather than the rule. Regardless of the educational requirement, the primary emphasis must rest on the individual's professional profile and the overriding necessity of maintaining well-qualified faculty within the institution.

Promotions from Instructor to Assistant Professor for those individuals without the terminal degree should be recommended only in those instances where the faculty member's qualifications, including teaching performance and other professional contributions, substantially outweigh the degree requirement. *Normally, granting of continuous appointment to Assistant Professor should be accompanied by promotion to Associate Professor.*

⁶ Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Tenure

⁷ Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Tenure

⁸ Bylaws, Board of Regents, Section 4.4.3

⁹ Bylaws, Board of Regents, Section 4.10

When a faculty member in the University has met the criteria mentioned above, the department desiring to recommend tenure or promotion is required to present evidence that performance has been outstanding in one of the first two following areas and above average in at least one of the three remaining areas¹⁰:

1. Teaching, advising, or working with students in some other professional capacity. Evidence to be based largely on evaluation by students, faculty colleagues, and administrators.
2. Scholarly research or other creative work. Evidence to include publication, (written or oral) performance, recitals, exhibitions, etc., which must be qualitatively as well as quantitatively evaluated.
3. Other services within the University. Evidence of effectiveness in fulfilling administrative, committee, and special assignments at the department, college, or university level or levels.
4. Service outside the University. Evidence of substantial contributions to educational, scientific, cultural, and civic organizations, and/or private or governmental agencies at community, state or national levels.

Continuous Appointments for Non-Teaching Professionals

A continuous appointment is designed to protect the academic freedom of University personnel who are directly involved in an academic program and whose work requires protection from censorship and external pressures which threaten that freedom. Fostering the spirit of inquiry and guarding the pursuit of truth is essential both to academic excellence and institutional integrity. Research professors and librarians are examples of professional personnel whose work is directly related to academic freedom throughout the educational enterprise and are eligible to be considered for a continuous appointment. The University's rules of continuous appointment should be applied to these individuals on the basis of criteria comparable to those established for teaching faculty. It is understood that administrative assignments are not eligible for continuous appointment.

Separation of Continuous Appointment and Academic Rank

The awarding of continuous appointment and promotion in rank are two separate actions—this University does not automatically award a continuous appointment upon promotion to a given rank. Time considerations for promotion purposes must be established within each department and college, but in no instance should an individual faculty member be considered for promotion by merely attaining a minimum number of years service in a given rank.

It is conceivable that in some cases an individual's assignment might warrant a higher rank before his department chairperson is ready to make a decision on a permanent commitment, just as there are other individuals whose assignments might be appropriate to warrant a continuous appointment at one of the lower ranks. In no case should a continuous appointment be tied to any consideration other than the decision that a member of the faculty has earned the right to continuous employment.

Procedure in Granting Continuous Appointment and Promotion

Because of varying circumstances within different departments, such as size, nature of curricula, level of teaching, etc., the procedures used in granting of continuous appointment or promotion must be allowed to vary among the departments. While recognizing the necessity for various procedures among the departments, some provision must be made in every department for meaningful faculty participation in continuous appointment and promotion recommendations, and each department must publish its procedures for making these recommendations. These procedures, like the criteria for tenure, must be approved by the cognizant dean and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs.

¹⁰ Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Tenure (modified)

The recommendations for promotion and/or continuous appointment, together with substantial documentation provided by the department chairperson and dean, must be submitted to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs' office no less than 30 working days after written notice has been received by each department chairperson; such notice shall be communicated in writing to all faculty members in each department. The form and style which recommendations shall take shall be part of the notice. When such appointments include individuals currently participating or scheduled to participate in a graduate program, the graduate dean must review the recommendations.