Guidelines for Two and Four-Year Reviews for Departments and Tenure-Track Faculty

The College of Arts and Sciences desires the success of all its faculty, regardless of rank. The Dean and Executive Committee are particularly mindful of our need to oversee, monitor, mentor and guide assistant professors who need to build an outstanding record that will qualify them for promotion to the rank of associate professor, with tenure. To that end, and in order to provide appropriate and timely feedback to tenure-track faculty, the College long ago instituted formal two and four-year review processes that involve the candidate, the home department, the CAS Executive Committee and the CAS Dean. While the primary intent of these reviews is to provide guidance to candidates, these assessments are also intended to be carefully considered by the home department(s).

Guidelines for two and four-year reviews are necessarily linked to the College’s Promotion and Tenure Standards (hereafter referred to as “Standards”), which focus on three primary areas of accomplishment: excellence in teaching and facilitation of student learning; high quality, significant scholarly and/or creative work, and a record of engaged and meaningful service to UM-Flint, the candidate’s profession, and the surrounding community. Two and four-year reviews should be structured so as to address College expectations (sometimes defined as “thresholds”) in these three areas. Departments’ own promotion and tenure guidelines offer more discipline-specific information regarding these three areas, but in particular teaching and scholarly/creative work are also important for candidates to review and familiarize themselves with. Finally, since the probationary period for candidates begins literally at the point of hire and formal commencement of the faculty appointment, “Guidelines for Departments, Promotion Committees and Candidates: The Promotion and Tenure Process” (amended as of November 2010, hereafter referred to as “Guidelines”) is also an important document, both in general expectations set forth, and in more specific guidance provided regarding the organization and content of the two and four-year review notebook(s).

There are candidate responsibilities and department responsibilities in both the two and four-year review processes. In some cases, particularly for joint appointments, department responsibilities may be undertaken by a peer committee. Faculty who are involved in the review or assessment of their colleagues’ progress towards promotion and tenure are directed in particular to Section II, “Department and Candidate Responsibilities,” and Section III, “Department or Peer Committee Recommendations” of the “Guidelines” document. The guidance provided in these sections is by no means exhaustive. We encourage active and continuous mentoring on the part of senior faculty throughout a candidate’s probationary period.
Tenure-track faculty are normally hired on an initial three-year contract, with an expectation of renewal for a second three-year contract based on a promising two-year review, and a department recommendation supporting contract renewal. While contract renewal for a second three-year term is not automatic, it is the norm. It is the Executive Committee and Dean’s understanding that concerns identified at the point of the two-year review are, in all but the most exceptional cases, remediable, and that candidates should be provided some time to make necessary corrections and adjustments to their teaching, or scholarly and/or creative activity program, or service. However, in some cases contracts may be renewed for less than three years, or the candidate may be given a terminal, one-year contract. Contract renewal normally occurs in the candidate’s third year of appointment. It is formally separated from the two-year review because the Executive Committee and Dean want this two-year review process to focus on the recommendations and guidance that is provided to the candidate.

At the point of the two-year review, faculty will be expected to have “settled-in” to their UM-Flint appointment, developed courses, modified teaching so as to have adjusted to students typical to UM-Flint, begun to make progress on their research agenda, and made appropriate beginnings in institutional, professional and community service. At the point of the four-year review, faculty should have made substantial progress towards meeting College expectations in teaching, service and research and/or creative activity. It is also expected that the framing of the review materials will closely resemble the format that will be used by candidates as they prepare their promotion and tenure notebooks.

Construction of Candidate Notebooks: Norms and expectations regarding organization of notebook sections, quantities and types of supporting material, length of personal and department statements, are contained in the “Guidelines” document and should be scrupulously observed. You will be evaluated in part based on your capacity to condense, edit and encapsulate necessary information within prescribed limits.

Notebooks should be divided into roughly four sections:

- Preliminary matter that includes the Department recommendation, the Candidate statement, and the Candidate CV.
- The section on teaching, which should be organized in accordance with the definition of teaching contained in “Standards” and elaborated on in “Guidelines.”
- The section on scholarship, where the norms of the research or creative work should guide organization of the materials. Care should be taken to assess the quality of the work presented in this section.
- The section on service, which should be organized so as to clarify service that focuses on
  - The Department
  - The College
  - The University
  - The profession
  - The community
Note that while there is an expectation of engagement at Department, College, University and community levels, the Executive Committee and Dean understand that candidates may focus more heavily on some areas than others. Bear in mind that the quality of the contribution is the most important criterion for assessment of the service activities, at whatever level they occur. To this end, documentation of the quality of effort in service is an important element of the two and four-year review process, and essential in the promotion and tenure review.

**Deadlines:** Two and four-year review notebooks are normally due in the Dean's office on the 31st of March. For candidates with January (as opposed to September) hire dates, slightly later deadlines may be negotiated. The Executive Committee and Dean will make every effort to provide written responses to the review by mid-summer. After the review is issued, the Dean will meet with the candidate and his or her Chair.