

**MTSU College of Mass Communication  
Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion  
(Final III September 22, 2006)**

The following College of Mass Communication guidelines supplement the general University policies and procedures on tenure and promotion. In compliance with the Middle Tennessee State University Policies and Procedures Manual for Tenure (II:01:05A) and Promotion (II:01:05B), it is important to note that the listed guidelines represent minimum standards set by the College.

**Department policies relating to the tenure and promotion process must meet the criteria as specified herein, but may exceed and be more specific than the minimum standards required by the College and University. For purposes of promotion and tenure, two additional MTSU documents – Faculty Appointments (II:1:05D) and Academic Freedom and Responsibility (II:01:05A:I) -- may be applicable to the process. Therefore, candidates for tenure and promotion are encouraged to consult all of the above documents.**

**Promotion and Tenure Committees in the College**

Departmental promotion and tenure review committees should be organized early in the year and should meet within the first month of the semester to select a chair. Meetings to evaluate candidates for promotion and tenure should be announced as early in the semester as possible and, at the latest, 10 days prior to the meeting. The committee chair leads the deliberations of the committee and coordinates the committee's work with the departmental chair and with the candidates. The committee chair functions as a participating member of the committee and may vote on all issues facing the committee. Absentee votes are permitted by the College-level committee and at the discretion of the department/school. In instances where absentee votes are permitted, all materials and information that are not part of the package submitted by the candidate and are used to assess his or her application should be made available to all members of the Promotion and Tenure Committee in written form. A quorum (simple majority) of the Promotion and Tenure Committee must be present for the committee to vote on promotion and tenure of candidates; however, absentee ballots do not count toward the quorum for the Promotion and Tenure Committee meeting. Further, the recommendation shall be the result of a majority vote of all the Promotion and Tenure Committee members. In the case of multiple votes, including votes taken after consultation with departmental chairs to resolve splits, only the final vote is reported.

**Process for election of Promotion and Tenure Committee**

The College Promotion and Tenure Committee is newly elected at the start of each academic year.

All full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members, including associate and/or assistant chairs and associate directors, may vote in the election of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee; the dean, associate dean, department chairs, and school directors, however, are not eligible.

At the beginning of each academic year, each department or school shall nominate at least two (2) eligible faculty members for election to the College Promotion and Tenure Committee. More than

two eligible faculty members from each department or school may be nominated, but only two may be elected from each academic unit. Members of the College Committee are elected by a vote of all full-time College faculty. Nominations may be declined by faculty members at the departmental or school level.

At the beginning of each academic year, the associate dean will distribute a ballot to each full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty member. Ballots shall be written in such a way that provides anonymity for each voting faculty member.

A clearly defined voting period shall be communicated to all faculty eligible to vote for Committee members.

Immediately following the voting deadline, the associate dean and a member of the previous year's College Promotion and Tenure Committee shall count the votes and report the results to the College faculty and administrators.

If there are more than two nominations from any department or school, the two nominees who receive the most votes will be elected to the College Promotion and Tenure Committee. In the event of a second-place tie, a runoff election between the two second-place candidates will be held to determine the winner.

### **Election of the Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair**

The associate dean will call a meeting of all newly elected members, who will elect a chair at their first meeting.

### **Tenure**

Probationary faculty may be employed on annual tenure-track appointments for a maximum probationary period that may not exceed six (6) years. Faculty members may stand for tenure in their fifth or sixth year. Faculty members who stand for tenure in their fifth year and are denied tenure will be permitted to reapply for tenure in their sixth year, provided they have been recommended for renewal.

Exceptions to the minimum probationary period may be made under special circumstances upon recommendation by the president and approval by the chancellor. Upon approval of such an exception by the chancellor, the faculty member's recommendation will go forward to the Board of Regents as meeting the requirements for the probationary period.

The faculty member will receive two formal reviews for tenure: a pre-tenure review of progress for tenure and a final review during the fifth or sixth year. The pre-tenure review will follow the process of the final tenure review through the department/school and College level as outlined in Section III of the University Tenure Policy. Probationary faculty entering with zero or one year of credit for prior service should stand for pre-tenure review in the third year of their probationary appointment; probationary faculty entering with two or three years of credit for prior service should stand for pre-tenure review in the fourth year of their probationary appointment.

Types of evidence relevant to evaluating effectiveness and contributions in teaching,

research/scholarship/creative activity, and service/outreach are identified in Section IV of this document.

Candidates for tenure must demonstrate excellence in two of the following areas and average performance or above in the third:

- (1) Teaching
- (2) Research/scholarship and/or creative activity
- (3) Service/outreach

Candidates must identify the two areas in which they claim excellence and marshal evidence to document the claim.

Faculty hired as assistant professors must complete the terminal degree before applying for tenure. In the absence of a terminal degree, significant professional experience (as determined by the department/school) may be substituted to meet this requirement. Petitions for exceptions to promotion criteria may include consideration of the appropriateness of the degree, extraordinary qualities that the candidate may possess, and/or equivalent work experience credit. The department chair and dean are responsible for evaluating a candidate's professional experience and record of accomplishments and recommending to the provost consideration for an exception.

### **Promotion**

For promotion to assistant, associate, and full professor, we defer to the MTSU document, except where more stringent criteria are defined by the department or school.

At the College level, support will be given for variance in the definition of and criteria for "national recognition."

Those hired as instructor on a tenure track with a yet-to-be completed terminal degree are encouraged to apply for promotion to the rank of assistant professor during the next promotion cycle upon completion of the terminal degree.

### **Degrees and Professional Experience**

At the time of employment, an initial determination is made of the suitability of the candidate's professional experience and academic background for purposes of tenure and promotion. The chair (in consultation with the departmental promotion and tenure review committee), dean, and executive vice president/provost are responsible for this evaluation. Because of the diversity of backgrounds and qualifications required for faculty membership in the College, this evaluation assumes great importance, and the candidate's letter of hire should make explicit its outcome.

### **Scholarship**

The College values both traditional research and creative activity.

### **Research**

University guidelines offer explicit direction in the area of traditional research. The College adopts University policy on research specified in Section IV, D in Middle Tennessee State University's

Policies and Procedures Manual for Promotion (11:01:05B). The departments within the College will set additional guidelines on research for their respective areas/sequences.

## **Creative Activity**

The following guidelines offer general direction for those who will present creative activity as part of their record for tenure and promotion. "Creative activity" consists of the creation, production, exhibition, performance, or publication of original work. Such activity should demonstrate originality in design or execution, and reflect, comment on, or otherwise contribute to the forms and practices of any endeavor represented by the disciplines in the College of Mass Communication. The product of creative activity may be communicated through print media, photographs, film, video recordings, audio recordings, graphic designs, digital imaging, live performances, or other technologies.

**Creative Activity Examples** may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Published books (professional, trade, or consumer), and articles, reviews, and commentaries in professional and popular publications;
- (2) Graphics, visual materials, photographs, video productions, multimedia productions, or other visually oriented media for professional or general audiences;
- (3) Audio and/or audio-related productions, sound design for theater, film, video, or other media for professional or general audiences;
- (4) Performances or exhibitions of creative works before professional or general audiences;
- (5) Original musical works or original arrangements of pre-existing works, including, but not limited to, scores (traditional, electronic, or other fixed media) engineered, produced, or performed for professional or general audiences;
- (6) Software development, multimedia authoring, and/or unique and innovative applications thereof for professional or general audiences;
- (7) Public relations materials such as media kits, campaign plans, media placements, brochures, training manuals, and Web pages.

**Creative Activity Review** – Review of creative activities may be satisfied in one or more of the following ways:

- (1) Acceptance for exhibition, publication, or performance in popular or professional media where submissions are judged by independent referees who are respected practitioners of the creative activity; or
- (2) Acceptance by an editorial staff or someone who is charged with a selective review process; or
- (3) Published review of performances or productions by recognized critics, scholars, or industry professionals.

In fields where published reviews or their equivalents are difficult to obtain, independent reviews of the individual works, projects or performances may be solicited. Such reviews are separate from the evaluation of the faculty member's research and/or creative record as a whole, which occurs as part of promotion and tenure review.

**Creative Activity Responsibilities** - As indicated in the University policy, documentation of creative activity represents the cornerstone of the evaluation process. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to provide detailed documentation of creative activity in materials accompanying

the application for tenure or promotion, or where the creative activities are being judged as part of the annual evaluation for retention in a tenure-track position. This documentation must accompany the initial submission of materials to the department chair and departmental promotion and tenure review committee. The faculty member may also include supporting materials that would assist colleagues in assessing qualitative aspects of the work. The faculty member will receive one formal internal review (with assessment of strengths and areas to be improved) before tenure consideration. The general details related to evidence of work are outlined in the University's tenure and promotion policies for tenure II:01:05A(IV:C) and promotion II:01:05B(IV:D)

## **Documentation**

In documenting the record for tenure and/or promotion review, candidates, and departments when appropriate, should marshal evidence in the following ways:

Teaching candidates are expected to present the following: (1) an orderly summary of teaching evaluations that utilizes tables to chart responses to important questions about teaching over time in relation to departmental averages (supplied by the department/school); (2) copies of class-visitation reports as prepared by the senior faculty of the department/school or other documented evidence of excellence in teaching (such as letters from the peer committee or chair, other faculty, administrators, students, etc.); and (3) additional evidence of quality teaching, including records of teaching innovations, course improvements, honors received, teaching portfolios, and participation in national, regional, and state symposia.

Service and outreach candidates may solicit letters that document substantial accomplishments, whether they are service to the University, profession, or society. University guidelines offer ample direction for documenting excellence in public service.

## **Reviewers**

Departments/schools have the option to require candidates applying for tenure and/or promotion to solicit three outside evaluations of their research and/or creative record. In either case, at least one reviewer must come from an institution of higher learning. Candidates in a department/school that does not require mandatory outside reviewers have the option to request external reviews of their work. Such outside reviewers must be (1) expert in the candidate's area of specialization or in a closely related field, and/or (2) from a peer institution or higher.

For research, the evaluations should be written by appropriate scholars; for creative activity, the evaluations should be written by appropriate professionals and/or scholars. The evaluators should be chosen by the department chair or director in consultation with the candidate and with the advice of the departmental promotion and tenure review committee. Candidates shall have the option of providing a list of 6-10 qualified outside reviewers to the department chair. In order to fulfill University deadlines in the decision year, the candidates should discuss evaluators with the chair during the spring semester of the year prior to being reviewed. The department chair, in turn, should consult with the departmental promotion and tenure review committee to finalize the evaluators. The candidate should provide the chair with a package of materials for the evaluators by the first week of classes in the decision year. The outside evaluations should address the quality of the scholarly or creative activity as a whole, delineate the unique contribution to the field, comment on future prospects, and, if appropriate, evaluate the quality of the candidate's work in

relation to those evaluated for tenure at the evaluator's institution.

**Notification**

Faculty members may stand for tenure at the beginning of their fifth or sixth year unless years of prior service are granted in the letter of hire or contract or in the event of nonrenewal.

Date of ratification Sept. 22, 2006

Approved by Dean Frank S. Bablut 9/25/06

Approved by Provost \_\_\_\_\_