Board of Trustees Decision on Promotion & Tenure Process at Syracuse University

Approved May 10, 2014

In August 2012, after discussion and recommendation in the May 2012 Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee meeting, Board Chair Richard Thompson requested the Chancellor initiate a campus-wide review of the University's promotion policies and develop recommendations for a promotions structure that would make SU consistent with our research university peers in the alignment of promotion processes with tenure processes. Then-Chancellor Nancy Cantor asked the University Senate Agenda Committee to constitute a broad-based committee to study this issue and make recommendations. The *Ad Hoc Committee on Promotions* was charged to evaluate SU promotion policies and practices as well as those of peer institutions and "to determine what (if any) changes to promotion policies and practices should be implemented at SU to assure the granting of promotion is in the best interest of the University as a whole, fair to individual faculty members, and consistent with the values of shared governance."

Based on a review of best practices of tenure and promotion processes of Syracuse University peers and aspirational peers, the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, and the recommendations of the University Senate, the Board of Trustees directs the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor and Provost to make the following changes in bylaws and processes related to promotion:

1. **Collect data on promotion.** As with information on tenure, the Office of Academic Affairs will immediately develop procedures for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on promotions.
   [As recommended by the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Promotions]

2. **Expedited promotion to professor.** The University will institute a process for expedited promotion review for exceptional cases such as retention of faculty members. The Vice Chancellor and Provost will ask each school/college to draft internal processes that are consistent with the University's promotion policy, which should then be reviewed and ultimately approved by both the Senate Appointment and Promotions Committee and the Vice Chancellor.
   [Consistent with the recommendation of the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Promotions]

3. **Linkage of tenure and promotion.** Except in those cases when a faculty member already is at the rank of associate professor or higher (due to initial hiring at that rank), the granting of tenure by Syracuse University will coincide with promotion to associate professor beginning with the 2014-15 academic year.[1] Other than via an initial faculty appointment, this will be the only method of promotion to associate professor, meaning that there will no longer be any applications by faculty members for, or institutional reviews of, promotion to associate professor alone (*i.e.,* without application for tenure).
   [Consistent with the recommendation of the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Promotions]

[1] It is understood that many law schools hire their faculty at the level of associate professor and link tenure with promotion to professor. If the Syracuse University College of Law revises their policies and practices to be consistent with this widely followed peer practice in the future, the SU policy will be modified to allow for this variation of the policy, with tenure for Law faculty being linked to promotion to Professor.

4. **Administrative involvement in promotion to professor.** University-level review and administrative involvement will be instituted for promotion to full professor in a manner that is parallel to that now used for tenure.[2] Beginning with the 2014-15 academic year, the full professor promotion process will consist of a school/college committee recommendation and an independent recommendation from the Dean being forwarded to the Vice Chancellor and Provost for a decision which will then be transmitted to the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees for their concurrence. *[Consistent with the recommendation of the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Promotions]*

5. **Accountability for final decisions.** The Vice Chancellor and Provost will implement a standard protocol to communicate the rationale to the Dean and the school/college committee in any instance when his/her decision is counter to a recommendation from that committee.
[As recommended by the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Promotions]

Beyond these five recommended actions, the Board of Trustees asks the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor and Provost to pursue discussions with the faculty in fall 2014 to achieve the following:

6. **Strengthen the voice of the faculty in tenure and promotion decisions.** Appoint a small task force of faculty, including, but not limited to, representation from the Senate, to work with the Vice Chancellor to develop a proposal for modifying the SU tenure process by adding a University-level review and advisory committee comprised of faculty who will meet with the Provost on all tenure and promotion cases and make recommendations. The task force should also consider whether and how the overall process should change to best accommodate the new level of review, including timing considerations. The Board of Trustees requests a recommendation be provided in time for its consideration at its November 2014 meeting if possible, but certainly not later than the May 2015 meeting.

7. **Create a school/college-based advocacy process.** The Vice Chancellor and Provost will charge schools/colleges to develop "advocacy" processes within their tenure and promotion structure (as currently employed in the College of Arts and Sciences) to provide faculty at risk of negative recommendations the opportunity to respond within the school/college process to concerns about their record, accomplishments, and promise.

8. **Role of the Senate Appointment and Promotions Committee.** The changes identified in items 3 and 4 above imply a substantive change in the role of the Senate Appointment and Promotions Committee relative to promotions decisions. The Office of Academic Affairs is asked to work with the leadership of that Senate Committee to reorient its activities from the recommendation of promotion decisions to ensure that processes are in place in each school/college that are consistent across the University and reflect both best University practices and the changes above.

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[2] Given the linkage between tenure and promotion defined in #3 above, University-level review will occur by definition in promotions to associate professor.