

POST-TENURE REVIEW: Report and Recommendations



AUBURN

UNIVERSITY

OVERVIEW

- Tenure
- Field Test
- Findings
- Recommendations

This is a progress report. Implementation, assessment, and refinement will take several years.

TENURE

- The purpose of tenure is to “establish an environment in which truth can be sought and expressed” in one’s teaching and research.
- Tenure “assures each faculty member freedom to criticize and advocate changes in existing theories, beliefs, programs, policies, and institutions. . . .”

TENURE

- The tenure decision is made within seven years of a person's employment as a full-time faculty member.
- It requires that a faculty member demonstrate:
 - The qualifications for promotion to associate professor and
 - Professional collegiality.

TENURE

- Promotion to associate professor requires “demonstrated quality” in the areas of:
 - Teaching
 - Research/creative work
 - Outreach and
 - Service

TENURE

- Teaching is assessed through:
 - Evaluations by students and peers
 - Teaching awards
 - Academic advising
 - Direction of theses and dissertations
 - Quality of publications about teaching

TENURE

- Research and creative work are usually judged on the basis of the candidate's publications or performances or exhibitions. Considerations include:
 - Peer Review
 - National or international level of publication, exhibition or performance
 - Success in obtaining extramural funding

TENURE

- Tenure also requires collegiality:
- “Are the candidate’s professional abilities and relationships with colleagues compatible with the departmental mission and . . . long term goals?”

TENURE

- Does the candidate “engage in shared academic and administrative tasks” such as committee work or work on “departmental policies and programs?”
- Does the candidate maintain high standards of professional integrity?

TENURE

- The tenure decision is based on reviews of the faculty member's record at several levels, including departmental peers, the department head, the dean, and the university-level promotion and tenure committee. The university committee's recommendations go to the president for the final decision.

POST-TENURE REVIEW

- Post-tenure review serves to ensure continued academic productivity and to ensure recognition for exemplary work.
- SACS standard 3.7.2 requires that the “institution regularly evaluate the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria. . . .”

POST-TENURE REVIEW

- Many peer institutions have post-tenure review in some form. Some rely on unsatisfactory annual reviews to trigger a full post-tenure review; others conduct post-tenure review for all tenured faculty.

POST-TENURE REVIEW

- A challenge we faced in the field test was to develop a method of post-tenure review that adds value beyond existing forms of faculty review, such as:
 - Annual written review of faculty members by department heads

POST-TENURE REVIEW

- University-level review for graduate faculty membership, some titled professorships, and awards for teaching, outreach, and research
- Review by outside experts for extramural grants and for publication of journal articles, books, and creative works

POST-TENURE REVIEW FIELD TEST

- The post-tenure review field test included the following steps:
 - The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment identified a pool of nearly 600 eligible faculty members, including tenured faculty serving in full-time administrative positions.
 - The Office of the Provost selected 38 of the 600 faculty using a random sampling method that ensured even distribution across colleges and academic departments.

POST-TENURE REVIEW FIELD TEST

- All deans and department heads underwent training on how to conduct the post-tenure review field test.
- The importance of maintaining confidentiality to the extent possible was emphasized throughout.

POST-TENURE REVIEW FIELD TEST

- For each of the 38 faculty members a dossier was assembled that included:
 - Current *curriculum vitae* for the faculty member
 - Two-page statement by faculty member describing accomplishments and plans
 - Two-page letter of assessment by department head

POST-TENURE REVIEW FIELD TEST

- Each dossier was then reviewed by a committee charged with assessing whether the faculty member's work as reflected in the dossier was satisfactory.
- In order to assess different types of review committee, 19 faculty members were reviewed by committees consisting of their departmental peers, and 19 were reviewed by a university-wide committee whose members were nominated by the Senate Rules Committee.

POST-TENURE REVIEW FIELD TEST

- The university-wide committee reviewed all 38 dossiers for the purpose of identifying faculty members whose work is truly exemplary.
- The provost communicated the results of the review in writing to all 38 faculty members and their deans and department heads.

FOLLOW UP

- For each of the seven faculty members whose work was judged to be exemplary, the provost will follow up by writing a letter of commendation to the faculty member, and by
- suggesting to the dean and department head existing forms of recognition and reward for which they might recommend the faculty member.

FOLLOW UP

- Existing forms of recognition include:
 - Promotion to the rank of professor
 - University-wide awards for teaching, research, or outreach
 - Appointment to a titled professorship

FOLLOW UP

- In the cases in which the committee concluded there was not evidence of satisfactory performance, the provost talked to the dean and faculty member about the concerns and ways to address them.
- The provost will examine next year's annual reviews to assess progress, and to determine whether further review is warranted. As examples, evidence of progress could take the following forms.

FOLLOW UP

- Progress in research:
 - Acceptance of papers for conference presentation
 - Submission of creative work to juried competitions
 - Submission of manuscripts for publication
 - Applications for internal or extramural support
- Associate deans for research are there to help.

FOLLOW UP

- Progress in teaching:
 - Improvements as reflected in student teaching evaluations or peer reviews.
 - Using services of the Biggio Center to improve teaching methods.

FOLLOW UP

- The Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning began offering instructional support for faculty in 2003. Support services include:
 - Videotaping of a faculty member's classroom performance, followed by confidential consultation.

FOLLOW UP

- Discussion of the faculty member's teaching by a Biggio Center staff member with students in the faculty member's class, followed by confidential consultation.
- Workshops to provide faculty with practical information and suggestions that they can use in the classroom.

FINDINGS

- Approximately 95% of the faculty members who underwent review were judged to be performing in a manner consistent with university expectations. With the proviso that the sample size is small, this result suggests that most faculty members at Auburn are also performing satisfactorily.

FINDINGS

- The result that some faculty members do not appear to be performing satisfactorily suggests that existing accountability measures need to be improved. For example, we are taking action to strengthen the annual faculty review process, and we expect post-tenure review to assist in that strengthening.

FINDINGS

- The university-wide committee identified several faculty members who truly excel at their work. Some but not all of these faculty members had previously received university-wide recognition. This result suggests that post-tenure review can help us identify and reward faculty who excel.

FINDINGS

- The university-wide committee is preferable to departmental-based review committees because the single committee provides greater consistency and objectivity, and because it is much more efficient.
- We can improve the process by holding workshops to help department heads and deans with annual faculty reviews, promotion and tenure applications and post-tenure review. The provost's office will conduct such workshops in the summer of 2007.

FINDINGS

- The estimated cost of post-tenure review in terms of person-hours of work is 20 hours per individual if the university-wide committee does the review. This estimate takes into account the time of the faculty member, the department head, the provost's office, and the university committee members.

NEXT STEPS

- The field test results lead to several next steps which I am recommending to Dr. Richardson:
 - Begin regular post-tenure review in the 2007-2008 academic year, recognizing that full implementation will take years.

NEXT STEPS

- In the first year of implementation select 60 faculty members for review. Based on the field test, this number appears manageable for the people involved and allows us to emphasize the quality of the process rather than the number of people reviewed.
- Refine several aspects of post-tenure review in preparation for implementation in the fall of 2007. The provost will be responsible for this process and will involve the Senate leadership in it.

NEXT STEPS

- Areas to be developed or refined include:
 - A review cycle in which all tenured faculty are reviewed every six years.
 - Provisions for review of a faculty member outside the six year cycle where circumstances warrant it.
 - The selection process for members of the university-wide committee.

NEXT STEPS

- A process for preparing improvement plans for faculty whose work is not found to be satisfactory.
- A process for judging whether a faculty member who has been working under a development plan has met its targets.
- Forms of recognition for faculty members who are judged to be exemplary.

NEXT STEPS

- A final recommendation is that the provost report annually to the Board on the implementation and assessment of post-tenure review.