

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Senate

FROM: Faculty Affairs Committee

DATE: March 16, 1989

SUBJ: A Commentary on the Promotion and Tenure Document (SD 88-25)

The attached "Commentary on the Promotion and Tenure Document (SD 88-25)" is submitted by the Faculty Affairs Committee in order to explain the context in which that document was created. This statement is offered to provide faculty and administrators with suggestions about ways we feel the broad criteria framework of SD 88-25 may be fleshed out in the creation of documents governing the promotion and tenure process at the department and school levels.

A COMMENTARY ON THE PROMOTION AND TENURE DOCUMENT

(Senate Document SD 88-25)

Every text has a context and what follows is the context within which the promotion and tenure document should be read. We have tried to create a statement of criteria that is brief, comprehensive and susceptible to flexible interpretation. On this campus, with its variety, maintaining a standard requires that it be regularly applied in a variety of cases. We think that excellence as a standard in teaching, research, and service is no exception. The Faculty Affairs Committee intended, as well, to develop a policy that recognized past practice on this campus. We wanted no sharp break with local ways of working within the Indiana University and Purdue University traditions; and, where modifications of criteria or methods occurred, we wanted to be able to justify and explain them. We wanted one process and policy where there had been two.

This set of definitions, explanations and possibilities will help faculty build successful cases for promotion and tenure. New faculty should be introduced to this commentary soon after they begin their service here. Administrators should have it in hand and in mind when they write annual reviews, make reappointment recommendations, and decide promotion and tenure cases. We expect that this instrument will suggest much that will be helpful without obligating anyone beyond the point where common sense or reason or taste obtain.

IN GENERAL

Each department should develop a promotion and tenure policy of its own, setting out criteria for excellence and acceptability in teaching, research, and service. The policy should define what the department means by "teaching," "research," and "service" and list what activities and achievements should properly be associated with those terms.

The policy so developed should be consistent in content and criteria for quality with those governing promotion and tenure in comparable departments at other universities, and may be evaluated by peers in the discipline in order to strengthen claims that faculty here are judged according to accepted professional standards.

All types of evaluations should be accompanied by a statement indicating who solicited them, the terms under which they were obtained, the number solicited, and the number returned.

1. TEACHING

Evidence to support the evaluation of teaching should represent multiple perspectives, which may include information from students and colleagues, on and off campus, as well as self-evaluation.

Information from students may be in the form of student evaluations, interviews, letters, surveys of graduates, and measurements of learning. This information should be accompanied by a statement of the manner in which it was gathered, the individuals involved in the process, and the safeguards employed to preserve confidentiality.

Evidence from colleagues may be evaluation of course materials, instructional contributions and curriculum development, observations of classroom teaching, and teaching awards. In many departments, a summative judgment by a senior colleague or colleagues of all the evidence concerning teaching effectiveness can provide a context for a claim of comparative excellence.

Self-evaluation may include methods such as personal statements, self-assessment forms, and video and audio-tape analysis.

Furthermore, active involvement with professional organizations which focus on teaching effectiveness and leadership of university-sanctioned student organizations may provide additional support for the candidate's interest in teaching and in working with students.

2. RESEARCH

When assessing the scholarly or creative contributions of a candidate, some of the factors which will be important in establishing excellence are originality, significance, depth of consideration, contribution to the discipline, and relevance to the candidate's teaching. Depending upon the discipline and area of endeavor, some combination of several or all of these aspects may be involved in building a case for excellence.

The evaluation of research, scholarly, or creative outcomes by authorities in the field is accomplished by a variety of means, such as publication, presentation, exhibition, and performance. In general, the widely accepted evaluation practices within the discipline will determine what evidence a candidate includes in a tenure/promotion case.

Documentation concerning the stature of the publication, conference, place of exhibition, or performance venue, as well as the selection process (refereeing, judging, competition) may also be important in establishing excellence. In some cases letters solicited from authorities in the field outside the university should be an essential part of the documentation as well.

3. SERVICE

Individual members of the Faculty should provide evidence of service adequate to enable its fair assessment. Such evidence might include self-reports, documents from those served, products of the service, reports of the results of the service, evaluation reports received with or without solicitation from disinterested third parties, and requests for continued service from those served. The foregoing is intended to be neither an exhaustive list nor a list of types of evidence to be required of any one individual. The evidence should demonstrate both the quantity and the quality of the service.

Policy regarding service should distinguish between professional activities (those related to the Faculty member's discipline or assigned university duties, or to the mission of the university) and nonprofessional activities (those not so related). The quality of

nonprofessional service should not be a major factor in promotion and tenure considerations.

Policies should also take into account the possibility that certain service activities may overlap with activities in the other two areas.