

**COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

**DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY**

**GUIDELINES FOR TENURE AND PROMOTION**

TENURE AND PROMOTION GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO ALL COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES FACULTY  
(Approved February 1, 2012)

All college and departmental guidelines are intended to provide guidance to faculty members seeking to meet the University's criteria for tenure and promotion set forth in the *Faculty Handbook*, sections 2.5.1 - 2.5.4. All faculty members should familiarize themselves with those principles, which govern the processes and standards for all departments and colleges of the University. This document is intended to provide clarity to the appropriate sections of the *Faculty Handbook*.

As UNA's largest and most diverse college, the College of Arts and Sciences is composed of seventeen academic departments encompassing more than twenty disciplines. Methods of demonstrating professional performance may vary with the traditions and goals of distinct disciplines. Teaching methods vary, as do the forms of scholarly or artistic performance, but all tenure-track faculty members are expected to demonstrate a pattern of sustained cumulative accomplishment in teaching, scholarly or creative performance, and service.

All faculty members in the College of Arts and Sciences should recognize the following common expectations:

Teaching is a foundational professional function of faculty members at the University of North Alabama. A record of demonstrable success in teaching, as a UNA faculty member, is expected of every successful applicant for tenure or promotion in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Scholarship and creative accomplishment are essential to the academic profession. Every successful candidate for tenure or promotion is expected to provide convincing evidence of a pattern of scholarly or creative accomplishment appropriate to his or her discipline during the period of employment at UNA. Scholarship should include research or other forms of intellectual discovery made available to professional peers through publication and/or presentation beyond this university and the local area. For those in the performing or visual arts, creative performance should include performances or exhibitions for audiences beyond the local area. Peer review or review by qualified critics is a proper consideration in the assessment of both scholarship and creative performance. Departments may consider professional consulting as an appropriate form of scholarship if the results of the consultation are made available to a professional audience beyond the proprietary interests.

Service is an indispensable element in the professional performance of each UNA faculty member. The operation of a university is dependent on services provided by its faculty members beyond their classrooms, laboratories, and studios. Applicants for tenure or promotion are expected to present a record of effective service to the university, the community, and the profession during their period of employment at UNA.

While previous accomplishments will be recognized, special consideration will be given to accomplishments during the period of employment at UNA and since the faculty member's last promotion. In evaluating teaching, scholarly or creative performance, and service, it is appropriate to consider both the quality and the extent of each element. Especially in scholarly and creative performance, there are recognized hierarchies of organizations, journals, publishers, forms of dissemination, and venues for performance or exhibition in each discipline. It is appropriate to take into account the professional recognition of the instrument or venue through which scholarship or creative performance is presented.

More specific interpretation is provided by departmental guidelines. Faculty members are invited to discuss questions or concerns in advance of application for tenure or promotion with the department chair, tenured members of the department, and the dean.

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**Introduction**

This document provides information regarding the Department of Geography's expectations of faculty members and the criteria by which they will be evaluated for tenure and promotion. These expectations are departmental interpretations of the standards specified in the *Faculty Handbook* regarding tenure and promotion (see below), and indicate how, beyond the *Faculty Handbook*, the department evaluates teaching, research and scholarship, and service. The chair of the Department of Geography provides a written and oral evaluation to each faculty member at the end of the academic year with comments on teaching, research and service. The faculty member has the option to agree or not agree with the assessment and to respond in writing to the evaluation.

**2.5.1 General Criteria**

General criteria for faculty appointment, promotion, and tenure are established in the following three areas:

1. Effectiveness as a Teacher. The individual is judged upon knowledge of subject matter, including current developments; active concern for the student's academic progress; and ability to organize and effectively present and evaluate coursework, including effectiveness in oral and written communication, ability to motivate student interest and participation, ability to relate coursework to other fields with a view to broadening the student's general awareness, evidence of conscientious preparation for all instructional situations, and use of effective methodology and teaching techniques.

2. Effectiveness in Research, Scholarship, and Other Creative Activities. The individual is judged upon the quality of scholarly attitude, the capacity for independent thought, originality and quality of published and unpublished contributions to knowledge, the application of creative approaches to new problems, the effectiveness in planning for future research and study for himself or herself and for students, professional recognition of research efforts, and the effectiveness in the administration of research projects.
3. Effectiveness in Rendering Service. The individual is judged upon recognition in the professional field; consultation of high professional quality in business, cultural, educational, governmental, and industrial endeavors; activities in learned and professional societies; potential for continuing professional growth; contribution to total university development and growth; performance on committee assignments; performance on administrative assignments; and contributions to the improvement of student life.

It is expected that each individual considered for academic appointment, promotion and/or tenure will demonstrate effectiveness in each of these general criteria. Assessment of the level of effectiveness in these general criteria for the purpose of promotion and/or tenure consideration will be based on performance standards defined and interpreted by each academic department. These standards should be structured in such a way as to reflect the varying degrees of performance commensurate with each academic rank and allow for value added contributions unique to different academic fields.

In addition to the three general criteria, an applicant should satisfy regional and specialized accreditation standards. *Faculty Handbook 2.5.1*, pages 2-6 and 2-7

The Department of Geography expects excellence in all faculty members evaluated in three professional areas: teaching, research and scholarship, and service. Placing equal emphasis on all three is very difficult and therefore, faculty members are allowed to select which of the three areas they would like to emphasize; this selection may be re-evaluated yearly. For example, if a faculty member is on "research leave" and has a substantial amount of time devoted to research, then that faculty member may place a greater emphasis on research within their portfolio. If a faculty member believes that his/her calling is excellence in teaching then their portfolio should reflect the amount of time and effort required to be an excellent teacher. University service may be emphasized when a faculty member is involved in service beyond that which is normally expected of a faculty member; examples include, but are not limited to, chairing the department or being involved in campus leadership. Toward this goal, a faculty member may choose to request that one of the three areas be given higher/greater consideration over the other two. This request should be documented as to "why" and "how" the consideration should be given.

## **Defining Excellence**

The basic assumption for tenure and promotion evaluation is that all faculty members perform at a minimum satisfactory level. Excellence is therefore seen as performance that is superior to satisfactory. In general, it is the *quality* of the contribution plus the quantity that distinguishes excellence from satisfactory performance.

For purposes of this process, excellence is defined as sustained superior performance of scholarly activities, receiving recognition from peers and colleagues in the profession, and having made positive contributions to the discipline. Moreover, excellence also includes engaging in the discipline with an attitude of intellectual curiosity, a desire to make meaningful contributions to the field, and sharing knowledge with students in a way which enhances their college experience and career opportunities.

Excellence is not an absolute quality measured by simple objective criteria, but requires the judgment by academic peers of evidence provided. It is up to the tenure or promotion candidate to provide evidence of excellence.

## **Teaching**

Excellence in teaching is proven by student course evaluations, written course comments from the department chair or peers, letters from current and former students, teaching award, and other relevant data.

Student evaluations are required for all faculty members regardless of rank and are a significant source of data for the assessment of teaching effectiveness. However, these evaluations cannot serve as the sole basis for the evaluation. Teaching evaluations in the Department of Geography are expected to be high. A direct comparison of scores among departmental faculty is an unacceptable means of evaluating teaching performance. Comparisons should be extended beyond the department to the College of Arts and Sciences and the university as a whole.

When applying for promotion or tenure, the applicant will explain the general trends within the student evaluations. Evaluating trends and changes in specific questions is encouraged, as these can be very revealing of improvements in teaching effectiveness. Documentation such as new course syllabi, study guides, class projects, fieldtrips, class exercises, and guest lectures, should be included. Strong student evaluations carry the greatest weight when accompanied by evidence that the faculty member maintains departmental academic standards; this evidence should be documented within the portfolio.

The faculty member's portfolio section on Teaching will be assessed based on performance in a substantial number of the following activities:

- Teaching awards and/or nominations
- Use of innovative methods of instruction
- Development of an innovative undergraduate or graduate course or teaching materials
- Development of study abroad programs and/or courses
- Development of field-based or technology-based learning experiences
- Supervision of Master's theses (as primary supervisor)
- Direction of student independent study or capstone projects
- Serving on Master's theses committees
- Teaching or conducting workshops outside the department and/or discipline
- Conducting workshops or seminars that substantially enhance teaching within the department
- Evaluations of course materials and/or teaching by the department chair and/or faculty peers
- Participation in departmental efforts to assess, standardize, improve, and monitor the delivery of multi-section courses
- Effectively teaching overload assignments as needed
- Other related activities that support this area appropriately

## **Scholarly or Creative Performance**

Faculty members are purveyors to the student population of accurate and current information, research and geographic methods, technology, and practical applications of their discipline. Faculty members have been trained to conduct research and to publish the results. Furthermore, the university and the Department expect faculty to maintain an active involvement in scholarship or research. Faculty members should also write applications for external funding to support research or scholarly activities, engage in professional development activities, and enhance their experience and certifications as appropriate. In order to keep current in the discipline and to contribute to disciplinary scholarship, the faculty member must be engaged in a range of scholarly activities.

The faculty member's portfolio section on Research and Scholarship will be assessed based on performance in a substantial number of the following areas:

- Research awards and/or nominations
- Publications in peer-reviewed journals
- Book publication
- Professional certifications
- Serving as editor of a book or special issue of a journal
- Publication of research results in professional outlets such as atlases, conference proceedings, encyclopedias, textbooks, and other professionally acceptable venues
- Publication of maps for research or public use
- Serving on an editorial board

- Presentation of research at conferences and other professional venues
- Proposal writing for external funding
- Peer reviewing articles for a scholarly journal
- Citations or references in other scholarly publications
- Other related activities that support this area appropriately

## **Service**

Service is defined as activities leading to the improved well-being, functioning, status, or image of the group concerned. Faculty members are expected to be active in service to the department, the university, the geography profession, and to the community (which can be local, regional, state, national, or international). A faculty member may choose to concentrate his or her service in one or several areas, but should not leave a void in any of the four areas.

### **1. Service to the Department of Geography**

Service to the department consists of such activities as:

- Service on departmental committees
- Departmental outreach
- Serving as an advisor for a departmental student organization
- Assisting with departmental publications and web pages
- Organizing departmental seminars, activities, or arranging for speakers
- Mentoring other departmental faculty members
- Providing leadership on departmental initiatives
- Other related activities that support this area appropriately

### **2. Service to the University of North Alabama**

Service to the university includes service to the College of Arts and Sciences as well as to the university as a whole, and may consist of such activities as:

- Organizing college-wide and/or campus-wide events, seminars, or arranging for speakers
- Serving in a leadership role in a campus-wide organization
- Serving in the Faculty Senate
- Serving as an advisor for a campus-wide or college-wide organization
- Serving on college and/or university committees
- Serving as an academic tutor
- Assisting other college and/or university faculty members
- Other related activities that support this area appropriately

### **3. Service to the Profession of Geography**

Service to the discipline may consist of such activities as:

- Serving as an officer of a professional society or organization
- Serving on a journal editorial board
- Serving on a committee of a professional society or organization
- Assisting with the organization of professional conferences
- Serving as a reviewer for external university department reviews
- Serving as a reviewer for journal or book manuscripts
- Serving as a reviewer for grant proposals
- Participating in geography outreach outside the university
- Other related activities that support this area appropriately

#### 4. Service to the Community

The community is defined as the local, regional, state, national, or international community. Service activities to the community should have some connection to the faculty member's professional expertise, and may consist of such activities as:

- Serving as a speaker for a community organization or event
- Serving as a board or committee member for a community organization or event
- Acting as a consultant or advisor for a community organization or event
- Assisting with the organization of community conferences or events
- Other related activities that support this area appropriately

### Appendix (optional)

#### Expectations for Tenure and Promotion

The structure of tenure and promotion committees is described in the Faculty Handbook. Committee members will review a candidate's portfolio for tenure or promotion and consider the three categories of activities: teaching, research and scholarship, and service. Committee members will rate faculty performances in each of these categories as Excellent (4 points), Above Average (3 points), Satisfactory (2 points), or Unsatisfactory (0 points). Evaluators will score each section individually and will total the three numbers to obtain an overall score for promotion and tenure, and all committee member scores will be averaged for a final committee score.

#### *Tenure*

A Ph.D. is required and a person should have a total of at least seven (7) points in order to be recommended for tenure. The total of seven points may not include any



Unsatisfactory (0 points). In the area of research and scholarship, a person must have published at least one article in a refereed journal. Additionally, a candidate for tenure must excel in such traits as professionalism, collegiality and teamwork. This category will be evaluated by a vote of the tenure committee on a "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory" basis. Tenure will be contingent on a satisfactory score in this area.

#### 2.5.4 Tenure

An award of tenure is not a right but a privilege which must be earned by a faculty member on the basis of his or her performance during a probationary period. The granting of tenure is never automatic. Normally, tenure is granted after a faculty member has been evaluated by the tenured faculty members in a department, the department chair, the college dean, the University-Wide Promotion and Tenure Portfolio Review Committee, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, and the President. However, the President may, after appropriate consultation, grant tenure at any time if good and sufficient reasons exist for doing so.

Policy on tenure, or continuing contract status, as adopted by the Board of Trustees of the University of North Alabama, provides that a person appointed to the faculty rank of instructor will serve a probationary period of six successive academic years and will be granted tenure upon acceptance of an offer of appointment from the President for the seventh consecutive academic year. A person appointed to the faculty in the academic rank of assistant professor will serve a probationary period of five successive academic years at this University and will be granted tenure upon acceptance of an offer of appointment from the President for the sixth consecutive academic year. A person appointed to the faculty in the academic rank of associate professor will serve a probationary period of four successive academic years at this University and will be granted tenure upon acceptance of an offer of appointment from the President for the fifth consecutive academic year. A person appointed to the faculty in the academic rank of (full) professor will serve a probationary period of three successive academic years at this University and will be granted tenure upon acceptance of an offer of appointment from the President for the fourth consecutive academic year. A faculty member holding the academic rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor may, at the discretion of the university administration, be granted leave without breaking the successive years of employment for tenure purposes, but years of leave will not count as years of service toward tenure unless specifically granted in writing at the time leave is granted. Faculty Handbook 2.5.4, page 2-13

In considerations of promotion for all ranks, evaluations will reflect the evolution of the candidate's credentials since the last promotion or job action as indicated in the Faculty Handbook and by department standards. Specifically, what the candidate has accomplished in each area since the last time the candidate was promoted or appointed to a given rank will be evaluated and given the greatest weight. Lesser consideration will be given to the applicant's career accomplishments within the three fields. Within this context, the standards outlined below are applied.

#### 2.5.2 Evaluation of Candidates for Promotion

Faculty ranks of the University, including librarians and supervising teachers at Kilby School, are instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. The qualifications stated below are the minimum required and do not imply a guarantee of promotion.

##### Minimum Qualifications by Rank

1. Instructor. Appointment as an instructor requires the master's or higher degree in the field of assignment. There shall also be evidence of potential for effective teaching and for a successful academic career.
2. Assistant Professor. Appointment or promotion to this rank requires possession of a master's degree in the field of assignment and a minimum of six years' appropriate experience, or possession of a doctor's degree or the terminal degree in the field of assignment as determined by university policy and a minimum of two years' appropriate experience. There shall also be evidence of potential for effective teaching and for a successful academic career.
3. Associate Professor. Appointment or promotion to this rank ordinarily requires possession of a doctor's degree or the terminal degree appropriate in the field of assignment as determined by university policy and a minimum of eight years' appropriate cumulative experience. In addition, the applicant shall have had successful experience in teaching and scholarly or creative performance. There shall also be evidence of relevant and effective service to the institution, the community, and the profession.
4. Professor. Appointment or promotion to this rank requires possession of the doctor's degree or terminal degree appropriate in the field of assignment as determined by university policy and a minimum of 12 years of appropriate cumulative experience. In addition, the appointee shall have established a record of excellence in teaching, in service to university, community, profession, and in scholarly or creative performance. Faculty Handbook 2.5.2, page 2-7 and 2-8.

#### Instructor to Assistant Professor

In order to be recommended for promotion from instructor to assistant professor, a person will have completed the Ph.D. and have a total of at least seven (7) points, with no Unsatisfactory scores (0 points).

#### Assistant Professor to Associate Professor

In order to be recommended for promotion from assistant professor to associate professor, a person should have a total of at least nine (9) points. In the area of research and scholarship, a person must have published at least one article in a refereed journal.

#### Associate Professor to Professor

In order to be recommended for promotion from associate professor to professor, a person should have a total of ten (10) points. In the area of research and scholarship, a person must have published at least two peer-reviewed articles, documents or technological innovations.