

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

POLICY ON RETENTION, TENURE AND PROMOTION

Revised 14 April 1997

PREAMBLE

This document enunciates the Department of Sociology's expectations of candidates seeking retention, tenure, and promotion. The standards described here, while occasionally specific to the discipline of Sociology, are intended to augment the University-wide documents outlining requirements of faculty retention, tenure, and promotion. The central question addressed here is: What standard is required of successful candidates for retention, tenure and promotion in the Department of Sociology?

Standards outlined here support and reinforce the primary missions of the Department of Sociology to provide students with a quality undergraduate education in the overall discipline of sociology and for its faculty to conduct sustained social research leading to publication.

I. INSTRUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONALLY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

This category includes teaching in a classroom setting, advising, supervision of student research, curriculum development, and other activities related to the goal of educating students.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

The Department of Sociology expects that the candidate's teaching record will demonstrate:

1. An ongoing commitment to the development of appropriate pedagogical skills, including continuous updating of course materials reflecting changes in the discipline, and in the candidate's particular field of expertise. Course materials should be appropriate to the design and level of the course, and inform students, in fairly specific terms, what is expected of them.
2. Student evaluations should, on an ongoing basis, reflect favorably on the candidate's ability to organize and present the content of the course; and to provide engaged students with the tools for understanding, and for academic success. Evaluations that fall significantly below department and college averages on a consistent basis will be a cause for concern and potentially harmful to the candidate's success in the RTP process. However, the Department of Sociology recognizes that student evaluations may be affected by many different factors, including class size, class level, class composition, pedagogical approach, an assignment due to department needs, and unforeseen developments. In that spirit, RTP Committees in this department are urged to look carefully at the entire record of student evaluations and to weigh carefully any unusual circumstances that might affect a given candidate's record.

3. As candidates move through various levels of the RTP process, they should evidence a pattern of growth and development as teachers that can be documented by narrative description, peer review and discussion, and the ongoing development of teaching materials.
4. Evaluation of a candidate's teaching shall include two classrooms visits by at least two members of the RTP committee. The candidate will be informed in advance that a committee member or members will visit one or more of the candidate's classes. After each visit, the RTP member will write a report for inclusion in the candidate's file.
5. Candidates are expected to evidence currency in their fields through attendance at academic conferences, interaction with colleagues, and familiarity with major issues and arguments in their respective fields. Currency also should be reflected in the content of class materials and revision of syllabi.

ENHANCING CRITERIA

Candidates may enhance their teaching record in ways, but are not limited, to the following examples:

1. Mentoring students, directed study projects, informal advising, and other forms on non-classroom teaching.
2. Directing students connected to internship projects, on or off the campus.
3. Advising student groups in curricular or extra-curricular settings.
4. Developing or assisting in the development of pedagogical techniques related to the discipline or a related interdisciplinary field of study.
5. Developing teaching materials directly related to the candidate's teaching assignment, or more broadly, to the discipline. Developing new areas of expertise and new courses based on that expertise.

II. SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

This category includes scholarship and creative activities demonstrating intellectual and professional growth over time. Department RTP committees will be expected to look for excellence in all areas of scholarship and creative intellectual work, but also to differentiate between different kinds of work and note the particular skills required for each type. The Department of Sociology has no single research model for candidates in the research process, and strongly encourages RTP committees to pay careful attention to the particular value of an individual candidate's work. The Sociology Department notes that the preamble to university policy document 96-12 on Retention, Tenure and Promotion states, "The University seeks to promote continued professional growth. Therefore, the process of evaluation at all levels of

review should take into consideration the pursuit of new interests and the acquisition of new skills by the individual faculty member.”

The RTP committee is looking for a record of sustained intellectual accomplishment that can take a wide variety of forms, including, but not limited to: peer-reviewed journal articles; books by academic and quality commercial presses; textbooks; chapters in edited books; news and magazine articles, op-ed essays, and other kinds of publications in the print or electronic media that show the influence of sustained intellectual inquiry. The RTP is looking for quality work—that is the key characteristic. Candidates whose long-term scholarly output may seem comparatively small, but whose work is nonetheless recognized as groundbreaking by the academic community, should be judged accordingly.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

The Department of Sociology expects all candidates in the RTP process to provide a record documenting serious and ongoing research project(s) that have or will result in publication. The Department of Sociology expects the record of scholarly and creative accomplishment to reflect the following characteristics; examples supplied are not exhaustive, but suggestive, of the kinds of evidence candidates could be expected to use in each category.

1. Evidence of serious commitment to scholarly activities that advance the state of knowledge in the candidate’s field(s). This may be demonstrated through publication, presentation of papers at professional meetings, participation in professional associations, and significant contributions to the editing of journals and electronically-published documents within the broad sphere of intellectually-oriented social inquiry.
2. An ongoing effort to engage in scholarly activities that serve both the discipline and ongoing pedagogical development of the candidate. This effort may be demonstrated by review of manuscripts for journals and book publishers, publication of book reviews, and contributions to the development of new pedagogical tools, such as interactive media. Research into pedagogical issues that affect the discipline, and/or the editing and publication of course materials that have an impact on the discipline are also acceptable in this category.

ENHANCING CRITERIA:

Candidates may enhance records of scholarly and creative activities in ways that include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

1. Grants and awards for research.
2. Participation in the grant process as an evaluator or consultant.
3. Participation in the publication of professional journals and other intellectually oriented periodicals.

4. Editorship of, or significant contributions to, a newsletter serving the discipline or a related field of interdisciplinary studies.
5. Professional recognition for excellence in research or research-related activities.
6. Planning, or helping to host, an academic conference.
7. Contributions to the formulation and dissemination of policy in candidates' area of expertise.

III. PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

All faculty share collegial responsibilities for governance and administrative duties at departmental, college, and university levels. Professional service provided to the community must be directly or indirectly related to the academic expertise of the candidate in order to be considered in the RTP process at the departmental level. Consultancies, paid or unpaid, will be evaluated based on (a) benefit to the discipline and department, and (b) benefit to the missions of the college and university.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

The Department of Sociology expects all faculty members to act in a collegial manner and participate in the governing and administration of the department, college and university.

Candidates are invited to write a narrative explaining how their service is related to their teaching, research, or the mission of the university. Candidates may demonstrate service through:

1. Service on assigned and elected departmental committees.
2. Service as an elected officer of the department.
3. Service as an appointed, or ad hoc committee member in the department.
4. Service on various college and university-wide committees.

ENHANCING CRITERIA

Candidates may enhance the record of professional service in a number of ways, including, but not limited to the following examples:

1. Professional Service: Faculty may enhance their service record through service to international, national, regional, state, and local sociological and related multi-disciplinary organizations.

2. College and University Service: Faculty may enhance their service record through contributions to the quality of intellectual, cultural and scholarly life of the College and University Community.
3. Off-campus Service: Provide service to off-campus organizations requiring the expertise of the faculty member to help the organization achieve its goals.
4. Facilitation of communication among scholars in the discipline or related inter-disciplinary fields through the electronic media, such as the internet, the creation of Web pages, list servers, etc.
5. Contributions to the formulation and dissemination of policy in candidate's area of expertise.