

Report to the Faculty
Advisory Committee on Retention, Promotion, and Tenure

October 1986

The Advisory Committee on Retention, Promotion, and Tenure consists of six members elected by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for three-year terms, with two terms expiring each year. Elected from and by the Faculty, it is responsible to the Faculty, to whom it reports annually.

The Committee meets its responsibility by advising the Dean on the retention, promotion, and tenure of faculty members in the Arts and Sciences. When it receives formal written recommendations and supporting documents from the department, it carefully evaluates each candidate according to the criteria set forth in the Faculty Handbook: "possession of the professional education, experience, and degrees necessary for his or her duties; conscientious and effective teaching with proper command of the material of his or her field, and helpfulness to his or her students; significant contributions to his or her field through research and scholarly or artistic activity, and through professional service; and responsible participation in departmental, faculty, and College governance." The Committee then sends its positive or negative recommendations to the Dean with an explanation for each decision. Its recommendations are made solely on the evidence of the qualifications prescribed in the Handbook; the numbers or proportions of tenured or senior faculty in the College or a department are not considered. After submitting its recommendations, the Committee often meets with the Dean to discuss the candidates before the Dean in turn forwards his recommendations to the Provost.

In order to give concrete focus to the necessarily general criteria stated in the Handbook, the Committee sent to all department chairpersons and personnel committees a description of the kinds of supporting materials that should be submitted on behalf of each candidate. Its deliberations—and those of several previous committees—followed the guidelines in that memorandum.

During the academic year 1985-86, the Committee received and evaluated three recommendations for tenure for continuing William and Mary faculty; all three were endorsed by the Committee. In two of the cases, the Committee also endorsed recommendations for promotion to Associate Professor. The third case involved a candidate already holding the rank of Full Professor.

This year the Committee also considered seven recommendations for promotion from Associate to Full Professor and endorsed three of those recommendations. In all of these cases, the Committee's decisions were endorsed by the Dean.

The Committee also received a number of tenure recommendations outside of the normal schedule for consideration. In one case, the Committee asserted its responsibility to review recommendations made on an extra-departmental basis (e.g., tenure for a Kenan Professor). The Committee endorsed the recommendation of the ad hoc tenure review committee appointed by the Dean to review the Kenan Professor. The review recommended tenure, but the incumbent

accepted a position elsewhere. Three other cases came to the Committee from departments recommending that individuals not currently on the faculty be hired with tenure. The Committee requested full tenure recommendations evaluating the candidates on the basis of the four criteria specified in the Faculty Handbook.

Upon receipt of the recommendations from the departments, the Committee endorsed the requests in two cases, but recommended that the tenure decision in the third be delayed until the candidate had been in residence for two semesters. The administration rejected the Committee's recommendation in this last case, endorsing all the departmental requests.

The increasing opportunities for the College to hire at the senior level and the apparently growing number of appointments outside the academic departments pose particular challenges to the Committee, the Dean and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in the coming year. The Committee, as the Faculty's elected representatives, must insist on the right to review all candidates for tenure and promotion in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The Committee strongly believes that except in the most extraordinary cases candidates for tenure should be required to have served at least one academic year in residence at the College before being evaluated for tenure, and that the administration should affirm this principle.

Departments which do recommend that tenure be granted with the initial appointment must provide a complete tenure review including external evaluations of the candidate's qualifications, and such evidence of the candidate's teaching and contributions to governance as can be obtained.

The failure of the Committee, the departments or the administration to abide by these guidelines will seriously impair the ability of the Faculty's elected committee to perform its duty of insuring consistently high standards for the awarding of tenure and promotion in rank.

Finally, in the area of appointments outside of the established academic departments, the Committee recommends that faculty members appointed to such positions be informed at the time of appointment of the procedures which will be used in the evaluation process. Such information should include a description of the review group, the evaluation of their recommendation by the Committee on Retention, Promotion and Tenure, and the administrative review, as well as the appeals process.

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