

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

October 1987

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 may meet 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 1986-87, the Committee received and evaluated two recommendations for tenure for continuing William and Mary faculty; both were endorsed by the Committee. The Committee also recommended their promotion to Associate Professor. The Committee recommended the promotion of one faculty member from lecturer to Assistant Professor (without tenure) after having completed the doctoral degree.

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

The Committee also received four recommendations from two departments and one Arts and Science committee to hire with tenure individuals not currently on the faculty. 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, the Committee endorsed the requests in three cases, and recommended against tenure in the fourth case. The administration rejected the Committee's recommendation in this last case, but the candidate accepted a position elsewhere.

The committee also received four retention cases. It approved the department's recommendations in each instance. Two of the recommendations were reversed by the administration, but the individuals subsequently resigned from the faculty.

In evaluating candidates for tenure and promotion, the Committee looks favorably upon the inclusion of external letters of recommendation which speak to the individual's teaching and scholarship. Three such references would not be inappropriate.

The increasing opportunities for the College to hire at the senior level have posed particular challenges to the Committee, the Dean and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The Committee, as the Faculty's elected representatives, asserted the right to review all candidates for tenure and promotion in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The Committee continues to believe 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.

Departments and specially appointed committees of the Arts and Sciences faculty 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 distinguished faculty appointments, the Committee accepted guidelines formulated by the Faculty Affairs Committee and endorsed by the Procedural Review Committee.

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Richard Terman
Hans Tiefel
Philip J. Funigiello, Chairman