

Report to the Faculty  
Advisory Committee on Retention, Promotion, and Tenure  
October 1989

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 Faculty voted in October, 1987, to exclude department chairs from sitting on the Committee due to the potential for a conflict of interest.

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 presented in the candidates' tenure dossiers concerning 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 the spring of 1988, the Committee drafted, at the request of the Dean, a set of procedures for departments to follow in writing tenure evaluations. The procedures reaffirmed the criteria for tenure specified by the Handbook; aimed at clarity and uniformity in the writing of the evaluations; described the kinds of supporting materials that should be submitted on behalf of each candidate; and set firm dates for their submission to the Dean. During the past year, these procedures have been clarified further and copies sent to all department chairpersons and tenure eligible junior faculty whether or not they are scheduled for tenure consideration this fall. Our hope is that the procedures will obviate the need for either the Dean or the Committee to request clarification or additional information from a department.

During the academic year 1988-89, the Committee received and evaluated nine recommendations for tenure for continuing William and Mary faculty. Seven were endorsed by the Committee and

recommended for promotion to Associate Professor. The Dean concurred with the recommendations of the Committee in all cases. The Committee also considered eight recommendations for promotion of continuing faculty and endorsed seven of the recommendations. In each case, the Committee's recommendation was endorsed by the Dean.

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, reviews all candidates for tenure and promotion in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The Committee continues to recommend that, except in the most extraordinary cases, all candidates for tenure should serve at least one academic year in residence at the College before being evaluated for tenure.

This year the Committee received several recommendations from departments and ad hoc faculty committees to hire with tenure distinguished individuals not currently on the faculty. These included the Gumenick Professorship, the Gottwald Professorship, the CSX Chair of Economics and Public Policy, a Distinguished Professorship in Economics and Public Policy, the Governor's Distinguished Commonwealth (CEBAF) Professorship, the Pamela Harriman Chair of Government and Public Policy, the Ralph H. Wark Chair in Fine Arts, the Fred Huby Memorial Professorship in Geography and International Education, and two Kenan Professorships. The Committee believes that it is important not to treat the appointments as exempt from the usual procedures of evaluation and, therefore, before making recommendations to the Dean, it attempted to make complete tenure evaluations of the candidates based on criteria specified in the Handbook. A continual problem in this area, for a variety of reasons, is the difficulty of getting adequate teaching evaluations of the candidates, and in some cases, eminent scholar appointments were referred back to the department and to the Dean, for further documentation of teaching. The Committee continues to make the strong recommendation that information on teaching performance be assembled for each candidate for these positions. A further hindrance to adequate evaluations of candidates is the often short time period in which decisions must be reached following the assembling of the credentials of each individual. Often the recommended individuals have multiple offers. This situation necessitated hurried meetings of the Committee in order to make a recommendation to the Dean in time to avoid losing the individual. The Dean, the department Chairpersons and the Committee have been very cooperative and are continuing to work on this problem.

Another activity of the Committee this year has been to work with the Dean and the Provost in drafting a recommended change in the Faculty Handbook to clarify procedures for candidates who have been denied tenure. This recommendation is being considered by the committee involved with revision of the Faculty Handbook.

Finally, the Chairman of the Committee, at the request of the Dean, met with the Dean and tenure-eligible faculty to explain the Committee's expectations for tenure consideration and to answer questions regarding the process.

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