

## **Art & Sciences Senate Commitment to Academic Review**

Resolution adopted at the meeting of the Arts & Sciences Senate, February 19, 2018

### **RESOLVED**

The integrity of Arts & Sciences Senate procedures, and accountability of action within the framework of those procedures, are cornerstones of meaningful and effective shared governance.

The Arts & Sciences Senate objects in the strongest possible terms to any action on the part of the College of Arts & Sciences Dean, or any individual or group that would deliberately deny or prevent the appropriate review of a promotion & tenure file. The Arts & Sciences Senate expects --and the Promotion & Tenure Committee Procedures require-- that all appropriate P & T files duly put forward by the faculty of a CAS department be delivered to the Arts & Sciences Senate Promotion and Tenure Committee for evaluation.

Academic review for appointment, promotion and tenure is performed by faculty as a measure of faculty performance and competence, as described in the Association of American University Professors (AAUP) *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*<sup>1</sup>:

Faculty status and related matters are primarily a faculty responsibility; this area includes appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal. The primary responsibility of the faculty for such matters is based upon the fact that its judgment is central to general educational policy. Furthermore, scholars in a particular field or activity have the chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues; in such competence it is implicit that responsibility exists for both adverse and favorable judgments. Likewise, there is the more general competence of experienced faculty personnel committees having a broader charge. Determinations in these matters should first be by faculty action through established procedures, reviewed by the chief academic officers with the concurrence of the board. The governing board and president should, on questions of faculty status, as in other matters where the faculty has primary responsibility, concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail.

Our appointment, promotion and tenure procedures support the strength, dynamism and diversity of the College and by extension the University. Adherence to our

appointment, promotion and tenure procedures (even in hard financial times, or times of strategic realignment) is necessary for the growth and success of the University.

Faculty, particularly assistant professors, need to trust that academic review is procedurally consistent and fair, and not subject to arbitrary decision by an administrator.

Effective academic review furthers the five-fold University Mission of Excellence, rewards our students, and makes Stony Brook University the great institution that it aspires to be.

We call on the CAS Dean to faithfully uphold the procedures of academic review.

<sup>1</sup> American Association of University Professors. *Statement on government of colleges and universities, section 5, the academic institution: the faculty.*

<https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities>

## **Art & Sciences Senate Commitment to Academic Review**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Executive Committees of University Senate and the Arts & Sciences Senate are concerned about an ongoing promotion and tenure case in a department of the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS). It involves policy and procedures that are fundamental to meaningful and appropriate shared governance.

When the faculty of a CAS department put forward a promotion and tenure file it is to go to the Dean only to ensure that it is technically complete, after which the Dean is obligated to send it on to the Promotion and Tenure Committee (PTC) for review. It is a breach of CAS and Arts & Sciences Senate PTC policies for the CAS Dean or any individual to prevent a P & T file from being received and reviewed by the PTC.

The Senate ECs object in the strongest possible terms to any action on the part of the CAS Dean, or any individual or group that would deliberately deny or prevent the appropriate review of a P & T file. The Senate ECs expect, and the Promotion and Tenure Committee Procedures require, that all appropriate P & T files duly put forward by the faculty of a CAS department be delivered to the Arts & Sciences Senate Promotion and Tenure Committee <sup>1</sup> for evaluation.

All promotions within the College of Arts & Sciences must adhere to the procedures laid out in the "Promotion and Tenure Committee Procedures" <sup>2</sup> of the College of Arts & Sciences, Arts & Sciences Senate, hereafter referred to as PTCP.

Requests for promotion are generally initiated by the Chair of the Department (PTCP, Section 2.2.2). In the case being discussed by the Senate ECs, this was done. Section 1.2.4 of the PTCP states "Assistant professors or instructors who have neither previously been reviewed for tenure at the State University of New York at Stony Brook nor submitted a letter of resignation, must be reviewed for continuing appointment not later than the sixth year of service in academic rank."

Following review by the Department, files are transmitted to the PTC. Section 2.6.1 of the PTCP states "The department chairperson or program director is responsible for forwarding the completed file with the recommendation letter to the Dean for transmission to the Promotion and Tenure Committee."

In practice, as indicated earlier, the files are routed through the office of the Dean of the College so that a technical review of the file may be done to ensure that the content is

complete. Section 2.6.1 of the PTCP does not give the Dean an option; the Dean is required to send the file to the PTC for evaluation.

There is no provision in the PTCP that addresses a case of a tenure-track faculty member's file not being forwarded by the Dean to the PTC. The closest provision we can find is in the PTCP Section 2.2.2, which deals with re-submissions: "When a letter of termination of employment has already been received, when a letter of resignation has been submitted and accepted, or when a non-mandatory case is being brought forward as a resubmission, the decision whether or not to submit or resubmit the case to the Promotion and Tenure Committee will be made by the department." In any event, this provision appears to be overridden by Section 2.6.1.

It is clear from this language that the existence of a "letter of termination" does not supercede the rights of the department to submit the file to the PTC. It is also clear that the decision to submit the file to the PTC is made by the Department, and not by the Dean or any other individual.

It is acknowledged and understood that the Dean has the authority to recommend in favor of or against the promotion and tenure of a faculty member whatever the recommendation of the PTC, as he/ she transmits the file up the administrative ladder; but he/ she does not have the option of refusing to send it forward. In the case that led to the resolution being presented to Arts & Sciences Senate, as in other cases, there may be compelling reasons to not offer promotion with tenure. But it is the position of the Senate ECs that all duly and appropriately forwarded P & T files by a faculty body must be afforded the opportunity to be reviewed by the faculty of the College through the agency of the PTC.

1. The Arts & Sciences Senate provides advice to and is the agency of shared governance for four academic units, each with its own Dean. The PTC is a committee of the Arts & Sciences Senate, and is answerable to it and not to any Dean.
2. Arts & Sciences Senate Promotion & Tenure Procedures, College of Arts & Sciences <http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/senatecas/key-senate-documents/ptc-guidelines.php>