

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY EVALUATION COMMITTEE

EXPECTATIONS FOR RENEWAL, PROMOTION, TENURE EVALUATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENTS

These expectations in no way replace the process and expectation for renewal, promotion and tenure presented in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The purpose of these expectations is to provide Geography Department faculty with information on how the Department Evaluation Committee (DEC) interprets the process and standards laid out in the CBA. These guidelines cover all full-time faculty being evaluated for renewal, promotion, tenure and professional assessment.

The DEC expects that the faculty member's work in all categories of evaluation will be of high quality. We expect that materials submitted can candidates for evaluation will be organized by the categories of evaluation specified in the CBA. Specifically:

LOAD CREDIT

Teaching – The DEC relies principally on two sources of information to judge quality:

Student Evaluations: Non-tenured faculty shall have courses evaluations conducted in all course sections. Evaluated faculty must use the Department approved evaluation instrument and may use other instruments if they wish. For professional assessments, faculty shall have course evaluations in all sections in the year preceding assessment. While the DEC reviews all information submitted, we pay special attention to the following questions on the survey:

Quality of Instruction – does a substantial majority of students responding agree or strongly agree that the quality of instruction was high?

Desire to Take Additional courses – does a majority or near majority of students responding agree that the course encouraged them to take more courses in the Department? This is especially important in 100 and 200 level courses since we draw our majors largely from that group.

Quality of the course - does a substantial majority of students responding agree or strongly agree that the quality of instruction was high?

Written Comments – are most comments generally positive toward the course and instructor? When several students make comments that the faculty member agrees would improve the course, the faculty member will present evidence in the next evaluation that the suggestions have been considered or implemented.

We expect that faculty will prepare summary tables of the responses to these questions (and any others they wish to emphasize) by course and transcribe all written comments.

Class Observations – for pre-tenure faculty, at least one course presentation each year will be observed by a member of the DEC. These observations will follow the guidelines in the

Department's By-Laws.

- a. Under normal evaluation procedures for reappointment, tenure and promotion only members of the DEC may observe classroom teaching.
- b. The faculty member whose class is being observed shall be given at least one week's notice of the observation.
- c. The results of any observation shall be made available to the member in writing within ten days of the observation.
- d. If the member wishes a second observation by another member of the DEC, the member may choose the observer.

Other Load Credit Activity

Chairperson – during evaluation, the Chairperson shall present evidence of the quality of performance as Chairperson.

Research Reassigned Time – accepted applications and final reports on research reassigned time shall be included in materials submitted for evaluation. The DEC expects that all research conducted using research reassigned load credit will lead to submission and possible publication of the research.

Other Load Credit Activity – if the faculty member is receiving load credit for other activities, they shall provide evidence of the quality of that performance for evaluation.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY APPROPRIATE TO GEOGRAPHY

The principal creative activity expected by the Geography DEC is the publication of high quality research. The DEC is the initial judge of the quality of the research and will evaluate the research with these questions in mind:

1. Is this research appropriate to the faculty member's stated research interest and teaching activities? While creative activity in other areas may be of benefit to the faculty member, the expectation is that the research and publication will be in an area of scholarly endeavor that the faculty member is competent in.
2. Does the research advance or add to the general body of geographic knowledge? Research and publication of review articles, book reviews, encyclopedia entries and other similar publications can be important to the discipline but are weighed more lightly than research and publication that add to the body of knowledge.
3. Is the research published in a journal or publication that is considered by practitioners in the field to be an important outlet? It is not just the quality of the research but where that research is presented; high quality research in a journal with wide readership and respect in the discipline is more likely to add to the body of geographic knowledge than publication in a minor journal

with small readership. Specifically, the DEC values publication of research in this order (highest to lowest)

- Single author books with traditional and respected publishing houses.
 - Peer-reviewed journals with national or international circulation
 - Book editor
 - Peer-reviewed book chapters
 - Peer-reviewed journals with local or regional circulation
 - Non-peer reviewed journal with national or international circulation
 - Non-peer reviewed book chapters
 - Single author books with less respected, so-called “vanity” presses.
 - Non-peer reviewed publications with regional circulation
 - Research reports in newsletters or other publications that might be considered trade journals.
4. The number of publications expected of a faculty member can vary. For example, a well-written and reviewed book could be considered as important as several peer-reviewed publications in national journals. A large number of publications in regional peer-reviewed journals may establish a faculty member as an expert within the region and carry the same weight as a smaller number of national peer-reviewed publications. Our expectation for the production of research is that it be consistent and improving. We discourage “churning”, taking research that could be presented in a single outlet and placing it in multiple locations, and generally “milking” the research for the sake of increased publications. The standard is quality and not quantity.
5. If research is published with other authors we expect the faculty member to clearly identify her or his contribution to the effort.

In addition to the publication of research we expect faculty members being evaluated to have given papers at regional and national conferences and generally participated in scholarly activity.

We also value successful peer-reviewed external research grants with the expectation they will lead to appropriate creative activity.

PRODUCTIVE SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT AND UNIVERSITY

Our expectations for service to the Department and University differ depending on where in the career path the faculty member is.

First Two Years Pre-Tenure: The DEC recognizes that the first two years of a pre-tenure faculty member are critical to development as a teacher and researcher and expects only minimal productive service in this category. Specifically, the Department will try to minimize the amount of University committee work that junior faculty do, allowing them to focus on the quality of their teaching and research agendas. We expect regular attendance and participation in

department meetings and new faculty will serve as secretary, recording minutes at Department meetings.

Tenure and promotion candidates – These faculty members need to demonstrate productive service on University committees that benefit the Department and University. Productive service implies more than just regular attendance; faculty members being evaluated should provide evidence that their participation was valued and useful.

Professional Assessment – Senior faculty with tenure have a greater responsibility for the department and university and their activities in this category of evaluation should reflect that.

Activities in this category can include many things other than service on committees, both those which are departmental appointments and those elected University-wide. The list below is not meant to be exhaustive but illustrative of service activities the DEC considers valuable:

- Organizing major campus events
- Participating in panel discussion at campus forums
- Serving as advisors to student clubs, both in and outside the Department.

Mentoring:

At the time of hire of a new tenure-track faculty member, the Chair shall in consultation with the Department DEC, appoint one tenured member of the Department to serve as a mentor to the untenured faculty who wishes to be mentored. Depending on the expressed wishes of both the mentor and mentee, the mentoring may continue until the new faculty is tenured. Prospective mentors shall be selected based on their skills, experience, expertise, and interests that are expected to match as closely as possible, the interests, likes, preferences and strengths of the untenured faculty member.

The desired goals of the mentoring program are: to provide a positive atmosphere for the mentor and mentee to hold discussions and engage in activities that can lead to a successful career as a teacher and scholar and an opportunity for the untenured faculty member to secure inter-personal connection in informed and supportive career development.

It is the desire of the Department that the mentoring will help the untenured faculty acquire an awareness of the expectations for career advancement, develop rapport with at least one other faculty member and to gain a clear sense of the rigors and rewards of a professional career in Geography.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

Grant Activity

We encourage, but do not require, faculty to seek internal and external grant funding to support their professional activities. Internal grants and non-research external grants should be reported under this category.

Discipline Specific Organization Membership and Activity

In addition to our roles as teachers and scholars, we are all members of larger groups of geographers. Most of us relate closely to sub-groups within our discipline and we value professional activity within that sphere as much as with the general area of geography. We expect faculty members to maintain membership in professional associations, and to attend regional and national conferences regularly. We particularly value faculty who take on leadership roles within their professional organizations.

Professional development

For all areas in geography, continued education is critical. In some areas this will take the form of workshops and training activities but for others keeping current in the literature is sufficient for maintaining professional competence. We expect faculty members who participate in faculty development activities to report those activities and the value gained from them.

Consulting Activity

We recognize that faculty may choose to exercise their skills and professional judgment in consulting activities conducted either through or outside University auspices. So long as this activity contributes to the faculty member's professional activity and can be clearly related to teaching and research interests, the DEC considers it of value in this category of evaluation. If legal or proprietary factors make it impossible to release the product of consulting activity, we expect the faculty member to obtain a letter from the organization stating that the activity was of high professional quality.

Adopted by Geography Department D.E.C. Februar 19, 2009.