

Handbook on Tenure and Promotion for Library Services Faculty

**Prepared by
Office of the Provost
Delta State University**

Introduction

The award of promotion and/or tenure is an important milestone in the professional life of a faculty member. It gives affirmation to the accomplishments of the faculty member as well as financial remuneration (in the case of promotion). It is a setback to the faculty member and to the institution when the process produces a negative result.

This handbook is designed to provide advice to faculty on how to submit a successful portfolio in support of promotion and/or tenure. The intent is to give as much direction as possible to faculty regarding all steps in the process.

This handbook is maintained by the Office of the Provost and updated periodically as evaluation issues arise. Faculty are encouraged to ask questions and/or seek clarity as needed.

Eligibility and Timeline

With respect to tenure and promotion, there are two types of faculty at DSU – tenure-track and non tenure-track. Typically the designation is made at the time of hire. The majority of faculty are tenure-track and start their appointment at the level of assistant professor. Faculty hired as instructors are non tenure-track. Also, university administrators and staff who teach part-time and/or adjunct/part-time faculty are also considered non tenure-track.

Tenure-track faculty members are afforded continuing employment on an annual basis. Their termination prior to the completion of the tenure-track must occur in accordance with the notification guidelines outlined in the university tenure and promotion policies. At the beginning of the last year of the tenure period (six years for faculty hired in 2005-06 or after; seven years for faculty before that time) tenure-track faculty must be reviewed for tenure. A negative decision results in a terminal contract for the following year. Thereafter tenure-track faculty are designated as tenured and are provided continuing employment. They can only be terminated for reasons as outlined in Institution of Higher Learning (IHL) policies 403.0104 TENURED FACULTY DISMISSAL or as a result of post-tenure review. Those policies can be accessed on the IHL website (www.ihl.state.ms.us). A checklist of all dates associated with the tenure/promotion process is attached as Appendix A.

Non tenure-track faculty are employed on a year to year basis and have no guarantee of continuing employment. However, non tenure-track faculty have historically served an important instructional role at DSU and are protected to the extent possible.

Documentation

There are two key documents that are used by the faculty member to support a request for tenure and/or promotion – a portfolio and curriculum vita. To ensure that these two documents are current and comprehensive, it is crucial that they be maintained and updated on a regular basis. At the point of initial hire until appointment as full professor, tenure-track faculty are encouraged to maintain on file efforts and/or accomplishments that can be included in the portfolio. All faculty members are also encouraged to update their curriculum vita periodically.

Organization of the Portfolio

A portfolio submitted for promotion and/or tenure is reviewed by numerous colleagues. It is advantageous to the candidate that it be organized in such a manner that accomplishments are presented in a clear and organized fashion.

A three-ring notebook should be used to compile the documents to be included in the portfolio. Notebooks that have a plastic binding over the cover and include a place to insert documents in the inside cover are preferred. This allows the faculty candidate to place a title page on the outside cover using the plastic binding. The title page should provide information such as the following:

Portfolio for Jane Smith
Assistant Professor of Library Services

Promotion from
Assistant Professor to Associate Professor
and Tenure

2009-2010

Letters of recommendation from the Library Services Committee on Tenure and Promotion, and the Dean of Library Services should be inserted in the document holder in the notebook by the Dean of Library Services.

The first document in the notebook should be a letter from the candidate addressed to the tenure and promotion committee. The candidate is encouraged to give careful attention to the letter. It should begin by clarifying the request under consideration. Initial information should also include date of hire, years at DSU, years at another institution for which the candidate was given credit at the time of hire, and any other information that might be useful to readers trying to make judgments. Depending on the candidate, it may be helpful to also provide information on relevant experiences prior to DSU that give strength to the faculty member's candidacy. Examples might include experience at other libraries, in industry, K-12 schools, social services, research centers, and/or governmental agencies. The purpose of the initial part of the letter is to give the evaluators a sense of the cumulative experience of the candidates that contributes to their faculty expertise.

Beyond the introduction the letter should chronicle a sample of the accomplishments of the candidate in order of professional competency, scholarship, and service. The letter provides an opportunity for the faculty candidate to give context to the portfolio, with particular emphasis on outstanding accomplishments that may need illumination beyond the portfolio. Perhaps the candidate wants to make sure evaluators know he/she created or changed services offered by Library Services. Accomplishments that are difficult to include in a portfolio can be described in the letter.

The second document in the portfolio should be a current curriculum vita. Care should be taken to make sure the vita information is current and also consistent with information provided in the introductory letter and the documentation included in the remainder of the portfolio.

After the vita, there should be a section on accomplishments in professional competency, scholarship, and service (in that order). Each of these is discussed in some detail below.

Professional Competency

DSU considers itself a teaching institution. However, most Library Services faculty do not engage in teaching semester-length formal courses. The tenure and promotion policies state:

Thus, for Library Services faculty, professional competency is essential for tenure consideration. Effective Library Services faculty demonstrate qualities which may include, but are not limited to, the following: high academic standards, concern for learning, a thorough knowledge of the subject, excellent organizational skills, excellent communication skills, service ethic, respect for Library Services patrons, innovations in professional practice, and continuing professional development and education.

It is incumbent on the candidate to provide evidence of performance in professional competency that is consistent with the statement above.

There are several approaches a candidate can take. The best portfolio will encompass many, or perhaps, all of these.

The first efforts should be targeted toward any tangible evidence of professional competency. This can include things such as awards and recognition for professional excellence, citations from peers, and director evaluations of professional competency.

A second dimension of professional competency effectiveness is indirect measures. These may include, but are not limited to, creative professional competency methods, faculty development, and use of technology. Each of these is discussed below:

Creative Professional Competency Methods Faculty candidates should give special attention to innovative professional practice they use that deserve the attention of evaluators. Any unique professional competency approaches that enhance library services should be referenced in the portfolio and could include: instruction in accessing information and technology, collection development, access and control of information and equipment, leadership and supervision of personnel, and preservation and conservation activities.

Faculty Development Efforts by faculty members to strengthen their professional competency should be documented in portfolios. This would include on and off campus developmental efforts. The knowledge and skills base and the professional literature supporting that base are continually changing. The extent to which faculty candidates attempt to remain current should be noted. This should include attempts to (a) remain current in professional practice, and (b) improve skills associated with professional competency excellence.

Typical examples include attendance at professional conferences and workshops – any efforts external to the campus that relate to faculty development. Also important are campus efforts such as enrolling in courses, attending lectures, and taking workshops. Portfolios should include information on how these faculty development efforts, on or off campus, contribute to professional growth.

Use of Technology Faculty candidates who are aggressive users of technology in their professional practice are encouraged to document such efforts. This would also include, but is not limited to, curriculum changes such as development of on-line courses and and/or web-based instructional enhancements.

In terms of portfolio organization there should be a tab labeled “professional competency.” The first entry behind that tab should be an index of the information items that are provided in support of professional competency. The documentation in support of each item should go behind the index and labeled accordingly.

Scholarship

The DSU tenure and promotion policies include a statement specifying scholarly activity as a faculty expectation. Faculty cannot be successful candidates for tenure and/or promotion with an absence of scholarly activity. However, DSU is considered primarily a teaching institution. The question confronting faculty is how to balance the roles of professional practice and scholarship.

Expectations for scholarship vary by discipline. For example, art, music, and theatre faculty tend to engage in activities directly related to performance-based scholarship. For Library Services, however, the description of scholarship reflected in the tenure and promotion policies is applicable (as shown below).

Delta State University recognizes the important contributions that scholarship makes in the advancement of Library Services. Scholarly inquiry and learning in Library Services are reflected in, but not limited to, the following: dissemination of research and scholarly findings through books, journal articles, monographs, abstracts, reviews, indexes, and presentations at professional meetings, workshops, and training sessions; presentation of creative achievements through exhibitions, performances, and publications; development of new research methodologies, studies, and surveys; compilation of bibliographies, collection research guides, and pathfinders; identification and evaluation of scholarly resources that are appropriate for the educational mission; production of instructional multimedia materials; obtainment of grants and contracts which support scholarly and creative activity; achievement of honors and awards for significant scholarly and creative activity, and participation as an editor and/or referee in support of scholarly and creative publications.

At Delta State Library Services faculty observe a 12 month contract. As such the challenge for faculty is to find the time and resources to be active scholars. Scholarly pursuits vary by faculty members. The range runs from faculty who find time to write books to those who are searching for an answer to the question: “What must I do in the area of scholarship to be successful in the pursuit of tenure and promotion?”

There are numerous outlets for scholarly activity. Most disciplines have professional associations at the state, regional, national, and international level. These same disciplines also have a multitude of journals. The first step is to establish familiarity with the outlets for scholarship in a particular discipline.

Knowing about available outlets is of little value unless faculty candidates have something to submit. Faculty should be steadfast in collecting data, doing literature reviews, and maintaining files relative to areas of scholarly interest. Preferably, faculty will maintain several interest areas so they can adapt their submissions to the call for papers or publications. Faculty should look for opportunities to acquire resources that will support research efforts. There are also funds available through the faculty research committee. Grants are another source. Often the primary limitation to establishing the data base to support a scholarly effort is time and money. Be aggressive in looking for funds to underwrite such costs. Faculty are also encouraged to collaborate in research and scholarly efforts with colleagues within and outside the institution.

To assist faculty in being successful with scholarship, the university requires two-year and four-year portfolio reviews (three-year and five-year for faculty hired before July 1, 2005) that require feedback from the departmental Tenure and Promotion Committee and the Dean of Library Services. Faculty should adapt their efforts in accordance with the recommendations provided in the reviews.

Regardless of how many reviews are in place, faculty candidates still want to know how much is enough. A review of portfolios in recent years indicates a wide range of scholarly activity among faculty candidates. A minimum threshold would be an average of one scholarly presentation for each year in the tenure track. The tenure-track for faculty hired in 2005-06 or after is six years.

In terms of portfolio organization, faculty should provide a tab labeled “scholarship” that comes after the professional competency documentation. The initial entry page under scholarship would be a listing of all scholarly entries being submitted. There would then be subsequent tabs for each piece of scholarship. There must be supporting evidence for all scholarly entries. Typical of such evidence would be copies of papers, summaries, conference abstracts, letter of approval, and/or copies of title pages.

Service

Like professional competency and scholarship, service is a required role for faculty applying for tenure and/or promotion. Library Services guidelines define service as shown below:

Delta State recognizes the importance of service as a part of its mission. The service component is based on performance in three areas: service to the faculty member’s profession, service to the University, and public service to the community which is related to the nature of the Library Services faculty member’s assignment. Efforts to advance accreditation-related initiatives, such as the Quality Enhancement Plan, shall be considered as service to the University.

Service is divided across several categories. Service to the library profession should be noted. This includes leadership and activity in professional groups that support the discipline of the faculty member. This includes activity at the local, state, regional, and/or national level. Service to the university should also be documented. Committee leadership and memberships, participation in initiatives designed to strengthen the university, and contributions to shared governance are examples that should be included. Any work activity that contributes to the continued vitality of the university is important.

A frequent question regarding service is what can be counted in the area of community service. The tenure and promotion policies speak only to community service tied to advancement of the candidate's discipline and/or the field of education within the community or region. Candidates choose what to include, but should demonstrate a link with their faculty role.

In terms of portfolio organization, faculty should provide a tab labeled "service" that comes after the scholarship documentation. Depending on what is included, faculty have the discretion as to how to organize it.

Things to Avoid

The portfolio is not a scrapbook. Avoid newspaper articles and/or thank you letters from students and colleagues. The exception might be a newspaper article that is used to document success in professional competency, scholarship and/or service.

Do not overwhelm the reader with documents. Samples that are clearly marked to provide evidence of certain goals and/or accomplishments are preferable.

Do not include letters of support. As stated earlier, the letters of recommendation from the library's tenure and promotion committee and Dean of Library Services will be inserted inside the front cover of the portfolio. This is sufficient.

Other Suggestions

When faculty fail to receive tenure and/or promotion, everyone loses. Certainly the faculty candidate experiences a serious setback in his/her professional career. The university also loses an asset for which it has invested significant resources. Moreover, colleagues, families, and the community are affected adversely. It is crucial that as much care as possible be taken to ensure success.

Departments and deans should exercise particular care when faculty are hired. The proper discussion regarding expectations between the university and the candidate must occur. References must be contacted. Doing a thorough job of hiring is the first step in the process.

Faculty candidates also undergo two major portfolio reviews. These must be taken seriously by all involved. Both reviews should provide a comprehensive listing of recommendations for areas of improvement. Moreover, there should be an analysis of the progress made from the first review to the second. Faculty candidates who are non-responsive to the plan of action in the portfolio reviews should be non-renewed after year four (after year five for faculty hired before July 1, 2005).

The Academic Council has asked departments to identify senior faculty who can serve as mentors to junior faculty. These mentorships are an important means of support as junior faculty navigate the tenure track and should be utilized. The Dean and Assistant Director of Library Services should also monitor the performance of faculty on an ongoing basis. Junior faculty should be afforded written communication on a regular basis on areas of concern.

It falls to the department to provide the kind of support needed for junior colleagues to have a clear understanding of what is required to be successful in attaining promotion and tenure. It also falls to the departmental tenure and promotion committee and Dean to have the courage to deny tenure and promotion when faculty candidates, in spite of being informed of contrary areas of concern, fail to meet the expectations associated with that professional recognition. Peer review is crucial to the success of tenure and promotion.

Summary

Attaining tenure and promotion is an important milestone in the professional life of a faculty member. The university must ensure that an adequate support structure is in place to help faculty be successful. The faculty candidate must commit to a level of professional competence, growth, and development that merits the award. When both are in place, the goal of a successful system that produces faculty functioning at high levels of performance in professional competency, scholarship, and service is met.

Appendix A

TENURE/PROMOTION DEADLINES FOR LIBRARY SERVICES

___ SEPTEMBER 1 – Tenure-track faculty with two or more years of service must be notified of non-renewal.

___ OCTOBER 1 – Dean of Library Services notifies eligible tenure candidates in writing.

___ NOVEMBER 1 - Dean of Library Services and representatives of department/division tenure/promotion committee meet with tenure/promotion candidates regarding portfolio preparation and submission.

___ DECEMBER 1 - Tenure/promotion candidates submit portfolio to chair of department/division tenure/promotion committee.

___ DECEMBER 1 – Chair of department/division tenure/promotion committee forwards a list of tenure and promotion candidates for their department/division to Dean of Library Services, university tenure and promotion committee chair, and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

___ DECEMBER 1 – Tenure-track faculty in their second year of service must be notified of non-renewal.

___ FEBRUARY 1 - Department/division tenure/promotion committee submits a written tenure/promotion recommendation for each candidate and forwards it along with the portfolio to the Dean of Library Services with a copy of the written recommendation to the candidate. For assistant professor candidates being nominated for tenure there should be a clear indication as to whether promotion is also being requested.

___ FEBRUARY 1 – Tenure-track faculty members in their third and fifth year of service (second and fourth year for faculty hired in 2005-06 or after) engage in pre-tenure review by submitting their portfolio to the dean and department/division tenure and promotion committee. The committee and dean review the portfolio and a copy of their reports outlining recommendations remains on file in the dean's office.

___ FEBRUARY 15 - Dean of Library Services prepares a written recommendation of each candidate and forwards a copy of the recommendation to the candidate.

___ MARCH 1 - Dean of Library Services submits a written recommendation of each candidate accompanied by the recommendation of the department/division tenure and promotion committee to the Provost. If the Dean of Library Services' recommendation is in disagreement with the recommendation of the department/division tenure committee, the Dean of Library Services is responsible for scheduling a meeting with the committee to provide an explanation prior to his/her submission to the Provost. Dean of Library Services also submits copies of all correspondence outlined above to the chair of the university tenure and promotion committee. The copies serve as documentation that policies were followed.

- ___ MARCH 1 – Tenure-track faculty in their first year of service must be notified of non-renewal.
- ___ MARCH (no later than third Monday) – Following distribution of appropriate application materials to each member of the University tenure and promotion committee for review, the committee meets to discuss the tenure/promotion documents for policy compliance. If necessary, the university tenure and promotion committee chair meets with Dean of Library Services to seek resolution of any policy compliance issues. The university tenure and promotion committee chair submits a letter to the provost indicating the approval by the committee of applications with no compliance issues and deferral of applications the committee determines not to comply with all policies and procedures.
- ___ MARCH 15 - Pre-tenure and pre-promotion review recommendations are on file in the office of the Dean of Library Services.
- ___ APRIL 1 - After receiving clearance from the university tenure and promotion committee, the provost prepares tenure/promotion recommendations on candidates and forwards his/her tenure/promotion recommendations in writing, accompanied by the portfolio and the recommendations of the department/division tenure committee and Director of Library Services to the President. Any unresolved policy compliance problems identified by the university tenure and promotion committee are also to be cited by provost in writing to President. Copy of the Provost’s recommendation is sent to the respective candidate, department/division tenure committee, and Director of Library Services.
- ___ APRIL 15 –Provost notifies candidates who are not recommended for tenure/promotion in writing.
- ___ MAY 1-Candidates not recommended for tenure/promotion that wish to appeal must refer the case in writing to the university tenure and promotions appeals committee. The committee hears the case within fifteen days and submits a recommendation to the President who makes a final decision within seven days. Faculty candidates for tenure who wish to appeal the final decision of the President to the IHL Board of Trustees have thirty days to do so effective from the date of notification by the President.
- ___ MAY – (IHL Board May meeting) President submits tenure recommendations to IHL.
- ___ MAY 1 – Improvements plans developed by the director in consultation with the departmental tenure and promotion committee are on file in dean’s office for faculty members demonstrating minimal progress in pre-tenure review.
- ___ JUNE 1 – Assuming approval by IHL, candidates are notified in writing by the President of tenure award.

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