

# **HANDBOOK ON TENURE AND PROMOTION**

**Prepared by  
the Office of Academic Affairs  
Delta State University**

## Introduction

The award of 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 the application for tenure and possibly, simultaneous promotion. The intent is to give as much direction as possible to faculty regarding all steps in the process.

This handbook is maintained and updated by the Office of Academic Affairs. Faculty are encouraged to ask questions and/or seek clarity as needed.

## Eligibility and Timeline

With respect to tenure, there are two types of faculty at DSU – tenure-track and non tenure-track. Typically, the designation is made at the time of hire. Normally, faculty are appointed to the tenure-track at the time of their initial appointment in the university. Tenure-track appointments may be at the level of assistant professor, associate professor, or professor. It is incumbent on every faculty member seeking tenure or with tenure seeking promotion to the next higher rank to demonstrate a sustained high level of successful activity in teaching, scholarship, and service commensurate with the increased level of rank.

The termination of tenure-track faculty members, prior to the award of tenure, must occur in accordance with the notification guidelines outlined in the university tenure and promotion policies. In the last year of the tenure period, tenure-track faculty must be reviewed for tenure. 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. In the last year of the tenure period, tenure-track faculty must be reviewed for tenure. A negative decision results in a terminal contract for the following year. Following the award of tenure, faculty members are designated as tenured and 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](http://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. Faculty hired as instructors, adjunct or part-time faculty are non tenure-track. University administrators who do not hold tenure track positions and staff who teach part-time or as adjuncts are non tenure-track and are not eligible for promotion in faculty rank.

## 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 vitae (CV). To ensure that these two documents are current and comprehensive, it is crucial that they be maintained and updated on a regular basis. Throughout employment, all faculty members shall maintain a current CV; faculty are encouraged to maintain on file efforts and/or accomplishments that can be included in the portfolio. To assist faculty in being successful with the portfolio, the university

requires biennial portfolio reviews that require feedback from the departmental Tenure and Promotion Committee, the department chair, and the dean. Faculty should adapt their efforts in accordance with the recommendations provided in the reviews. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the faculty to demonstrate that he/she has met or exceeded the criteria for promotion and tenure.

### 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 presented in such a manner that accomplishments are evident in a clear and organized fashion.

All new faculty members as of August 2018 are required to submit an e-portfolio for their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year reviews and tenure and promotion applications. All faculty are encouraged to begin using an e-portfolio at their earliest convenience for pre-tenure reviews and Promotion or Tenure applications. All faculty are required to submit an e-portfolio for their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year reviews and tenure and promotion applications beginning fall 2020.

Microsoft OneNote is the program of choice for e-portfolios. All faculty have access to this program. The Ford Center for Teaching and Learning will provide training for faculty to develop their portfolio and a template is provided that faculty must use to organize their materials.

#### Portfolio content

1. The title page, providing information such as the following:

Portfolio for Jane Smith  
Assistant Professor of  
Chemistry  
  
Promotion from  
Assistant Professor to Associate  
Professor and Tenure  
or  
submitted for  
Two-year/Four-year Pre-tenure review  
  
2018 - 2019

2. Letter of candidacy notification to department/division committee chair (promotion) and letter of eligibility notification from department/division chair (tenure).
3. Letters of recommendation from the departmental committee, the chair, and the dean inserted in the document holder in the notebook by the dean.
4. A letter from the candidate addressed to the tenure and promotion committee. The purpose of the initial part of the letter is to give the evaluators a sense of the cumulative experience of the candidate that contributes to the faculty's expertise. The letter is to address each of the following:

- a. A statement of the requested personnel action
  - b. Information regarding current appointment, 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.
  - c. Other relevant experiences prior to DSU that give strength to the faculty member's candidacy. Examples might include experience 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 candidate that contributes to the faculty's expertise, chronicle the accomplishments of the candidate of teaching, scholarship, and service, in that order. 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 revamped the curriculum for an entire program or instituted an undergraduate research component to a program.
5. A current curriculum vitae (CV). Care should be taken to ensure that the CV information is current and consistent with the information provided in the introductory letter and the documentation included in the remainder of the portfolio.
  6. A copy of the annual review document including the departmental/division chair's comments and rankings for each year of employment at DSU or since the candidate's last promotion.
  7. A copy of the 2-year and 4-year pre-tenure/promotion review and the candidate's narrative detailing steps taken to address recommendations for improvement cited in the reviews.
  8. A section detailing accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, and service (in that order).
  9. When applying for professor, include only material beyond the portfolio submitted for promotion to association professor.

### **Teaching**

DSU considers itself a teaching institution. The tenure and promotion policies state:

*Delta State University is primarily a teaching institution. Therefore, effective teaching and efforts to support an environment where teaching and learning are nurtured are considered essential requirements for tenure consideration.*

It is incumbent on the candidate to provide evidence of teaching effectiveness and competence in the classroom and other settings where instruction and supervision of student practice occurs.

Advising, mentoring, and the supervision of student projects, research, and fieldwork are all components of this.

In terms of portfolio organization there should be a section labeled “Teaching.” The first entry in that section should be an index of the information provided in support of teaching. The documentation should address:

#### Teaching Index

- (a) Philosophy of Teaching and Learning
  - (b) Include all Course Teaching Evaluations since the candidate’s hire or since the last promotion. Provide an analysis of the evaluations and discuss changes or improvements you have made as a result of the analysis.
  - (c) A sampling of Course Syllabi
  - (d) Description of Advisement Assignments and Responsibilities
- In addition, this section may include:
- (a) Awards, Citations, and Special Recognitions
  - (e) Other measures of teaching and learning outcome measures
  - (f) Responsive Syllabi
  - (g) Creative Teaching Methods
  - (h) Professional Development
  - (i) Use of Technology
  - (j) Testing & Feedback
  - (k) Instructional Support Programs
  - (l) Student Initiative and/or Success after Graduation

#### *Direct Measures:*

Philosophy of Teaching and Learning. The teaching section should begin with a well-stated philosophy of teaching and learning. The teaching philosophy serves to introduce you as a teacher to your colleagues and articulates your beliefs about student learning and your approach to teaching.

Analysis of Course Evaluations. Provide copies of all course evaluations since your date of hire or since your last promotion. Include your analysis and reflection of the results and describe any changes or improvements you have made as a result of student feedback. This section may include citations from peers; and chair/dean evaluations of teaching. The intent is to document the improvements you have made in teaching and your effectiveness in the classroom.

Awards, Citations, and Recognition for Teaching Excellence. Acknowledgement by the University, professional organizations and other venues outside the university, of exceptional achievement as a teacher.

#### *Indirect Measures:*

Measures of Outcomes, including student learning outcomes and program outcomes. Summative information about student performance, both individualized and aggregated, may be helpful in presenting a picture of you as a successful teacher with a particular instructional model or pedagogy. Program improvements that are a result of your teaching can be useful in documenting the broader impact of your contributions.

Responsive Syllabi. The course syllabus can be used in support of teaching effectiveness. It is most useful when the faculty candidate provides evidence that syllabi for his/her classes are responsive to changes in the discipline and/or student feedback. Samples of how course

syllabi have changed in response to the growth of the faculty member strengthen a portfolio. Faculty who wish to do so may also want to use syllabi to give attention to academic rigor in their courses. For example, class assignments that place significant emphasis on reading and writing reflect the commitment of the faculty member to do the work necessary to attend to these important student skills.

Testing & Feedback. Student evaluation and instructor feedback are an important part of student learning. They are strengthened when faculty are effective in test construction, particularly testing that forces students to practice higher order thinking skills. Instructor feedback in the form of written comments and corrections are essential methods for helping students understand subject matter, and improve performance. Feedback from test results can also be a learning tool for students. Faculty candidates should document unique and effective ways they use classroom testing and feedback to students to strengthen student learning.

Creative Teaching Methods. Faculty candidates should give special attention to unique teaching methods they use that deserve the attention of evaluators. There are a variety of such approaches described in the literature on pedagogy. Any unique teaching approaches that enhance student learning and better engage students should be referenced in the portfolio. For example, the incorporation of service learning and/or civic/community engagement initiatives should be referenced and explained. These efforts allow students the opportunity to see the connection between learning outcomes and their role as good citizens. Faculty who incorporate field-based experiences and/or significant use of “hands-on” experiences should document such efforts.

Professional Development. Efforts by faculty members to strengthen their teaching 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 the teaching discipline, and (b) improve skills associated with good teaching. 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 your evaluation of how these faculty development efforts, on- or off-campus, contribute to professional growth.

Use of Technology. Use of technology in teaching may be documented. This would include, but is not limited to, curriculum changes such as development of on-line courses and/or web-based instructional enhancements.

Instructional Support Programs. Faculty candidates who implement supplemental programs for students outside of class should acknowledge such efforts in their portfolios. Efforts that promote and successfully support student engagement demonstrate your commitment to the facilitation of learning.

Advising Students - A part of the faculty candidate's assigned duties may be advising students in discipline specific academic area and/or serving as the university assigned faculty liaison to a recognized student organization. In this role, the faculty candidate may work with students who are majoring in or considering majoring in the discipline in which the candidate teaches. However, in some instances, the students are not in the discipline.

Student Initiative and/or Success after Graduation. Effective teaching leads to student success beyond graduation. Stories of such success should be noted in portfolios. Included might be alumni who have achieved success in a career field and/or graduate/professional studies.

## **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 without evidence of scholarly activity. In terms of portfolio organization, faculty should provide a tab labeled “Scholarship” that follows the Teaching section. The initial entry page under scholarship would be a listing of all scholarly entries being submitted. Subsequently, there would then be a tab for each related item of scholarship that is included in the document. Copies of the manuscripts, papers, conference proceedings, abstracts, and letters of acceptance for in press manuscripts must be included. In those instances where there is more than an average of one published manuscript per year for the years since the initial appointment or the last promotion or award of tenure, the applicant may select a representative sample of manuscripts for inclusion (not less than an average of one per year).

Expectations for scholarship and performance based creative activity vary by discipline; 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 a profession or discipline and as an important component of the teaching/learning process. Scholarly inquiry and learning vary by discipline and are reflected in, but are not limited to, the following: dissemination of research and scholarly findings through books, journal articles, monographs, and presentations at professional meetings; presentation of creative achievements through exhibitions, performances, and publications; development of new research methodologies; and grants or contracts that support scholarly and creative activity.*

Producing knowledge and performance in professional/creative activities are essential aspects of faculty roles. While forms of scholarship vary across the University, some examples of scholarship include engagement in writing and publishing in peer reviewed venues, procurement of external funds for research and professional activities, and documented creative activities that have professional impact. Honors and awards for significant scholarly and creative activity may also be submitted to enhance your record of scholarship. In addition, you should clearly identify those scholarly or creative activities that are peer reviewed. Although the minimum acceptable threshold would be an average of one scholarly accomplishment in a state, regional, national, or international venue for each year since the initial appointment in a tenure track position or the last promotion, this minimum does not automatically indicate that the scholarship expectation has been met.

## **Service**

Like teaching and scholarship, service is a required role for faculty applying for tenure and/or promotion. The university 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 academic profession, service to the University, and public service to the community that is related to the faculty member's academic discipline. Efforts to advance accreditation-related initiatives, such as the Quality Enhancement Plan, shall be considered as service to the University.*

In terms of portfolio organization, faculty should provide a tab labeled "Service" that follows the scholarship documentation. Depending on what is included, faculty have the discretion as to how to organize it. Service is possible in various categories.

Service to the discipline. This service includes leadership and activity in professional groups that support the discipline of the faculty member. Such service includes activity at the local, state, regional, national and/or international level. Service to the education profession should be included here. This might include service in professional organizations whose mission is targeted toward such areas as improvement of teaching and learning, or the advancement of education, or participation as an editor and/or referee in support of scholarly or creative publication.

Service to the university. Committee leadership and memberships, participation in initiatives designed to strengthen the university, and contributions to shared governance are examples that should be included. Any service 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 regarding community service but should demonstrate a link with their faculty role.

### 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 teaching, scholarship, and/or service.

Do not overwhelm the reader with documents on teaching. Instead, use representative examples to demonstrate achievements.

Do not underwhelm the reader with a lack of context. For example, simply including course syllabi for all classes taught, or every test administered, fails to illustrate effective teaching. Samples that are clearly marked to provide evidence of certain goals and/or accomplishments are recommended.

Do not include letters of support. Letters of recommendation from the departmental committee, the chair, and dean are added to the ePortfolio by the dates outlined in Appendix B.

Do not include institutional grants such as the Deans Faculty Research Award, Kent and Janice Wyatt Professional Development Award, the Dulce Fund, the Bryce Griffis Fund, or any other internal funding awards.



## Appendix A

### PRE-TENURE AND PRE-PROMOTION CHECK LIST FOR DEANS AND DEPARTMENT/DIVISION CHAIRS

- \_\_\_\_OCTOBER 1 – The college/school dean will notify in writing with copy to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs a faculty who is in the first year of an appointment who received years of credit toward tenure or promotion at the time of hiring stating if and when a pre-tenure and/or pre-promotion portfolio is to be submitted.
- \_\_\_\_OCTOBER 1 – Department/division chairs shall notify faculty in writing of their responsibility to submit a portfolio during that academic year for pre-tenure and pre-promotion review.
- \_\_\_\_FEBRUARY 1 – Pre-tenure and pre-promotion candidates submit portfolio to chair of department/division (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year reviews).
- \_\_\_\_FEBRUARY 4 – The department/division chair forwards each candidate’s portfolio to the chair of the department/division tenure/promotion committee.
- \_\_\_\_MARCH 1 – Pre-tenure and pre-promotion candidate’s portfolio, along with the written recommendations from the department/division tenure and promotion committee, shall be submitted by the committee to the department/division chair.
- \_\_\_\_MARCH 15 – Pre-tenure and pre-promotion candidate’s portfolio, along with the written recommendations from the department/division chair and from the department/division tenure and promotion committee, shall be submitted by the chair to the dean.
- \_\_\_\_APRIL 7 – Pre-tenure and pre-promotion candidate’s portfolio, along with the written recommendations from the dean, the department/division chair, and the department/division tenure and promotion committee, shall be returned by the dean to the candidate. Copies of all recommendations shall be filed in the department/division chair’s office and in the dean’s office.
- \_\_\_\_MAY 1 – Pre-tenure and pre-promotion candidate’s plan of action for improvement (if necessary) is placed on file in the college/school dean’s office by the department/division chair.

## Appendix B

### TENURE/PROMOTION CHECK LIST FOR DEANS AND DEPARTMENT/DIVISION CHAIRS

- \_\_\_\_ SEPTEMBER 1 – Candidates eligible for promotion request consideration in writing to department/division tenure and promotion committee chair.
- \_\_\_\_ SEPTEMBER 1 – Department/division chair verifies eligibility of candidates for tenure and promotion according to records of hire-date (from department/division, dean, and/or Provost/VPAA) and any credit given toward tenure from previous work experience.
- \_\_\_\_ OCTOBER 1 – Department/division chair notifies eligible tenure/promotion candidates in writing. College or school dean notifies chairs of their eligibility. Copies of letters are sent to the chair of the department/division tenure/promotion committee, the dean, and the Provost/VPAA.
- \_\_\_\_ NOVEMBER 1 – Department/division chair 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.
- \_\_\_\_ DECEMBER 1 – The department/division chair forwards a list of tenure and/or promotion candidates to the chair of the university tenure/promotion committee, the college/school dean, and the provost/vice president for academic affairs.
- \_\_\_\_ DECEMBER 5 – The department/division chair forwards each candidate's portfolio to the chair of the department/division tenure/promotion committee.
- \_\_\_\_ JANUARY 20 – Department/division tenure/promotion committee submits a written tenure/promotion recommendation for each candidate and forwards it along with the portfolio to the department/division chair. There shall be a clear indication as to whether tenure and/or promotion is being requested. A copy of the department/division tenure and promotion committee's written recommendation is sent to the candidate.
- \_\_\_\_ FEBRUARY 1 – Department/division chair prepares a written recommendation for each candidate and forwards it along with the portfolio and the recommendation of the department/division tenure/promotion committee to the appropriate college or school dean. A copy of the department/division chair's written recommendation is sent to the candidate.
- \_\_\_\_ FEBRUARY 15 – Dean prepares a written recommendation for each candidate and forwards it along with the portfolio and the recommendation of the department/division tenure and promotion committee and the department/division chair to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) and to the chair of the University Tenure and Promotion Committee. If the dean's recommendation is in disagreement with the recommendation of

the department/division tenure committee, the dean is responsible for scheduling a meeting with the committee to provide an explanation prior to his/her submission to the Provost/VPAA. A copy of the dean's written recommendation is sent to the candidate.

\_\_\_\_ FEBRUARY 15 – MARCH 1 – Following distribution of appropriate application materials by the Office of Academic Affairs to each member of the University Tenure and Promotion Committee for review, the committee meets to review the letters for each candidate for tenure/promotion to verify policy compliance. If necessary, the University Tenure & Promotion Committee chair meets with college/school deans to seek resolution of any policy compliance issues. The University Tenure & Promotion Committee chair submits a letter to the Provost/VPAA verifying compliance and identifying applications that the committee determines have not complied with all policies and procedures.

\_\_\_\_ MARCH 15 – After receiving verification of policy compliance from the university tenure and promotion committee, the Provost/VPAA prepares written tenure/promotion recommendations for each candidate and forwards the recommendations, accompanied by the portfolio, the candidate's notification to department/division tenure/promotion committee (promotion), the department/division chair's notification of eligibility (tenure), and recommendations of the department/division tenure/promotion committee, department/division chair, and dean, 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 the President.

\_\_\_\_ APRIL 1 – Provost/VPAA notifies in writing candidates who are not recommended for tenure/promotion by the President.

\_\_\_\_ APRIL 15 – Candidates not recommended for tenure/promotion who 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 and notifies the candidate of the decision in writing. 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 1 – Candidates are notified in writing by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs of promotion award.

\_\_\_\_ JUNE 1 – Upon approval by IHL, candidates are notified in writing by the President of tenure award.

## Appendix C

### NON-RENEWAL CHECK LIST FOR DEANS AND DEPARTMENT/DIVISION CHAIRS

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

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

\_\_\_ MARCH 1 – Tenure-track faculty in first year of service must be notified of non-renewal.

Dates corrected 1/14/2021  
Revised Academic Council 10/22/2020  
Revised Academic Council 1/10/2019  
Revised Academic Council 8/21/2018  
Revised Academic Council 11/14/2013  
Revised Academic Council 9/26/2013  
Revised Academic Council 5/9/2013  
Cabinet Approval 8-9-2010  
Revised Academic Council 7-30-2010  
Revised Academic Council 7/22/2008  
Academic Council 11/30/2006  
October 25, 2006