**DRAFT**

1 September 2016

TO: Department chairs

FROM: Michael Bernard-Donals, Vice Provost for Faculty and Staff

Steve Smith, Secretary of the Faculty

RE: Guidance on promotion to full professor

The promotion of a faculty member from associate professor to full professor is a significant milestone in one’s academic career, and is a sign that the person who holds this status is recognized by her or his peers as having achieved national and international recognition for her or his excellence in the scholar’s field. Unlike promotion from assistant professor to associate professor with tenure, the process for promotion to full varies – sometimes widely – from school to school, and from department to department. While some variation is entirely understandable, the lack of clear and consistent processes across the university – or even within schools and colleges – causes confusion among associate professors, and raises questions as to the “standard” for achieving the rank of full professor.

We ask that each department develop a clear process for the promotion of associate professors to the rank of full professor, using the guidance below by 1 January 2018.

What follows is meant to augment FP&P 5.21.d.2 and provide uniform guidance to departments and their respective schools and colleges on expected best practices in the process for the promotion of associate professors to the rank of full professor.

* Promotion from associate to full professor should be guided by a clear, written policy on the criteria and process for promotion. While the policy does not need to quantify – for example, how many single-authored books, how many R-01 grants, etc. – it should articulate what kind of scholarly work, teaching, and service/outreach “counts” and in what proportion.
  + Each dean’s office should decide if these policies will be created solely at the departmental level, if there will be a school/college policy that covers all departments, or if a general school/college policy will determine the parameters for specific departmental versions.
  + Copies of these policies should be sent to the appropriate dean’s office, the office of the Provost, and the office of the Secretary of the Faculty.
  + The decision on promotion from associate to full professor rests with a subset of the departmental executive committee comprising the department’s full professors (referred to in the remainder of this memo as the council of full professors). Exceptions to this must explain how conflicts of interest will be avoided.
  + Outside letters of evaluation will normally be required as part of the process of evaluating the work of associate professors requesting promotion. The executive committee should determine how many letters will be required, and how the referees will be selected. (In doing so, executive committees should balance departmental culture, disciplinary norms, best practice, and peer institutions’ practice.)
* Ideally the articulated standards in each department are consistent with the criteria for excellence held by peer institutions, and with disciplinary conventions.
  + Votes to promote should be based on the record of scholarly work, teaching, and service/outreach, and should not be taken for reasons of salary, status, or perceived inequity.
* All tenured associate professors’ scholarly, teaching, and service/outreach work should be evaluated **each year** by the chair, in consultation with the department’s council of full professors.
* Often, the first post-tenure review, undertaken and performed in the associate professor’s fifth year after promotion and tenure, is the “trigger” for a conversation with the department chair about the appropriate timing for promotion to full professor.
* Any associate professor can ask her or his chair to be considered for promotion to full professor at any time. The request for consideration for promotion should be followed by a conversation between the chair and the associate professor about the criteria for promotion, the associate professor’s record of achievement since promotion to associate professor, and the relative strengths of the case in the context of the department’s criteria for promotion.
* If, at the conclusion of the conversation, the chair and the associate professor agree that it is appropriate for the associate professor to be considered for promotion, the chair will appoint a small subcommittee of full professors – ideally in a scholarly area in or adjacent to the associate professor’s – to solicit outside letters, evaluate the scholarly, teaching, and service/outreach work, and to make a recommendation to the council of full professors. (In the event that the faculty member is working across disciplinary areas, or in hybrid fields, it may be worth considering the inclusion of a faculty member from outside the department in the subcommittee.)
  + Should there be a disagreement between the chair and the associate professor about the appropriateness of undergoing a promotion review, the council of full professors should make the ultimate decision.
* The associate professor will prepare a dossier of her or his work, including all publications, grant proposals, and other scholarship; evaluations of teaching from students and peers; and evidence of service (both at UW-Madison and to the profession more broadly), outreach, governance, and administrative work.
* The small subcommittee will prepare a written evaluation of the associate professor’s work, and submit it for consideration to the council of full professors so that the report – along with a selection of the work and the record of teaching and service/outreach – can be read before a vote is taken.
* The council of full professors will, after reading the report of the subcommittee and evaluating the associate professor’s work, vote on whether or not to promote. (The department’s policy should specify whether a 2/3 or simple majority is required for a positive vote, and should specify whether it is a majority of all full professor members or of those full professors of the EC present.)
* The council of full professors should deliberate on such promotion cases that have been brought before them by the associate professor being considered for promotion, the department chair, and the small subcommittee charged with evaluating the scholarly, teaching, and service/outreach work of the associate professor being considered for promotion.
* Once the vote has been taken, the chair should report the results of the vote to the associate professor, and – if the vote is positive – write a letter recommending promotion to the dean of the appropriate college or school. The dean will then follow the process for approval of promotion recommendations as outlined by school/college policies and procedures.
* In the event of a negative vote, the chair will meet with the faculty member to discuss how to create a stronger case for promotion at some later date.

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