

**POLICY ON TENURE AND PROMOTION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
Oklahoma State University

**I. Composition and Operation of Personnel Committee**

1. Establishment

The Personnel Committee is essential to the fair and reasonable conduct of departmental affairs. It creates a climate of representational democracy that is crucial to an academic environment, and provides a measure of protection for all parties involved in key decisions concerning faculty. (NOTE: All references to the department in this document include activities at OSU/Tulsa as well as the Stillwater campus.)

2. Composition & Representation

Although University policy requires a minimum of only three faculty members on the Personnel Committee, the Sociology Personnel Committee typically consists of five members. One representative will be elected from each of the ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor by a vote of the members of that rank. Two additional faculty members will be elected as at-large representatives from among the tenured faculty. All tenure and tenure-track faculty members will participate in the election of at-large committee members. Members of the Personnel Committee serve for a term of two years. At least two of the members are elected each year to provide continuity through staggered terms of office.

Election of members to the Personnel Committee will occur by mid-April and the new committee will take effect on May 1. Members of the Personnel Committee will select a Chair from among themselves.

Faculty members on the Personnel Committee who participate in voting on the reappointment, promotion, or tenure of a fellow faculty member must be at the same level as, or above, that being sought by the candidate. Individuals who are family members of the faculty member seeking reappointment, promotion or tenure are not eligible to participate in voting regarding the reappointment, promotion, or tenure case of the related faculty member.

Faculty members who are themselves under consideration for promotion are not eligible to participate on the Personnel Committee in any activity regarding their own promotion, nor are they eligible to participate in the evaluation or voting on the reappointment, promotion or tenure of any other faculty member during that same year. Under circumstances requiring that faculty member elected to the Personnel Committee must be replaced because she/he is seeking promotion or because she/he is a family member of a faculty member seeking promotion, the elected faculty member will be replaced for tenure and promotion deliberations by a member of the faculty of the same rank through a vote of the appropriate faculty members. If a faculty member declines to serve as the representative of a rank that has only one member, an at-large member will replace that position for that term. Under

circumstances where five Sociology faculty members of appropriate rank are not available to serve on the Personnel Committee for reviewing faculty for tenure and/or promotion, as few as three faculty from the Department of Sociology or, when necessary, a related discipline, will suffice. When a sufficient number of voting faculty members in Sociology is not available, the department head, in consultation with the eligible faculty members, will solicit faculty from similar departments or disciplines at OSU to assist the committee with both the review and recommendation.

### 3. Action

The Personnel Committee will initiate and process requests for reappointment, promotion and tenure as they come from individual faculty members, from the committee itself, or from the Department Head. It shall act on these matters within the framework of established Departmental, College, and University policies. In the event that the unit administrator is a candidate for reappointment, promotion and/or tenure, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences will, in accordance with University policy, appoint a senior member of the faculty from the department to serve as the "acting" unit administrator for this purpose only. This person will perform all duties associated with the unit administrator in the reappointment, promotion and/or tenure process. The committee process is as follows:

- The Personnel committee shall request that candidates provide appropriate materials for review, which in cases of tenure and promotion will include the names of four or five potential external reviewers by mid-May. External review letters must be obtained from individuals with no direct professional or personal interest in the advancement of the candidate's career (e.g., they should not be former advisors or mentors, and generally should not be co-authors or co-investigators on previous work). Likewise, letters from former students are inappropriate for this purpose, although they may be useful for other purposes, such as indicators of teaching quality. (See Section V for more information about the selection of external reviewers.)
- All external review letters shall be included in the RPT packet.
- In cases of tenure and promotion, the Personnel Committee will select a minimum of three external reviewers using the candidate's list and their own list. At least one reviewer will be selected from the candidate's list. Appropriate materials will be sent to the reviewers by July 10 with a request that letters from the reviewers be received by October 1.
- Faculty members may opt to waive their right to see their external peer review letters. Notification will be given to reviewers as to whether or not the candidate in question has signed the waiver. The signed waiver shall be included with the candidate's materials that are sent to the external reviewers.
- Input shall also be solicited by the Chair of the Personnel committee from the department's eligible tenured faculty at least ten days in advance of the first meeting of the committee to consider the candidate's tenure and/or promotion file. The committee shall consider this input in their deliberations. This input shall not be placed in the candidate's file. A written summary of this information, however, must be provided by the Personnel committee in the committee's written recommendation to the Department Head.
- Candidates may opt to waive their right to see the internal faculty comments. Notification will be made available to department faculty (who are eligible voting faculty) as to whether or not the candidate in question has signed the waiver.

- The Chair of the Personnel Committee will maintain this input until the conclusion of the RPT process.
- The Personnel Committee will complete review of all reappointment, promotion and tenure materials for all candidates by mid-December.
- The Committee's letter of recommendation will be sent to the Department Head by early January.

*(Note: Exact dates are contingent on college deadlines and will be set by the Personnel Committee at the beginning of each academic year.)*

#### 4. Confidentiality

All discussions of the Personnel Committee shall be confidential.

#### 5. Notification of the Candidates

When departmental recommendations are completed, the Department Head will inform the candidates of the recommendations and convey to them copies of the letters that have been prepared by the Personnel Committee and by the Department Head.

#### 6. Meetings

The Chairperson of the Committee or a majority of the members of the committee shall call meetings of the Personnel Committee. A quorum shall consist of a majority members of the Committee.

## **II. Documentation Sent to the Dean's Office in Cases of Reappointment, Tenure, or Promotion**

The documents that shall be forwarded to the Dean's Office and subsequent levels of administration are those indicated by the official Oklahoma State University Reappointment, Promotion/Tenure Recommendations Form, "Development of the RPT Documentation File", and by OSU Policy & Procedures 2-0902. The A&S College also requires the following:

#### 1. Vita for the Individual

The vita shall describe in a professional manner the totality of accomplishments of the individual, as opposed to the individual's most recent contributions.

#### 2. Copy of a letter from the Personnel Committee to the Department Head concerning the Action

This letter is to state the majority view of the Committee and must include reasons for approving or denying the requested action. All solicited unit input (including a summary of the input provided by faculty not on the Personnel Committee outlined in Section I, subsection 3) will be addressed in the letter of the personnel committee, either by noting its receipt or referencing it in the rationale for the recommendation.

The numerical vote of the Committee on the recommendation must be stated. If the vote is not unanimous, the minority opinion will be stated within the letter. If more than one vote is taken, the numerical results of only the final vote will be recorded. The letter is to be signed by all voting members. The candidate has three working days from the receipt of this letter to respond in writing (maximum 1,000 words) to a majority negative recommendation from the committee. This response should be submitted to the unit administrator, and included in the documentation file for the candidate.

### 3. Letter from the Department Head to the Dean Concerning the Action

This letter is to set forth the Department Head's reasons for recommending or denying approval of the action in question. Where the position of the candidate is specialized, differing significantly from the normal assignments within the Department, this shall be detailed. A copy of the letter shall go to the Personnel Committee and the candidate.

### 4. External Review Letters

For candidates for promotion and/or tenure, at least three letters from external reviewers shall be included in the documentation file. Letters are not required for reappointment. The personnel committee and administrator should utilize these peer review letters when they formulate their decisions. All solicited letters received from external reviewers must be included in the documentation file and will be used by the Personnel committee, department Head, Deans and other OSU Administrators for personnel decisions. The candidate's signed document indicating whether he/she has waived the right to access external review letters must also be included in the documentation file.

### 5. Solicitation of Input from Sociology Faculty

Sociology department faculty written input shall be solicited by the Chair of the Personnel committee from the tenured faculty at least ten days in advance of the first meeting of the committee to consider the candidate's file. The committee shall consider this input in their deliberations. This input shall not be placed in the candidate's file. The candidate's signed document indicating whether he/she has waived the right to access internal faculty input must also be included in the documentation file.

### 6. Supporting Evidence

Appraisal and development (A&D) documents through the fall semester immediately preceding the reappointment or promotion recommendation shall be considered. A limited amount of the evidence in support of the reasons given in (2) and (3) above may accompany these documents, including summaries of University teaching evaluations, representative research and publication, letters from former students, published reviews of the candidate's work, and internal peer review letters. A copy of the department criteria shall be included with the supporting evidence.

Candidates for reappointment or tenure shall include all A&Ds since their initial

appointment to OSU. Candidates for promotion only shall include the past five year's A&Ds.

### **III. Levels of Achievement for Tenure, Promotion, and Regents Professor Appointments**

#### 1. The Concept of Tenure

The Policy Statement to Govern Appointments, Tenure, Promotions, and Related Matters of the Faculty of Oklahoma State University (hereinafter referred to as "The Policy Statement") states "Tenure is a continuous appointment granted following evaluation by the faculty member's academic department, review by appropriate administrators, and approval by the Board of Regents." Tenure may be revoked only for the reasons specified in The Policy Statement and according to the procedures articulated there. This means that the granting of tenure is an extremely serious commitment of the University and shall not be recommended by the Department unless it is confident that the department would surely benefit if the candidate were to spend his or her remaining career at Oklahoma State University.

#### 2. The Concept of Promotion

Promotion is the changing of a faculty member's academic title to that of a higher rank. Promotion shall be granted only when it is judged that a candidate is already performing at the quality level of the next higher rank.

#### 3. Guiding Principle

Every candidate for promotion and/or tenure must demonstrate commitment to the three mission areas of the University; teaching, research/scholarship, and extension/service/outreach. The Policy Statement states that "Tenure is a major undertaking and shall not be granted unless the faculty member has demonstrated by consistent performance that the academic department will benefit from making a career-long commitment to the faculty member." Job assignments must be consistent with the promotion and/or tenure criteria of the Sociology department. Exceptions to these guidelines must be approved by the Dean.

#### 4. Reappointment as Assistant Professor

Criteria for reappointment to the Assistant Professor level shall include those that require quality performance. The candidate will be evaluated in the areas of teaching, research/scholarship, and extension/service/outreach; however, satisfaction of such minimal expectations does not guarantee promotion or tenure. Teaching assessment will be based on the Department Head's annual reviews, student evaluations, and two peer reviews by tenured members of the department faculty, as described in Section IV, subsection 5.

Research/scholarship assessment will be based on publications at the time of review and an evaluation of the candidate's research trajectory in relation to the criteria for promotion and tenure described in Section IV, subsection 4.

Extension/service/outreach assessment will be based on continuing participation in

activities that will enable the candidate to meet the criteria for promotion and tenure outlined in Section IV, subsection 5. An Assistant Professor shall be reappointed only if he/she has the potential to be promoted at the second reappointment.

#### 5. Tenure and Promotion by Rank

- a. Associate Professor: Any person appointed or promoted to the rank of Associate Professor must hold the Ph.D. degree in Sociology or a closely related field. In addition, candidates must be already performing their duties of teaching, research/scholarship, and extension/service/outreach at the level expected of an Associate Professor. Candidates are expected to achieve excellence in research. A substantial portion of a candidate's publications should appear as refereed articles in recognized journals in sociology or closely related fields. Promotion to Associate Professor requires demonstrated excellence in teaching as well. Research and teaching are emphasized. Finally, the faculty member must show evidence of active involvement in departmental committees and activities, professional organizations, and to a limited degree in extension activity and college and university committees. Promotion to Associate Professor confers tenure.
- b. Professor: Any person appointed or promoted to the rank of Professor must hold the Ph.D. degree in Sociology or a closely related field. In addition, candidates must be already performing their duties of teaching, research/scholarship, and extension/service/outreach at the level expected of a Professor. The distinction between the level of achievement expected of an Associate Professor and a Professor is one of consistency of achievement over several years as well as quality and quantity in teaching, research/scholarship, and extension/service/outreach. Candidates who are promoted to Professor must meet their discipline's most rigorous criteria of excellence.

This promotion confers tenure if it is not already held. There must be evidence that this person has made a significant contribution in his or her area of expertise at a national and/or international level and that he or she has taken on a major role of leadership and service within the department, college, university, profession, and/or professionally related extension/outreach activities.

#### 6. Appointment and Reappointment as Regents Professor

The procedures contained in OSU Policy Statement 2-0905 shall be followed in awarding faculty with the rank 351 of Professor the title of Regents Professor.

### **IV. Assessment of Quality of Performance by Candidates for Tenure/Promotion**

1. Faculty members must have confidence that their work is evaluated fairly and according to professional standards. The Personnel Committee and Department Head shall each assess a faculty member's performance in the three mission areas of the University: teaching, research/scholarship, and extension/service/outreach. They shall base their evaluations on the department's guidelines for reappointment, promotion and tenure. In the case of split, interdisciplinary or joint appointments, the unit administrator of the home department must consult with the other administrators to whom the faculty member reports.

2. The annual appraisal and development (A&D) evaluation of faculty is an interim stage in the promotion and tenure process. These evaluations are the occasion to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the faculty. If any deficiencies are identified, faculty members have the responsibility to improve through the development process.
3. The performance appraisal shall be based solely on departmental standards applied in the context of the faculty member's workload assignment. This workload assignment, in turn, must be developed in advance (if at all possible) after consultation between the unit administrator, the administrators of any other units to whom the faculty member reports, and the faculty member. Within a department, there may be significant differences in the assignment of responsibilities to individual faculty members. A range in teaching, scholarship, and service responsibilities of individual faculty is allowed.
4. Review of Research/Scholarship. The College and Department expect that every candidate for tenure and promotion achieve excellence in the area of research and scholarship. A substantial portion of a candidate's publications shall appear as refereed articles in recognized journals in sociology or closely related fields. A candidate may further demonstrate excellence by having published books and book chapters, chapters in annual reviews, and other scholarly writing that are peer reviewed, published by recognized publishers, and make a contribution to the candidate's field of study.

The Personnel Committee and Department Head reserve the right to request supporting documentation regarding any publication by a candidate to ensure that an appropriate peer review process has occurred. In addition to these peer-reviewed writings, the Personnel Committee and Department Head will evaluate the following types of scholarship as part of the candidate's overall record: peer-reviewed grant proposals (funded and unfunded); research awards; papers presented at regional, national, and international conferences; textbooks; book reviews; technical reports; and non-peer reviewed publications. In addition to conducting its own independent evaluation of a candidate's scholarship, the department will undertake an external peer review.

5. Review of Teaching. The College and Department expect that every candidate for tenure and promotion be an effective teacher. The determination of effectiveness will be based on the types of evidence outlined below. The Department Head shall prepare annually an assessment of the quality of teaching by untenured faculty; in the case of split, interdisciplinary or joint appointment, the Department Head of the home department must also consult with the other administrators to whom the faculty member reports. This assessment shall be incorporated into the annual appraisal and development statement by the Department Head. Evidence of teaching effectiveness may include:
  - Course syllabi
  - Student evaluations (both Departmental & University) Annual reviews by Department Head for untenured faculty
  - For untenured faculty, peer review letters by two tenured faculty members, one selected by the Personnel Committee and one selected by the candidate during the year of the candidate's evaluation for reappointment or promotion and tenure
  - Involvement in teaching improvement activities (e.g., participation in teaching workshops, participation in assessment activities, presentations

on teaching related subjects, innovative approaches to teaching such as instructional technology)

- Teaching awards
- Graduate student mentoring (e.g., supervising graduate teaching assistants (if applicable), directing independent studies, supervising graduate student research, serving on thesis/dissertation committee.)
- Undergraduate student mentoring (e.g., providing independent studies, assisting clubs and organizations, providing professional direction for students)
- Publications related to teaching effectiveness
- Teaching-related peer reviewed grant proposals, both funded and unfunded

6. Every candidate for tenure should demonstrate some measure of service activity. Service is broadly defined to include committee, administrative, and other service within the Department, service to secondary units (in the case of interdisciplinary or joint appointments), service on College or University committees, service to professional Organizations, and outreach and extension activities. The Department Head should identify and evaluate specific service assignments in their annual appraisal and development statements; in the case of split, interdisciplinary or joint appointments, the unit administrator of the home department should consult with the other administrators to whom the faculty member reports.

The determination of extension/service/outreach contributions will be based on such activities as the following:

- Participation in Departmental, College, and University committees
  - University and College Extension-related activities
  - Participation in state, regional, national, and/or international professional organizations and activities
  - Profession-related public service activities
  - Consulting engaged in as part of one's university appointment
7. Candidates may place unsolicited materials in their files provided they are unedited and clearly marked as "unsolicited."
  8. Faculty in the Department of Sociology are expected to maintain standards of professionalism in accordance with the American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics, which outlines the following principles: professional competence; integrity; professional and scientific responsibility; respect for people's rights, dignity and diversity; and social responsibility (ASA Code of Ethics can be found at: <http://www.asanet.org/images/asa/docs/pdf/CodeofEthics.pdf>).
  9. Although not all Sociology faculty conduct research, teaching and/or outreach that necessitates extramural funding, to the extent that a faculty member pursues and obtains extramural funding, these accomplishments may be included in the faculty member's portfolio for promotion and/or tenure.
  10. Although not all Sociology faculty are expected to pursue community engagement and/or outreach as part of their faculty position, to the extent that a faculty member's work



engages communities or involves outreach, these accomplishments may be included in the faculty member's portfolio for promotion and/or tenure. Community engagement is understood to involve faculty collaborations with outside communities (local, regional/state, national, international) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. (Adapted from the Carnegie definition of Community Engagement.) "This scholarship which is in the areas of teaching, research, and/or service will intentionally engage faculty in academically relevant work that simultaneously meets OSU's mission and goals and community needs. This scholarly agenda contributes to the public good." (Adapted from the definition used by the National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement) Faculty involved or planning to be involved in community engagement are encouraged to speak with the Assistant Dean for Community Engagement in the A&S College Office.

11. For faculty with interdisciplinary or joint faculty appointments, the department in which faculty status and tenure reside will be the individual's home department. The home department will carry full budgetary responsibility for the salary and benefits of the appointment and be responsible for administering A&D evaluations and reappointment, promotion and tenure recommendations, though input will be solicited from the administrator of the secondary unit or interdisciplinary program. The offer letter issued for the position should delineate both the duties and responsibilities of the faculty member inside and outside of the home department with particular attention to teaching assignments, direction of research and administrative responsibilities outside of the normal duties expected of a faculty member in the home department. Modifications or special considerations of the home department's promotion and tenure criteria should be clearly indicated in the offer letter as should the responsibilities, rights and privileges accorded to the individual by the secondary department.

Steps should also be taken by the home department to ensure proper evaluation of work performed outside of the home department including, but not limited to the solicitation of written input from the administrator of the secondary unit or interdisciplinary program during the annual appraisal and development process. When evaluating the performance of faculty with interdisciplinary or joint appointments, the RPT Committee of the home department should include at least one voting representative from the secondary department or interdisciplinary program. The representative from the secondary department or interdisciplinary program must meet the criteria for voting in reappointment, promotion and tenure processes for ranked faculty set forth in the university RPT document (2-0902 509 Academic Affairs, April 2014).

## **V. Means of Obtaining External Peer Reviews**

The Sociology Department shall require external peer reviews in all cases of promotion and reappointment decisions that confer tenure in accordance with the following guidelines.

1. The candidate will provide the Personnel Committee with four or five names of potential external reviewers from which at least one will be selected. In addition, the Personnel Committee will provide and select the remaining reviewer names for a combined total of at least three reviewers. The reviewers, after agreeing to serve, will be provided with all relevant candidate information and instructions about how to perform the review.
2. The candidate may not contact potential reviewers herself/himself.

3. Notification in the form of a statement to the potential reviewer explaining whether the candidate in question has waived her/his right to access external review letter will be provided by the Personnel Committee to the potential reviewer.
4. Only the extent and quality of the candidate's scholarship and/or visibility in a specialized professional pursuit will be at question; all other items pertinent to promotion must be judged by internal standards, using local information.

## **VI. Means of Establishing Time in Rank and Prior Service**

### **1. Time in Rank**

Promotion to associate professor or reappointment as an assistant professor after seven years of probationary service as an assistant professor shall confer tenure (see the Policy Statement to Govern Appointments, Tenure, Promotions, and Related Matters of the Faculty of Oklahoma State University, contained in the University Faculty Handbook, Section 1.4.4). In general, a faculty member is promoted when the member's qualifications and scholarly record match the published criteria for the next rank, with time in rank a minor consideration.

### **2. Prior Service**

Ideally, new members should be hired at a level commensurate with their professional stature. However, certain new faculty members will have approached but not achieved the qualifications of a particular rank. Typically, at least two years in residence at OSU are required in addition to prior service as a tenure track faculty member in a similar university setting elsewhere. Such candidates then may be evaluated for reappointment, promotion and/or tenure based on their cumulative record of achievement. Credit for prior service must be agreed upon in writing (i.e., the offer letter) at the time of employment.

## **VII. Assessment of Academic Need as Criteria for Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure**

Consideration of a faculty member for reappointment, promotion, or tenure will be based solely upon the faculty member's professional performance, taking into account the faculty member's job description and applicable University, college, and departmental standards, criteria, and procedures. Departmental needs are determined prior to a faculty member's initial appointment and therefore are not a primary or decisive factor in subsequent decisions.

## **VIII. Goals and Objectives in Establishing Criteria for Tenure and Promotion**

As a Land Grant Institution, Oklahoma State University has identified three major missions of the University: teaching, research/scholarship, and extension/service/outreach. In most cases, it is necessary for each faculty member to participate effectively in all three of these missions. Prior to tenure, faculty members should give greater attention to the areas of research and teaching and less attention to extension/service/outreach. However, it is important that they be involved in the latter to some degree for it is through this mission that important networking is developed which might lead to successes in teaching and research as well. Once a faculty member is granted tenure and promoted to the rank of Associate

Professor, there is an expectation for greater involvement in extension/service/outreach. Each faculty member's position description should accurately reflect the range and levels of responsibility expected for teaching, research/scholarship, and service/outreach.

Approved by Faculty of the Department of Sociology, March 15, 2018.



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Sharon R. Bird, Department Head

5/22/2018

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Date

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Bret Danilowicz, Arts & Sciences Dean

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Date