

FSA Committee on Rank and Tenure Working Document

Preamble

The creation of the FSA committee on rank and tenure was the result of a motion approved at the June 2011 meeting of the FSA executive. The call for such a committee arose in response to the results of the FSA survey of faculty on the matter of rank. The executive recognized that a majority of faculty expressed interest in seeing the FSA explore the options available for a system of rank and tenure.

However, the executive realized that the implementation of such a system cannot be a function of the FSA alone. A system of rank and tenure requires the setting of scholarly and professional standards that do not fall under the purview of the FSA. In that regard, the executive anticipates that certain key aspects of the system must be determined by other bodies and committees within the university, including academic departments, faculty councils and Senate.

Hence, the committee operated with the assumption that its initial task was to produce a document that articulated the FSA's role in the implementation of a system of rank and tenure. To that end, the document now presented to membership indicates what the committee holds to be vital areas of concern from the perspective of a faculty and staff association charged with defending its members' workplace interests. Some of these concerns are reflected in the emphasis placed in the document on the need for clear and transparent procedures governing the evaluative phase of the promotion process. It is at the level where members are believed to be most vulnerable to problematic treatment.

Finally, the committee's hope is to use this document and the discussion it generates as a way of contributing to the formulation of proposals to be brought forward in the next round of collective bargaining.

Principles

The FSA committee on rank and tenure was guided by the following principles in its deliberations and in the drafting of the document submitted to membership.

In considering ranking processes and tenure systems, we acknowledge the importance of systems that reflect the traditional framework of academic institutions, but that are nevertheless consistent with our mandate, history, diversity and values.

Furthermore, one of the founding characteristics of the academy is the democracy of its systems of governance and its collegiality of decision-making. Any system of rank and tenure must reflect both the complex nature of academic work and the democratic nature of academic governance.

In our consideration of ranking processes and tenure systems, we will respect:

- the primary importance of teaching;
- the value of research and its relationship to teaching;
- the diversity of faculty research and scholarship;
- the significance and wide range of service as measures of excellence.

In light of these fundamental considerations, we hold that:

- Evaluation processes related to rank and promotion must be clearly and thoroughly detailed in advance of implementation.
- Evaluation must be used strictly for the purpose of promotion.
- Tenure must be an essential part of the Rank system; tenure conditions must be compatible with the current institutional approach to employment continuance.
- Rank and tenure recommendations must originate in a peer setting.
- Good faith bargaining depends on taking the workload concerns of faculty seriously and not jeopardizing improvements in workload in the pursuit of rank.
- The implementation of a policy on rank and tenure must be compatible with all related sections of the Collective Agreement and true to its general spirit.
- Any system of rank will accommodate faculty whose work is not primarily classroom-based.
- A transparent and independent appeal process must be bargained concurrently with the system of rank and promotion.
- Criteria for rank and or promotion should originate at the departmental level, and should reflect the values and expectations of the academic discipline in question.

In keeping with the principles guiding the FSA committee on rank and tenure, the development of a policy governing rank and promotion needs to facilitate promotion in a transparent and equitable fashion. To this end, there are four fundamental requirements that must be recognized in the process of implementing promotion criteria.

The requirements are as follows:

- 1) Promotion criteria must be implemented by UFV in a manner that is consistent with the requirements for tenure. Furthermore, the adoption of a formal tenure policy is to be compatible with long-standing assumptions and practices identified with academic freedom. For the FSA, a system of promotion utilizing academic rank is directly linked to a tenure policy to be articulated explicitly within the collective agreement.
- 2) Promotion criteria are to be put into action after the deployment of an initial grandparenting procedure. Moreover, grandparenting must be equitable and must treat all post-probationary faculty in the same manner.
- 3) Promotion criteria cannot result in a demand for increases in existing workload. The weighting of the factors that constitute conditions for advancement must be understood within the parameters for workload expectations stipulated within the collective agreement. The FSA will not negotiate a system of promotion that requires an increase in faculty workload. Furthermore, if adjustments in workload are to be made to accommodate the pursuit of promotion, the administration must ensure that those adjustments are made public, and pursuit of such adjustments is open to all interested applicants.
- 4) The development of promotion criteria must be compatible with the diversity of faculty at UFV. In this regard, it is essential that academic disciplines and professional divisions within the institution set the expectations for scholarly activity and research outcomes within their disciplines and fields. However, in

the end, the procedures and policies regarding promotion will be established by the collective agreement and will determine institution-wide practices.

Tenure

Tenure is to be recognized as the cornerstone of a system of promotion utilizing rank. Tenure provides faculty with the security necessary to pursue rank with confidence, in that tenure is predicated on the academic freedom essential for proper and productive teaching and scholarship. To this end, the implementation of rank is to be understood as complementary to a robust academic freedom policy and the enshrining of tenure in the collective agreement.

The method for granting tenure to current faculty at UFV is covered in this document in the section on grandparenting. For faculty hired after the introduction of a system of rank and tenure, the determination of a candidate's suitability for tenure will be the outcome of the tenure review process. At this moment, this process is defined as the IPEC process. The process that is to be used in the future shall follow a formal review of the IPEC process and may result in a changing of the standards used. Nevertheless, the resulting process will become the basis for tenure decisions in that faculty who complete the review successfully will receive tenure.

The probation process will commence when a faculty member is given a regular B contract position. At this stage, the new hire will be given the rank of assistant professor. The granting of tenure will follow the completion of the probationary review and the completion of the first three year review cycle. In whole, tenure should be bestowed on a candidate approximately five years after the date of the commencement of probation.¹ At the completion of this period, the successful candidate will be promoted to the rank of associate professor. Those who are unsuccessful in their request for tenure can utilize the appeal process as outlined in the appeal process section of this document.

Grandparenting

Grandparenting is a precondition for the implementation of a system of rank. Given that UFV, as an institution, has existed for over 30 years without a system of rank, its policies and procedures governing workload allocation and faculty performance have developed independent of rank. Currently, faculty progress up the pay scale based on seniority alone. The introduction of rank augments this practice by adding titles presumed to indicate differences based on assessments of merit. Grandparenting, in this context, is a good faith measure meant to ensure faculty hired prior to the introduction of rank do not have their status at the institution diminished by this significant change in institutional practice. Furthermore, since no merit-based distinctions predate the introduction of rank, there can be no such distinctions employed in grandparenting. Hence, all post-probationary faculty will receive the rank of associate professor when a system of rank is implemented. Faculty still considered probationary at the time grandparenting commences will receive the same title at the completion of the first full review cycle following their initial probationary period.

Implementing Rank

¹ Part of the negotiation of a system of rank and tenure should include the development of procedures for handling requests by applicants who may have undergone similar reviews elsewhere to have their tenure requests facilitated in a more accelerated fashion.

Systems of rank exist within universities as a means for identifying distinctions between faculty. A core presumption in such systems is that promotion through rank is predicated on the applicant's ability to present tangible evidence for why her or his advancement is warranted. In that regard, the applicant's chief task is to compile and submit the materials necessary to prove her or his case for promotion. To ensure that such applications are dealt with in a fair and timely fashion, application criteria need to be clear and consistent.

There are at least three separate phases evident in the establishing of a system of rank.

1) **Setting Criteria** – Advancement criteria are a function of standards set for academic success within the university. If we acknowledge that university faculty workload is associated primarily with teaching, scholarship/research and institutional service, then the standards for promotion must address these three areas. In that respect, the evaluation of an applicant's case for promotion turns on how these areas are weighted and what counts as appropriate demonstration of merit in these areas. For UFV, the weighting of these three areas must place the bulk of emphasis on teaching, or in the case of academic support faculty (formerly non-teaching faculty), emphasis is placed on what counts as the defining professional activity of the position in question. As for scholarship/research and service, the amount to which they are measured can be determined, in part, by the applicant, in keeping with the expectations set by the overall evaluation criteria for the institution.

The evaluation of an applicant's merit should be determined through a set of criteria approved in the following fashion:

a) The aspects of workload that are said to be primary should be gauged according to standards set by a discipline or field. The administration will oversee the gathering of information from each discipline or professional unit within the institution to provide the basic content of the standards to be employed. The intent is for standards to be formulated that capture a reasonable and reflective stance on how faculty should operate within the institution. The standards developed are to be compatible with national and international expectations, but not result in a substantial redefinition of existing responsibilities for faculty at UFV.

b) Since each department or professional unit is part of a larger division within an institution, there should be formal discussion of discipline and professional unit standards at the level of Faculty divisions, so as to ensure that discipline and professional unit approaches are commensurable. The result should be that the particularities of areas are preserved, but that equity of standards between disciplines or professional units is not sacrificed.

c) The final approval of standards falls under the domain of the Senate. Before this stage, consultation with the FSA is needed to ensure that equity and transparency in respect to the setting of standards is maintained.

d) Applications for promotion will be accepted upon completion of the implementation of the promotion process, which includes the formal establishment of the committees described in the following section.

2) **Promotion Committees and Promotion Recommendations** – The initial application for promotion should be considered by an area unit promotion committee (APC). One's area unit is one's academic discipline or professional unit.

Before an application is to be considered by the APC, the applicant must submit an official request for promotion to the head of this committee and to the relevant Faculty administrator, such as a Dean or Associate Dean. The applicant will then be instructed to submit an application portfolio to the APC. Once this committee has made its determination, the decision reached, a rationale for the decision, and the applicant's portfolio will be forwarded to the appropriate Faculty administrator, who will be charged with bringing the application forward to the University Promotion Committee (UPC). The UPC will have the option of confirming or rejecting the decision made by the APC. The UPC also will provide a rationale for its decision. If the applicant's request for promotion is deemed successful, the UPC will forward its findings to the President and Board for final approval. If the applicant's request is rejected by the UPC, the applicant will be informed of the finding and be provided with the rationales generated by the APC and the UPC. If the applicant's request is rejected by the President and the Board, then the President and Board will provide a rationale that will be given to the candidate. If a candidate is denied promotion at any stage in the evaluation process, that candidate will be informed of the appeal process, and be given the documents necessary for understanding and utilizing that process. The candidate as well will be advised that she or he is entitled to consult with FSA representatives for assistance in launching and pursuing an appeal.

The committee structure outlined in this document can work effectively only if committee members are given clear guidance in terms of the standards to be employed. It is anticipated that the implementation of a system of rank will bring with it policies regarding the operations of each committee. The formulation of these policies is seen at this point as an extension of the agreements intended to bring rank into place. The materials that form the basis of these policies will be garnered from the discipline and areas submissions that serve as the foundation for evaluation criteria.

3) Appeal Process – As part of the implementation of a system of rank, the university will establish a Rank Appeal Committee (RAP). Unsuccessful applicants for promotion have the right to appeal a rejection of promotion or tenure, irrespective of the level at which the application was rejected.

The applicant appealing the decision will provide a letter stating why she or he believes that the decision reached needs to be overturned. Once an appeal is launched, the RAP will commence to collect all materials relevant to the case, including the applicant's portfolio and the rationales generated by the APC, UPC and, if applicable, the President and the Board. No further submissions are to be required for the appeal to go forward, and no alterations can be made to the documents that are to be utilized in the appeal.

Upon review of the appeal, the RAP will issue a decision. The decision will be either the upholding or overturning of the decision that was appealed. If the appeal concerns the original denial of tenure, the applicant will face the termination of her or his position. If the decision results in the denial of promotion, the applicant will be considered eligible to reapply for promotion upon completion of the next review cycle, which will be a date no earlier than 3 years after the date of her or his original application for promotion. Failure to qualify for promotion will not count as a relevant factor in future determinations regarding promotion.

Salary and Workload

The creation of a system of rank is not tied to salary. At the time of the system's implementation, no one's salary will be increased or decreased as a result of judgments regarding promotion. In the future,

it may be argued that salary should be made commensurate to rank. If such a revision to the system is undertaken, then that amendment must be pursued through collective bargaining. The same conditions hold for the negotiating of permanent reductions in teaching load for instructional faculty or analogous alterations in the workload of academic support faculty (formerly non-teaching faculty) as an aspect of promotion.

Workload expectations are set by the collective agreement. The weighting of workload components is not to be based on changes to existing workload. If resources are made available that result in a different balance of teaching, scholarship/research and service, such that teaching load may be reduced, then access to those resources must be determined through fair and transparent procedures. Similar accommodations are to be made available for academic support faculty (formerly non-teaching faculty).

APPENDIX A – Evaluation

The determination of eligibility for promotion is a function of a demonstration of merit in respect to the defining elements of the applicant's position. Applicants seeking promotion need to present a case for promotion through a portfolio that addresses each aspect of their position. For teaching faculty, positions are recognized to include instruction, scholarship/research, and service. The legislative mandate of the institution as 'a teaching intensive' university entails that classroom instruction is the primary role of teaching faculty. Hence, teaching will be weighted heavier than the other factors in the evaluation process. For academic support faculty (formerly non-teaching faculty), the main emphasis will be on the aspect of the position in question that is considered analogous to teaching in its defining of the position. The actual weighting of the variables involved is to be set in the process of negotiating a system of rank. The FSA alone is not in a position to determine the percentages for weighting of each dimension of workload, since that is a decision that depends on the contribution of the administration. The FSA sees its primary function, in this respect, to be the negotiation of a clear and equitable set of guidelines and procedures governing the implementation of a system of rank.