Guidelines for Review of Overall Contributions of Tenured Faculty in Arts and Sciences

Background
The A&S Faculty Workload Committee, appointed by the Provost in AY2009-10, made a recommendation in May 2010 that the existing annual merit review process be augmented for tenured faculty by creating a process to improve and/or increase the contributions of tenured faculty who, over an extended period of time, are contributing below expectations for Brandeis tenured faculty. During the current academic year, this recommendation has been reviewed and discussed by the Faculty Senate, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and the department chairs. Based on these reviews and discussions, the Dean developed the following guidelines for implementing this recommendation.

Pursuant to the Faculty Handbook, tenured faculty are normally expected to contribute to the missions of the university in the three areas of teaching, scholarly and/or creative activity, and service. A&S Faculty are currently evaluated in these three areas by their department Chair and the Dean in the annual merit review. These reviews show that the vast majority of the faculty are working hard, and are productively balancing the demands of teaching, scholarship and university service. The minority whose contributions are judged to be below expectations are given small or zero merit raises, but no further action has typically been taken. Under this guideline, in cases where inadequate contributions have persisted, the Dean, in consultation with the department Chair, will seek to develop a plan to improve or increase the faculty member’s contributions over time.

In some cases faculty are, for various reasons, “stuck” in a professional rut in terms of scholarship, teaching, or both, but might welcome help in becoming “unstuck.” In such cases, initiation by the Dean and/or Chair of a discussion about how things might improve may be received positively. The conversation can focus on what the university could do to facilitate new productive activities, and establishing a plan for bringing about changes.

A second category of cases includes faculty who are good at teaching and/or service, but who are judged to be contributing below expectations in terms of scholarship, in a way that seems irreversible. In these cases, the Dean and/or department chair would initiate a discussion about how this successful teacher and colleague could augment his or her contributions in other areas in recognition of the absent scholarship. Such augmentation could come in many forms, including (but not limited to) teaching an additional course (either alone or in a team-teaching situation), advising more honors theses, taking on administrative responsibilities in either the department or the university administration, or teaching a section of the University Writing Seminar.

A third category includes faculty whose scholarship/creativity is adequate, but whose teaching does not meet Brandeis standards, either in terms of pedagogical method, freshness and depth of course syllabi for specific courses, or breadth of repertoire of different courses taught over several years. These are all deficiencies that can be remedied if the faculty member is given adequate guidance and resources, and is willing to improve. The Dean and/or Chair would have a discussion with the faculty member about the needed improvements, and develop a plan to remedy the deficiencies over a reasonable period of time. The plan could draw on multiple resources designed to assist in improving teaching, including
assistance from the Chair and other colleagues, workshops sponsored by the Dean’s office and the Committee for the Support of Teaching, and peer observation.

A final category contains faculty who are not active scholars, and are also poor teachers. On a case-by-case basis, the Dean and/or Chair would discuss with such faculty appropriate combinations of the measures discussed in the two previous paragraphs. In doing so, however, the best interests of the students and the university should always be paramount; faculty should not be assigned additional responsibilities in ways that are likely to harm our missions.

**Assessing scholarly/creative contributions**

An important aspect of this review is determining how the university should view the adequacy of faculty contributions in the area of “scholarly and/or creative activity” (Faculty Handbook, III.C.2.d). This section of the Handbook uses the word “publication,” which in context encompasses many forms of external validation of the faculty member’s scholarly and/or creative activity (including, for example, public performance or exhibition in the creative arts). But the key is that the faculty member is engaged in these scholarly and/or creative activities in a way that is somehow validated externally by the faculty member’s peers.

While disciplines vary in terms of the *form* of external validation considered most important (e.g. peer-reviewed articles, books in refereed series, juried artistic exhibitions), every discipline has some standard or standards for such validation. Faculty who are engaged in scholarly or creative activities, but who do not, over the appropriate time frame, seek and receive such external validation, cannot be judged to be fulfilling their responsibilities under Section III.C.2.d. By basing a judgment of below-expectations contribution in this area on observable external indicia of activity, it is possible for department Chairs and the Dean to make the judgment without undermining academic freedom.

**Procedural Details**

1. The responsibility for initiating the process described herein lies with the Dean, to be carried out in consultation with the department Chair. The Dean and the Chair will decide jointly whether discussions with the faculty member described below should be carried out by the Dean, the Chair, or both.

2. Faculty whose overall contributions with respect to teaching, scholarship, and service are below-expectations for a period in excess of two years will be asked to meet with the Dean and/or department Chair. At this meeting, the faculty member may contest the finding of below-expectations contributions. If the area of apparent below-expectations contribution is scholarly/creative activity, it will be judged (as discussed above) based on publication or equivalent modes of external validation. In fields where the “gestation” period for such publication is long (e.g. books), a long period of non-publication will not be judged evidence of lack of output, so long as there is demonstrable progress towards publication, such as completion of draft chapters, receipt of a publication contract, and/or completed collection of archival or other research material.

3. If, based on discussion at such a meeting, the Dean concludes that the contributions are, indeed, below expectations on a sustained basis, the Dean and/or the Chair will work with the faculty
member to develop a mutually agreeable plan designed to improve and/or increase these contributions over a reasonable period of time.

4. Faculty whose scholarly/research or creative contributions are deemed below-expectations, but who refuse to participate in the construction of a plan for improvement as described above, may be assigned different or additional teaching, advising or service responsibilities determined by the Dean to be within their competence and supportive of the missions of the university, designed to bring the faculty member’s overall contributions up to university expectations.

5. Faculty who agree to an improvement plan as described in paragraph 3, which does not after two years result in actual improvement in contributions, may similarly be assigned different or additional teaching, advising or service responsibilities determined by the Dean to be within their competence and supportive of the missions of the university, designed to bring the faculty member’s overall contributions up to university expectations.

**Sanctions for non-cooperation**

These efforts at improvement should always be launched from a perspective of positive actions to improve the situation for both the faculty member and the university. Such discussions, are, however, more likely to be successful if conducted with an understanding that there will be negative consequences for the faculty member if the situation does not improve. Such consequences will not be governed by a formula, but will be determined by the Dean on a case by case basis, consistent with the Faculty Handbook, with faculty appeal to the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities always available to a faculty member who feels that appropriate process was not followed.

Under the Faculty Handbook, the Dean has the discretion to determine appropriate sanctions for faculty who are not carrying out their responsibilities. Without limiting the Dean’s discretion to apply further sanctions, for faculty who are uncooperative in improving their contributions, annual raises will be zero indefinitely. In addition, such faculty will not be eligible for sabbatical, even if they have “earned” a sabbatical based on time in rank, unless there is a plan for the use of the sabbatical, approved by the department chair and Dean, which offers a plausible prospect of improving the below-expectations contributions.

Adopted by Dean Adam B. Jaffe
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