

**Guidelines for Tenure, Promotion, and Merit
Greenspun College of Urban Affairs
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
(Revised April, 2009)**

Preamble

Decisions about tenure, promotion, and merit within the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs (GCUA) are guided by three basic principles. First, a candidate's performance in the areas of research, teaching, and service will be evaluated primarily in terms of the significance of the work. Significant work is defined by its quality and impact. Benchmarks of significant work have been established within the GCUA (*see Appendix A*). Second, it is the candidate's responsibility to demonstrate the significance of his/her work by using these benchmarks or other direct evidence that clearly reveals its impact. Third, both internal and external sources of peer review will be used in all evaluative decisions to supplement and validate claims about the significance of the candidate's work.

The guidelines for Tenure, Promotion and Merit (TPM) included in this document were derived from the previous GCUA guidelines and modifications of them. The primary differences are that the revised TPM guidelines are not based explicitly on the Boyer model of scholarship and they enumerate quantity guidelines for some decisions (e.g., 6 to 12 refereed publications as one possible benchmark for an "excellent" rating in research). The new TPM guidelines, however, are consistent with the previous standards by placing primary importance on the significance of one's scholarship (as measured by its quality and impact) and emphasizing that it is the candidate's responsibility to demonstrate the significance of the work through the benchmarks provided in the document or other indicators of its quality and impact.

These new TPM guidelines will be applied on the basis of the candidate's particular service period and years in rank at UNLV. The specific application criteria include the following:

- New hires and faculty promoted as of July 1, 2009 will be evaluated exclusively according to the new TPM guidelines.
- Tenure-track faculty who have not received their mid-tenure review will be evaluated according to the new TPM guidelines, under the assumption that they will have sufficient time in their remaining probationary period to adjust the quantity of their research productivity to meet the new TPM guidelines.

- Tenure-track faculty who have received their mid-tenure review will be evaluated according to the TPM guidelines that were in place when they were hired at UNLV.
- Faculty who are candidates for promotion to full professor will be evaluated according to the new TPM guidelines, under the assumption that they will have sufficient time to adjust their scholarly activity to comply with these new standards.
- Beginning in July 2009, merit decisions for all GCUA faculty will be based on these new TPM guidelines.

This document is only concerned with tenure, promotion, and merit decisions. It does not address the “faculty expectations” standards related to annual evaluations of faculty performance that are conducted by administrators within the GCUA. These annual expectations are described on the GCUA homepage (see <http://urbanaffairs.unlv.edu/faculty/pdf/minimum-standards.pdf>).

1. Criteria for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

The NSHE code (Chapter 3: Section 3.4.2) requires that successful candidates for tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor have an academic record that is ranked as (1) excellent in at least one of the areas of teaching or research, (2) at least satisfactory in the other area, and (3) at least satisfactory in service.

Distinctions between excellent and satisfactory performance within the GCUA are based on the quality and impact of the work. For decisions regarding tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, the benchmarks for “excellent” and “satisfactory” performance in the areas of research, teaching, and services are summarized below. A rating of “commendable” represents performance that falls between the benchmarks for satisfactory and excellent.

Excellence Ranking in Research: The “excellent” researcher has a clear program of scholarship and is gaining national recognition for the significant contributions his/her research has made to a field of study. The significant impact of this research is measurable by its placement in high-tiered publication outlets, citations and other references to this work, and/or its widespread dissemination to professional audiences. Both evidence of the ability to conduct research as the lead author and a stable or upward trajectory in its quality and quantity over the evaluation period are additional expectations for a rating of excellence in research. The candidate’s research portfolio (**see Section 3**) will demonstrate the significance of his/her work according to established

benchmarks or other direct evidence of its impact and quality (**see Appendix A for some specific indicators of quality**).

Each research program is unique, and it is the responsibility of each candidate to make a case that the work is of high quality. As a general guideline, however, satisfying the following benchmarks would likely achieve a rating of “excellent” in research:

- 6 to 12 refereed publications in academic outlets (e.g., journals, chapters, scholarly books).
 - Lead or sole authorship on 4 or more of these refereed publications.
 - 2 or more these publications in top-tiered scholarly outlets, with at least 1 of these publications having the candidate as the lead or sole author. Normative standards within the specific field of inquiry will be used to determine the classification of “top-tiered” outlets.
- Favorable external reviews, evaluations, and indicators of the quality, impact, and significance of the candidate’s research. Included in this category are citations and other references to the work, narrative descriptions of the research in external letters for tenure/promotion (**see Appendix B for requirements for selecting outside reviewers**), and direct evidence of the work’s impact through the prevalence of its dissemination and/or use within the profession and the wider community.
- A steady or escalating level of research publication over the evaluation period.
- Annual participation in several additional research activities. These other research activities include non-refereed publications (e.g., encyclopedia essays, book reviews, book chapters, technical reports), papers given at professional meetings, and writing/submitting grant proposals.

Satisfactory Ranking in Research: The ranking of satisfactory performance in research involves the achievement of the benchmarks of quality and quantity that do not achieve the expectations for “excellence” in research. There are many ways to achieve a satisfactory assessment. As a general guideline, however, the following benchmarks would likely achieve a “satisfactory” rating in research:

- The development of a research agenda and making progress toward achieving specific research goals.

- The publication of an average of one refereed journal article per year or its equivalent in other scholarly outlets (e.g., research monographs, refereed book chapters).
- Participation in an average of one regional/national professional meeting per year or its equivalent in other scholarly activities (e.g., an encyclopedia essay, book review, technical report, or other type of non-refereed paper; submission of a research grant).
- Favorable external reviews of the candidate's research that provides some evidence of its quality, impact, and significance.
- The research productivity, in its totality, does not achieve the benchmarks of quality and significance that are required for a rating of excellence (e.g., it isn't placed within top-tiered research outlets or lacks a clearly demonstrative impact on a field of inquiry).

Excellence Ranking in Teaching: Evaluative decisions based on excellence in teaching are based on the significance of this activity. The candidate's teaching portfolio (**see Section 3**) will demonstrate the quality and impact of his/her particular teaching-related activities according to established benchmarks (**see Appendix A**) or other direct evidence of its significance.

There are many ways that a candidate can achieve an excellent rating in teaching. It is the responsibility of the candidate to make their particular case for an excellent rating. As a general standard, however, the accomplishment of most of the following activities would likely achieve a rating of "excellent" in teaching:

- A consistent record of effective teaching practice, as represented by independent evaluations of one's teaching portfolio, peer reviews of teaching, and strong student evaluations.
- Recipient of an external award for teaching from an honorary, learned, and/or professional society. An university-wide award for teaching-related activities is an equivalent criterion.
- A clear pattern of course and grading rigor, as shown in course syllabi, course requirements, and the distribution of course grades.
- Consistent evidence from standardized tests of substantial learning gains by students in multiple course offerings.

- Significant curriculum development, including the design of multiple courses for graduate and undergraduate concentrations within a departmental or multi-disciplinary program.
- A substantial record of extensive and successful mentoring of students, as indicated by (1) active supervision of numerous undergraduate students in independent studies and internships, (2) chairing or major participation in student committees beyond departmental or college norms, and (3) multiple instances of co-authoring scholarly work with current students and recent graduates.

Satisfactory Ranking in Teaching: The ranking of satisfactory performance in teaching involves activities that do not achieve the expectations for “excellence” in teaching. Over the candidate’s evaluation period for tenure and promotion, the following benchmarks for satisfactory performance in teaching would likely include all of the following activities:

- Participation in formal or informal efforts to improve teaching on a continuous basis.
- A clear record of satisfactory peer reviews and positive student evaluations of teaching.
- Participation in some mentoring activities, including serving on graduate and undergraduate committees (e.g., M.A. thesis, independent studies).

Satisfactory Ranking in Service: A satisfactory rating in service is required for tenure and promotion decisions. The benchmarks for achieving this ranking involve measures of the quality, quantity, and the significance of the service activities (**see Appendix A for specific indicators**).

2. Criteria for Promotion to Professor

The rank of Professor is a mark of distinction that is based primarily on the establishment of a national or international reputation for one’s research and scholarship. A successful candidate for promotion to Professor has a clear record of significant contributions across the range of faculty responsibilities (research, teaching, and service). It is incumbent upon the candidate to make an argument about the quality of such achievements. Generally speaking, the following would demonstrate acceptable indicators of quality (**see Appendix A for specific indicators of quality/impact**):

- A strong and consistent record of publication in top-tier scholarly outlets within the candidate’s field of study. These publications should

also demonstrate the candidate's expertise within a well-defined area of inquiry.

- Favorable external reviews of the quality, impact, and significance of the candidate's research.
- Active and consistent participation in teaching-related activities, including course/curriculum development and student mentoring.
- Active and consistent participation in university, professional, and/or community service.

Promotion to Professor does not occur automatically after an individual has spent a given number of years as an Associate Professor. Instead, if one has a strong record of accomplishments in all areas (research, teaching, and service), a promotion to Professor may occur consistent with the time periods within the UNLV bylaws.

3. Documentation for Tenure and Promotions

Candidates for tenure and promotions are required to submit research, teaching, and service portfolios that document their significant contributions in each of these areas. These portfolios include a short narrative statement and specific information that is necessary for external reviewers to make an informed evaluation of the quality and impact of the candidate's work. The necessary elements of these portfolios include the following:

a. Research Portfolio:

- A narrative summary (1 page) that puts the research within the context of the candidate's area of expertise and line of scientific inquiry.
- A listing of major research activities (e.g., complete bibliographic citations and titles of awards, publications, presentations, research grants) and the indicators of quality/significance associated with them (e.g., citations, impact factor of journals, acceptance rates).
- Samples of the written work, including copies of research monographs and up to 5 refereed publications.

b. Teaching Portfolio:

- A narrative summary (1 page) of a teaching philosophy, including one's goals and expectations surrounding teaching.
- A listing of major teaching activities over the evaluation period (e.g., lists of courses taught and numerical summaries of student evaluations of them, curriculum development, student mentoring activities, and other pedagogical activities).
- External evidence of the quality/significance of teaching-related activities (e.g., peer-reviews, awards, standard measures of learning gains).
- Copies of course materials (e.g., syllabi, handouts, and assignments, exams, readings, and grade distributions) for one graduate and one undergraduate class. Provide materials for two different undergraduate courses if not involved in graduate teaching.

c. Service Portfolio:

- A narrative summary (1 page) of the general nature of one's service activities.
- A listing of major service activities and one's role (e.g., member, chair, associate) within each of the following areas: (1) institutional service (e.g., department, college, and/or university), (2) professional service (e.g., serving on editorial boards, reviewing manuscripts for publishers, holding elected/appointed positions in professional associations or honorary societies), and (3) community service (e.g., workshops, public outreach activities).
- External evidence of the quality and quantity of the work associated with these service activities.

Other required documents for tenure and promotion decisions include copies of:

- Annual evaluations over the evaluative period in question.
- Midtenure evaluations (for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor).
- Chair/Director evaluations of tenure/promotion applications within each area of research, teaching, and service.

- External reviews of scholarly activity (**see Appendix B for the process of selecting outside reviewers**).

4. Criteria and Documentation for Merit Decisions

Contrary to the multi-year period covered in Promotion and Tenure decisions, Merit decisions are typically based on one's yearly performance. Both types of evaluations, however, are guided by assessments of the quality and impact of the research, teaching, and service activities (**see Appendix A for specific indicators of quality/impact**). Positive merit evaluations will be given to candidates who demonstrate significant work in these activities. Exceptional performance in any or all areas will be recognized in merit decisions.

Appendix A: Indicators of the Significance (Quality and Impact) of the Work

I. Research:

Normative standards within the specific field of study will be used as indicators of the significance (i.e., quality and impact) of the research activity. General indicators of the significance of research activity and its placement/outlets may include the following:

1. Measures of the Significance of the Research Activity:

- Awards for the research from professional societies.
- Citations and other positive references to the author's research in external reviews, other publications, and/or other clear measures of impact of the work on scientific knowledge or applied practices.

2. High Quality Peer-Reviewed Research Outlets:

- Research monographs in distinguished Academic Presses.
- Research articles in top-tiered journals.
- Book chapters in highly regarded Academic Presses or distinguished series.
- Research grants from competitive funding organizations (e.g., NSF, NIH, Guggenheim Foundation).

3. Mid-Level Quality Peer-Reviewed Research Outlets:

- Research monographs in less distinguished Academic Presses and trade presses.
- Research articles in lower-tiered journals.
- Edited research monographs and research-based textbooks.
- Other refereed research publications (e.g., book chapters, encyclopedia essays, conference proceedings or abstracts, translations).

4. Other Research Activities (peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed):

- Submission of research grants
- Technical reports to agencies
- Invited or non-refereed research publications (e.g., book reviews, book chapters, essays)
- Presentations at national and regional professional meetings.

5. Criteria for Evaluating the Relative Contribution of Quality Research:

- Research with multiple citations/references will be given more weight than scholarly work that lacks these external measures of its impact.
- Award-winning research as recognized by honorary/learned societies will be given more weight than scholarship awards within the University and without this external recognition.
- Primary/original research will be given more weight than edited materials (e.g., edited books).
- Research published/presented in national or international outlets will be given more weight than research in regional/local outlets.
- Scholarly books and research monographs will be given more weight than refereed journal articles.
- First-author and sole authored research will be given more weight than work in which the candidate is not the primary author.
- Completed and published research projects will be given more weight than scholarly activities in progress.
- Research activities completed at UNLV will be given more weight than research done before employment at UNLV.

II. Teaching

Indicators of quality and significance of teaching may include the following factors:

- External awards for teaching from honorary/learned/professional societies.
- Internal awards for teaching excellence--university awards are given the most weight, followed by college awards and then departmental awards.
- Teaching/training grants and contracts [competitive awards will be given more weight than non-competitive awards]
- Refereed publications on teaching pedagogy.
- A consistent record of innovative and effective teaching that is validated by multiple peer-reviews.

- Publication of textbooks that are adopted by other universities.
- Major technological innovations/developments in teaching related activities.
- Significant curriculum development, including the development of multiple classes for graduate and undergraduate concentrations within a departmental or multi-disciplinary program.
- Consistent evidence from standardized tests of substantial learning gains by students in multiple course offerings.
- A substantial record of student mentoring as indicated by
 - Extensive supervision of undergraduate students in independent studies, practicums, and internships.
 - Chairing multiple M.A. and Ph.D. committees beyond departmental or college norms.
 - Multiple instances of co-authoring of published scholarly work with current and recent students.
- Keynote addresses and other substantial presentations on teaching pedagogy at honorary/learned/professional societies.

III. Service

Indicators of quality and significance may include the following factors:

- External awards of distinguished service from honorary, learned, and/or professional societies.
- Internal awards for excellence in service--university awards are given the most weight, followed by college awards and then departmental awards.
- Receiving service grants/contracts [competitive awards will be given more weight than non-competitive awards].
- University-based service activities:
 - Major administrative appointments (e.g., Department Chair, Graduate Director).
 - Chairing of major university, college, and departmental committees.

- Active participation as a member of multiple committees at all levels (i.e., university, college, and departmental).
- Individual service initiatives that benefit the University (e.g., writing accreditation reports, coordinator of student service organizations).
- Professional service activities:
 - Membership on editorial boards and other review bodies.
 - Multiple reviews of manuscripts for many professional journals and national/regional funding agencies.
 - Organization of professional conferences.
 - Elected positions or appointments to leadership positions in professional organizations.
 - Individual service initiatives that benefit the profession (e.g., workshop coordinators, site coordinator, web-based development).
- Community service activities:
 - Appointments to leadership positions within community-based organizations.
 - Active participation in multiple collaborative partnerships between the university and community organizations.
 - Individual service initiatives that benefit the community (e.g., service training, outreach).

Appendix B: Selection of Outside Reviewers

Outside reviewers for tenure and promotion decisions are distinguished individuals who have the appropriate expertise to evaluate the candidate's academic record. The particular process of selecting outsider reviewers and their specific tasks include the following:

- The appropriate departmental official (e.g., Chair, Director, Personnel Committee) develops a list of potential reviewers. That list will include four names from the candidate and four names from the department personnel committee. Potential reviewers will be from outside the university and should have no close personal or professional relationship with the candidate. Dissertation/thesis advisors and all research collaborators are explicitly prohibited as external reviewers.
- From the list of potential outside reviewers, a total of four reviewers will be selected (2 from the candidate's list, 2 from the department's list).
- The outside reviewers will receive a letter that describes the principles and criteria for tenure and promotion in the GCUA. Included with this letter will be copies of (1) GCUA's Promotion and Tenure Guidelines, (2) the candidate's vita, (3) a descriptive summary of the candidate's research, teaching, and service activities, and (4) copies of four publications by the candidate.
- In their evaluation of the candidate for promotion and tenure, reviewers will be asked to answer the following questions: (1) the nature of his/her relationship to the candidate, (2) the significance of the candidate's work in terms of its quality and impact, and (3) whether the reviewer considers the candidate to be promotable under the guidelines set forth in GCUA and UNLV.
- The reviewer will also provide an abridged vitae with their evaluations.