

PTC Report 2009-2010  
**Report of the A & S Senate Promotion and Tenure Committee**  
**November 2010**  
**Presented by Gary Matthews, Chair PTC**

**2009-2010 Committee:**

- Gary Matthews, Chair – Neurobiology and Behavior (Natural Sciences & Mathematics)
- Ellen Broselow – Linguistics (Social and Behavioral Sciences)
- Vitaly Citovsky – Biochemistry (Natural Sciences & Mathematics)
- Peter Manning – English (Humanities and Fine Arts)
- Eduardo Mendieta – Philosophy (Humanities and Fine Arts)
- Suparna Rajaram – Psychology (Social and Behavioral Sciences)
- Barbara Selvin – School of Journalism – non-tenured member

**Organization and functioning:**

The committee met regularly during the 2009-2010 academic year, with excellent attendance. All committee members are dedicated and hard working. They take their position seriously and behave in a professional, ethical manner. The committee functions very well as a group, demonstrating cohesion and respect for all members. The committee also considered three cases during the 2010 summer session. Summer meetings have become increasingly necessary to deal with pressing issues, such as new hires whose appointments begin in September.

**Philosophy and process:**

The PTC plays an important role in the Arts and Sciences Senate. The PTC represents the faculty in providing independent assessment of cases of tenure and promotion and makes advisory recommendations to the Dean or other appropriate administrative officer. The faculty members who make up the committee are critical to its functioning and success, and it is important to continue to elect strong members to serve on the committee.

The PTC has maintained a strong level of continuity in process with prior years. We continue to adhere strongly to the Policies of the Board of Trustees, and to focus decisions on scholarship, teaching, and service. We recognize that every case is different and make certain that we take into account diversity in scholarly and creative achievements across departments, schools, and programs.

In making decisions, the main question that we focus on is whether a candidate's scholarly or creative activity is having an impact in the field of scholarship. Our ability to assess this hinges on the clarity with which this is presented in the dossier, and we rely heavily on the views

expressed in outside letters and in the chair's letter. A few comments about each are in order. Regarding outside letters, those that come from individuals who do not have a close professional relationship with the candidate are essential, because they are likely to be least biased by personal connections. Regarding the chair's letter, it is critical that it express and discuss both the strengths and weaknesses of the case, particularly those pointed out by outside letter writers or in the reviews of teaching. Providing a clear rationale for the departmental vote is also extremely important. If there were "no" votes or abstentions, it is important to clarify the reasons for such votes. Chair's letters that simply reiterate or quote from outside letters, or that present a run-down of the faculty discussion of the case are least helpful to the PTC and can be a disservice to the candidate.

Regarding the assessment of scholarly ability for promotion to Full Professor, the PTC feels that promotion should not be awarded just for significant administrative or other nonscholarly accomplishments, but should be awarded only to those who show true excellence and a strong reputation in creative and scholarly activities. However, teaching and service do matter, and weight is placed on the extent to which candidates for full professor have shown initiative in contributing to the future of their department and their field.

#### **Caseload and actions:**

From September 2009 through July 2010, the PTC acted on 23 cases. Of these, 8 were cases for promotion from assistant professor to associate professor with tenure, 3 were cases of tenure only for individuals hired as associate or full professor without tenure, 7 were cases for promotion from associate professor to full professor, and 5 were new appointments with tenure (1 at associate professor and 4 at full professor). Three of the cases were from SoMAS, and one was from Journalism (note that the CAS Dean does not act on these cases).

Excluding new appointments, the departments/programs voted in favor of promotion and/or tenure in 17 of 18 cases, and the PTC concurred with the departmental recommendation in all instances, including the one case in which the departmental recommendation was negative. The PTC voted in favor of appointment at senior rank with tenure for all five of the new appointments. Therefore, the PTC agreed with the departmental recommendation in all 23 cases.

There was also universal agreement with PTC recommendations at the decanal, provostial, and presidential levels. In two of the new appointments, the candidate withdrew from consideration prior to the President's decision.

#### **Other Activities:**

1. The PTC chair generated a fully editable document for candidates to assemble the biographic file, and the document was placed at the Senate website. With the approval of the Senate Executive Committee, language was added in several places to clarify information that should be included in particular sections of the biographic file. This results in a much more user-friendly form for candidates and departments.

2. The PTC continued to move toward electronic submission of PTC files, which has now

become a reality starting with fall 2010 submissions. This move was greatly assisted by the Dean and candidates of SoMAS, who agreed to a pilot test of electronic submission for the three SoMAS cases considered in 2009-2010.

3. The PTC met in the summer of 2010 to consider an appeal by a candidate of a departmental decision not to resubmit a case from the 2008-2009 academic year, which had resulted in a negative outcome. After considering the candidate's appeal, the PTC voted against the departmental decision and instructed the department to prepare a resubmission in accordance with PTC guidelines. The resulting file has been resubmitted and is now under consideration.

4. The Chair of the PTC is working with the Dean's office to arrange training for department chairs and assistants to the chair in preparing electronic dossiers for promotion and tenure.