

Policies 6-303, 6-002, and 6-305 Appendix: Revisions of Policies on Faculty Appointments and Related Matters

Highlights the proposed changes.

U-Policy 6-303.

Excellence. The committee's most important recommendations are for revision of University Policy 6-303 (formerly PPM 9-5.1). The most significant recommendation is for paragraph III-A-2-c, which the committee members have come to think of as “the standard of excellence paragraph” and which, if our recommendations are followed, will serve as the heart of the RPT system. It will guide departments in formulating standards for retention, tenure, and promotion, it is the yardstick the URPTSC will use in evaluating departmental RPT statements, and it will guide members of the central administration in their roles in RPT matters. Because of its importance, the committee has devoted much of its many months of work to consultation about and careful scrutiny of the precise phrasing for this 'excellence paragraph.’” As revised, it would read:

“c. Standards. Insistence upon the highest attainable standards for faculty members is essential for the maintenance of the quality of the University as an institution dedicated to the discovery as well as the assimilation and transmission of knowledge.

Departmental RPT Statements and the decisions based upon them shall emphasize the University's commitment to the achievement and maintenance of academic excellence.

i. Teaching and research/other creative activity. For granting of tenure it is indispensable that there be a cumulative record demonstrating sustained achievement of effectiveness in each of the two areas of teaching and research/other creative activity, and, additionally, achievement of excellence in a combination of those areas. This set of requirements may be met through articulation and application of departmental standards that require either (i) achievement of effectiveness in one area and excellence in the other, or (ii)

achievement of effectiveness in each area and combined achievements in the two areas that taken overall constitute excellence. Departments shall select, clearly articulate, and apply the selected standards in a manner that is appropriate to the characteristics and standards of the discipline and the intended roles of faculty members within the department. A department may select standards higher than these minimum requirements if clearly described in the departmental RPT Statement.

For retention during the probationary period, the record for the two areas must demonstrate reasonable potential for meeting the standards established for tenure.

For promotion in rank, the record for the two areas must demonstrate continuing professional growth at a level appropriate to the particular rank. Departmental RPT Statements shall clearly describe the standards applicable for each rank.”

External funding. Another change of some significance will clarify that any department which wishes to consider RPT candidates' success in obtaining external funding for research as a criterion for tenure or promotion must give notice of that expectation in the departmental RPT Statement--and must provide a rationale for such a criterion. As part of the background for its charge on this project, the committee was informed that lack of clarity about the role of funding has contributed to difficulties in individual RPT decisions in some academic units. The Executive Committee also asked the Academic Freedom and Faculty Rights committee to explore the 'academic freedom' aspects of using funding as an RPT criterion. The AFFR committee produced a report on that topic, which the Executive Committee and Senate may wish to refer to again. For its part, the RPT Standards committee has focused on the need for candidates to receive adequate notice, and that should be accomplished by adoption of our recommendation to add the following language to paragraph III-A-2-b of Policy 6-303:

“Any departmental expectation of accomplishment of or potential for obtaining external funding support (and the rationale for imposing such expectation) shall be described with particularity in the departmental statement.”

Effective date of 6-303 revisions. The committee recommends that there be further discussion as to the date on which the revision of Policy 6-303 should take effect. It may be that some number of departments will need to revise their RPT Statements to comply with some of the newly clarified requirements of 6-303 (e.g., clear notice of treating external funding as a criterion), and the process of making such changes can be lengthy (including careful deliberations within a department, and then a series of required approvals, culminating with approval by the committee). It may be appropriate to set the effective date further out than would ordinarily be done (e.g., July 1, 2010, rather than July 2009).

U-Policy 6-305 and 6-002.

Policy 6-002 governs the membership of the RPT Standards committee. For many years, the committee has relied upon the Associate Vice President for Faculty to assist the committee in carrying out its important functions, including acting as a 'permanent' point of communication between the committee and the more than 50 academic departments that the committee must interact with (as the leadership and membership of the committee change annually). The current policy does not mention this ex officio role for the Associate VP--and it is recommended that the policy be changed to conform to the longstanding practice by listing the Associate VP as an ex officio to the committee. The committee has also taken the opportunity to recommend other very minor clarifications to this policy.

Policy 6-305 sets forth the duties of the RPT Standards Committee. The committee recommends two changes in keeping with the charge by the Executive Committee. The first is to clarify that in carrying out its role of reviewing and approving departmental RPT Statements, **the committee is to ensure that the criteria and standards adopted by each department are “consistent with the University's commitment to academic excellence.”** The second is to clarify that, similar to the work it has done for this current project by special charge, for the future the committee should be considered “an appropriate forum for reviewing any proposed changes to university policy with respect

to retention, promotion, or tenure.” Several very minor technical changes are also recommended. Enclosures: Proposed revisions of University Policy 6-303, 6-002, and 6-305.

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Memo from Associate Vice Presidents Olson & Sperry to Senior Vice Presidents Betz and Pershing, January 9, 2009, including signature of approval from President Young.]

We are pleased to convey for your consideration and recommendation to President Young a proposal for revising three parts of University Policies related to retention, promotion, and tenure of regular faculty. The proposal has been developed primarily by the University RPT Standards Committee, at the request of the Academic Senate Executive Committee. Others who have had input into its development are the Academic Freedom and Faculty Rights Committee and the Counsel of Academic Deans in spring 2008, and recently department chairs and General Counsel John Morris.

The attached memorandum from the current chair of the RPT Standards Committee describes the background of the revisions and the proposed changes in some detail, so this cover memo provides a briefer summary and highlights a few additional points.

Policy 6-303:

Effectiveness and excellence as minimum requirements for tenure:

The primary objective for this project has been to ensure that University Policy clearly sets forth certain minimum standards that all departments must adopt and apply in RPT cases, particularly in the granting of tenure. In the course of developing appropriate language, it became clear that existing policy would benefit from reorganization into clearer categories with the headings of purpose, criteria, and standards. Thus, while the number of highlighted sections in the attached proposal may suggest extensive changes, only those formatted in oversized bold font represent changes of substance.

As proposed, the central statement of the changes appears in section III.A.2.c., which would set in place minimum requirements for tenure. First, a candidate must be shown to be at least “effective” in each of the three areas of research, teaching, and service. Second, for research or teaching (or those in combination) the candidate's record must demonstrate “excellence.” Those will be the minimum requirements, which all departments must incorporate into their written statements of RPT standards. Departments will be free to adopt even higher standards for their candidates, so long as they do so with sufficient clarity.

These are clarifications of current University policy, and in most instances the standards being used by departments should satisfy the newly clarified minimum requirements. For example, one fairly common current practice is to require candidates for tenure to demonstrate excellence in either research or teaching. That practice clearly already complies with the proposed clarification of policy. Another example is that some departments currently require excellence in both teaching and research. That is more than will be compelled under the clarified policy, but departments will be free to continue such practices. As some have phrased this in discussions--the University policy sets an institution-wide 'floor'--and departments must at least come up to that level, but remain free to set higher standards.

It is noteworthy that in the many months of this project, with wide consultation undertaken, every commenter has agreed that the University should have a clearly stated standard of excellence on RPT matters, and that it is appropriate to ensure that the standard of excellence is reflected both in institution-wide policy and in the individual RPT statements and practices of every academic department. The proposed language on minimum requirements of effectiveness and excellence should be seen largely as a codification of existing practices, with the long term benefit of having applicable standards stated with greater clarity so as to minimize opportunities for misunderstanding and dispute. This proposed new language is not anticipated to require departments to make immediate changes to their practices or department RPT statements. Instead, the benefits of this clarification of University policy will come over

the long term, guiding departments as they revise their RPT standards statements from time to time in the ordinary course of business.

Research funding expectations, and an appropriate effective date for the revised policy:

One component of the proposed policy revision (section III.A.2.b.) may require some departments to initiate changes to their departmental statements. Departments that treat an RPT candidate's success in obtaining funding for research as a substantial part of assessing the candidate's performance must include a description of that funding criterion in their written statements of RPT standards. To allow sufficient time for any departments where such expectations are now largely implicit to make their RPT statements more explicit, the drafters have suggested that the effective date for the revised policy might best be set one year further than would otherwise apply--- most likely July 1, 2010. That would allow time for departments to more clearly articulate statements of funding expectations and for deans and the URPT Standards Committee to review and approve those changes.

Policy 6-305 and 6-002

The proposed revision to Policy 6-305 reinforces the revisions above by charging the University RPT Standards Committee to ensure that departments conform to the proposed new standards.

The proposed revision to Policy 6-002 is to clarify the role of the Associate V.P. as ex officio to University RPT Standards Committee. In recent years, Associate V.P. Susan Olson has worked very closely with the Committee, and in the past year has assigned special assistant Bob Flores to work with the committee. We recommend that this de facto relationship be codified by establishment of the ex officio role.