

INTRODUCTION

The University draws its strength from the faculty, whose intellectual capacity, creative talent, and competence shape the institution's culture and reputation. Having chosen the life of the mind as its mission, both as an end and value in itself and a means to a better life, the University must attract, recruit, and retain the faculty of highest quality. Not only is the University's academic mission at stake; so is its capacity to address the rising needs of the country and anticipate the demands of a fast-changing and fiercely competitive world. Decisions on faculty hiring, retention, and promotion are crucial in determining the nature and form of the department and the College as a whole and, indeed, the very future of the University.

Hence, Deans and Department Chairs must apprise all academic staff of their departments, and in particular, those they newly recruit into the faculty, of institutional goals and individual expectations of faculty members, including the areas of performance in which the faculty are to be evaluated. This policy statement is issued to assist the process of communication and enable the faculty to internalize the University's academic value system. The statement is not intended as a compilation of policies and guidelines, although some are included here for emphasis. Rather, the statement is an explanation of these policies and an affirmation of the academic values that underpin them. These values—academic freedom, high academic standards, professional ethics, and the commitment to sustained intellectual growth—are the only standpoint from which the statement is to be interpreted. Bureaucratic and narrow legalistic interpretations diminish the statement's spirit and purpose.

Recognizing that certain procedures vary across constituent universities and among colleges and departments, the statement asserts three fundamental premises of academic life.

The first is the primacy of academic standards as the basis of faculty appointment, tenure, and promotion. This is the guarantee of academic freedom, a right and a value without which the University ceases to exist.

Second is the demonstrable character of the academic grounds for appointment, tenure and promotion. Faculty members must be able to show proof of merit to deserve membership of the faculty, tenure, and promotion.

The final premise is the value of peer review in arriving at decisions on appointment, tenure, and promotion. By submitting themselves to the judgment of their peers at various levels, faculty members gain recognition of their achievements and the meritorious ones are awarded tenure and promoted.

To address differences in procedure, units are enjoined to write down the core guidelines that direct the manner in which they arrive at recruitment, tenure, and promotion decisions and the criteria on which these decisions are founded. The guidelines are the product of a collegial undertaking and must have the approval of the department and preferably, also the College

faculty. They must also be consistent with the minimum standards set by the University and the declaration set forth in this statement. Units may, of course, adopt more stringent criteria; these require the approval of higher bodies.

Recruitment, tenure, and promotion are no doubt arenas of discussion and debate. This statement is not intended to stifle or mute discussion but to lay down the parameters for a fair evaluation of faculty members both in the decision-making process and the substance of the decision. If the review process is unfair, it can only be so for two reasons: that other than academic grounds served as the basis of the decision (a violation of academic freedom), or that the merits of the faculty in question were not adequately considered. In either case, proof must be demonstrable. By requiring departments to put their guiding principles in writing, the room for arbitrary decision making will at least be reduced.

The contents of this manual were discussed at various levels of the University. The portions on minimum expectations of faculty rank and promotion standards were initially worked out by a System Committee in 2001.¹ After the Committee submitted its report to the President in November that year, the Academic Affairs Committee, consisting of the Vice Chancellors of Academic Affairs of the constituent universities, discussed the report. Later that month, the President's Advisory Council took up the recommendations of the Committee and decided to consult the faculty through the Deans. Campus-wide consultations thus took place from late November 2001 until February 2002. The comments of the faculty were quite extensive and contributed greatly to the improvement of the original document.

The section on faculty tenure was subsequently added by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Initial discussions of the Academic Affairs Committee led to further refinements of the statement on tenure. The complete document as it now stands was endorsed by the President's Advisory Committee on 23 January 2004 (202nd meeting) and approved by the President.

Policies on recruitment, tenure, and promotion, however, cannot be permanent. Standards (ought to) improve over time, as new constructions of knowledge emerge and greater demands are placed on learning and scholarship. It is thus incumbent on the University (down to the unit level) to periodically review and upgrade its policies and guidelines so as to ably address changes in the world of knowledge and their impact on the professions and society at large.

For its part, the University reaffirms its obligation to continue to create and sustain an enabling and supportive environment for a vibrant academic life: to help faculty members develop their full potential, to provide and strive to upgrade the resources to meet these expectations, and offer incentives for creative work and research and awards for academic excellence.

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¹ Administrative Order FN 01-55, creating the Committee on Promotion Standards, chaired by Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs Jose Maria P. Balmaceda, with the following as members: Profs. Maria Carmen Jimenez, Ruben Defeo, Maria Antonia Habana, and Maribel Dionisio-Sese.