Tenure and Promotion Guidelines
Department of Comparative Literature
Hamilton College

PREAMBLE

The Department recognizes that each faculty member has a different balance of skills and interests and has a different pattern of development. Our concern is not, therefore, to assure that everyone fits the same model, but rather to assure that all members of the department contribute in their own ways to the intellectual life of the Department and of the College. Thus, while we rank teaching, scholarship, and service in that order and ask that everyone make a significant contribution in each category, we recognize that the balances will be different for each person; teaching and scholarship remain more important than service, however. To whatever degree possible, given the timing of the review, significant new information received after the review has begun (e.g., the acceptance of an article or book) will be incorporated into the review.

TENURE

TEACHING

The Department has a long-standing reputation of being an excellent teaching department. We hope to maintain that excellence. That said, we recognize that not every faculty member at Hamilton can be "above average." Dean Gulick used to say that, in the end, one could at best divide the faculty into three rough groups: a small number of exceptional teachers; a small number of clearly substandard teachers; and everyone else. We measure teaching in the aggregate, looking at general patterns rather than at performance in individual courses. We would hope for performance in the top category and would expect that anyone standing for tenure would be at least in the large middle group. A consistent pattern of performance in the bottom category would be a cause for concern; the Chair will discuss these concerns with the candidate during the probationary period.

Teaching will be judged on the basis of course evaluations, letters from students gathered for the tenure file, and the results of in-class visitations. It is expected that every voting member will have visited at least three classes chosen by the candidate. We expect that these three sources of information with be consistent with one another. Should there be a substantial conflict, our interpretation will tend to weight the letters and our own observations more heavily than the course evaluations. Students writing after they have graduated will have a more mature point of view, and we think that colleagues are in a better position to judge good teaching than students.

In reading course evaluations, we will pay more attention to the written comments than to the quantitative summaries. In both quantitative and expository questions, we will pay particular attention to the questions that center around the intellectual challenges of the course. Evaluation will also take into account the number of times a course has been taught and the difficulty of developing new courses. Development of new courses, especially of courses outside the faculty member's primary field of expertise, will be considered positively.

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While there are many ways of demonstrating excellence in teaching and many different kinds of teachers, in Comparative Literature we especially value the ability:

- to present students with intellectual challenges in the classroom
- to motivate students to develop their own critical voices
- to raise interesting questions that encourage students to be more self-aware with respect to their fundamental values and assumptions
- to push students to grapple with the problems of ideological differences
- to get students to recognize the wide variety of literary expression and the wide variety of ways of analyzing it
- to create an open atmosphere for discussion
- to develop new and interesting courses that reflect developments in the field and excite students in those developments

SCHOLARSHIP

As MLA report puts it, "we always need to value quality over quantity" (p. 25). Quality is measured by the department, outside reviewers, and the quality of the venue of any publication. In particular, we would be asking: Does the article or book seem to break new ground or to be an interesting perspective on relatively well-worked terrain? Does it serve to introduce a lay audience to issues of intellectual or artistic concern? If it does none of these things, we would value the work less highly. In terms of quantity, we do not expect a book for tenure, although a monograph would certainly fulfill expectations. Normally, we would expect the production of one article or its equivalent every one to two years over the six years prior to tenure. These articles should demonstrate a contribution to knowledge, serious engagement with an audience outside the college, and together should suggest a trajectory that implies continued progress in this area. Since the discipline and the college are increasingly interdisciplinary, work in cognate fields (e.g., art history, film studies, music) and work that expands the boundaries of the discipline are encouraged and count toward tenure and promotion in the same way that work focused on a more narrow conception of the field would be. Work on popular culture and non-canonical authors and texts are also encouraged. We recognize time-lags, so work accepted is treated as if it were published; we recognize changing systems of publication as well, and digital publications will be judged in the same manner as print publication. Generally speaking, work that goes beyond the dissertation or work that substantially revises the dissertation will be prized more highly than articles or a book culled more directly from a dissertation without further research.

We say we expect an article "or its equivalent" every one or two years. That category of "equivalent" would include, for instance, articles in peer-reviewed journals, article-length translations, chapters in books from university presses, substantial non-academic articles in significant venues (with the significance measured in a way parallel to the way we would determine the significance of an academic publication). Textbooks, articles or books on pedagogical issues, and bibliographic scholarship are all appropriate ways of fulfilling the publication expectations. Co-authored work is encouraged.

An edited book will be judged according to the nature of the project, specifically depending on the intellectual energy expended and extent of the contribution of each editor. Thus, books of

newly commissioned essays count for more than books that simply collect already written essays, since the editorial work is presumably greater. Similarly, an annotated edition of a literary text with substantial primary source materials (say, in the Longman "Cultural Editions" series) would count more than an anthology that simply gathered up twelve recent essays on the book.

Generally speaking, conference papers and/or book reviews, tenure and promotion reviews, manuscript reviews for academic journals and presses, participation on editorial boards, work as an editor of a university press series, positions of responsibility and similar activities are encouraged; although they may not, in themselves, serve as a complete fulfillment of our scholarly expectations, significant work in this area would compensate for relative weakness in publication and would add considerably to an already strong publication record. In a similar way, we encourage faculty to expand their knowledge. Especially given the Department's and the College's commitment to interdisciplinary study (for instance, in the form of sophomore seminars and college seminars), documented study of new fields to expand teaching or research will be viewed as a form of "research" and will be treated in the same way as reviews, conference papers, etc.

SERVICE

Service can be demonstrated by active membership on college committees, by participation in departmental affairs, by working formally or informally with student groups or with non-faculty staff, by participating in student/faculty organizations, by working in ways to improve the quality of student life (especially intellectual life outside the classroom), and in general by contributing in any other ways to the life of the college outside the department. As faculty members grow in their field, it is to be expected that they will participate in the larger professional community through activity at conferences and in professional organizations.

PROMOTION

Generally speaking, standards for promotion to Full Professor are similar to those for tenure: we expect tenured faculty to continue to develop and progress beyond the level achieved at the time tenure was granted; normally, we would expect faculty to develop several new courses during their period as Associate Professors and to continue to be actively engaged in the classroom (as defined above). We expect a continuation of scholarly productivity at the same rate expected for the granting of tenure; thus we expect that promotion to full professor will be based on the presentation of substantial new work.

Although the balance among teaching, scholarship, and service may well change as a career develops, and although increased participation in national scholarly organizations or editorial boards may well leave less time for scholarship and service more narrowly defined, on the whole we expect a continuation of the same total level of contribution to the intellectual life and the governance of the College, the Department, and the profession at large. Teaching and scholarship remain more important than service, but the candidate must show evidence of accomplishment in all three categories.

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