

Memo to: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders
From: Max Castillo, President
Subject: Rank and Tenure System

UH-Downtown/PS 10.A.01
Issue No. 7
Effective date: 04/01/2005
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1. PURPOSE

This PS delineates policies and procedures for the rank and tenure system of the University of Houston–Downtown (UHD). These policies and procedures are consistent with the role and scope of the institution.

2. POLICY/PROCEDURES

2.1 Discrepancies with System Policy

If any discrepancy occurs between the following UHD policies and those of the University of Houston System, the system policies are to be followed.

2.2 Basic Principles of the Rank and Tenure System

The UHD is committed to the fulfillment of human potential through educational opportunity and excellence in teaching. The purpose of the rank and tenure system is to recognize significant achievement and service, to reward excellence in teaching, to promote service to the institution, to encourage scholarly and creative activities, and to promote incentive for continuing professional growth. The rank and tenure process requires careful evaluation of faculty performance and potential by peers and by appropriate academic administrators.

2.2.1 Tenure-Track Ranks

The following ranks are considered part of the tenure-track: instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor.

2.2.2 Promotion

Promotion is an advancement to a higher academic rank based on evidence of excellence in the areas of performance, achievement and potential, experience, and academic preparation. The criteria listed in Section 2.2.5 state the minimal conditions for consideration rather than sufficient conditions for promotion. The president, in consultation with the tenured members of the appropriate department, may waive certain specific criteria in extraordinary situations. Promotions are subject to the approval of the chancellor and the board of regents and become effective at the beginning of the next academic year.

2.2.3 Tenure

Tenure is the right to continuous employment. It is awarded by the chancellor, effective at the beginning of the next academic year, based upon the authority delegated by the board of regents and upon the recommendation of the president after the appropriate review process has been completed. Tenure is awarded on the basis of overall excellent performance to date, on the basis of the likelihood of continued and enhanced performance for the benefit of the institution, and on the institutional need for the faculty member's field of expertise. Tenure is revoked only because of dismissal for cause, bona fide financial exigency, the elimination of programs, retirement or resignation, or due to violation of the requirements of the post-tenure review process (See PS 10.A.16, Performance Evaluation of Tenured Faculty, Sections 2.1.4, 2.2., and

2.2.2. Tenured faculty members are afforded every opportunity for placement in other related faculty assignments when the existence of a bona fide exigency or the elimination of a program necessitates the reduction of tenured faculty members. Tenure is specific to UHD and never applies to administrative appointments.

2.2.4 Probationary Period

The probationary period is the time a faculty member spends after appointment to a tenure-track position prior to being awarded tenure. The probationary period does not exceed seven years, and the conditions of the period are specified in the appointment letter. In order that the faculty member may build the best possible case for tenure, no more than two years of prior full-time college teaching experience ordinarily should be credited to the probationary period. The period of time of a leave of absence is not counted as part of the probationary period except by approval of the president. By May 31 probationary faculty members in their sixth credited year of service who are not recommended for tenure receive from the president written notification of non-appointment beyond the seventh year.

2.2.5 Special Considerations for Specific Ranks

For each faculty rank, the following special considerations shall apply:

2.2.5.1 Instructor

The rank of instructor is normally in the tenure-track with time spent as instructor counted in the probationary period. No instructor, however, is awarded tenure. Under special circumstances, the president may waive the inclusion of an instructor in the tenure-track by written mutual agreement. Minimum Academic Preparation: A Master's degree or significant professional experience or preparation. Minimum Experience: No experience is necessary as this is the first rank in the academic ranking system. Minimum Criteria for Rank: The applicant for instructor has a genuine interest in teaching and a willingness to engage in activities expected by the department.

2.2.5.2 Assistant Professor

Only in special cases is tenure awarded to an assistant professor. Minimum Academic Preparation: Appropriate terminal degree or appropriate preparation to serve the mission of UHD. Minimum Experience: A minimum of two years as an instructor or significant experience in subject area is preferred. Minimum Criteria for Rank: The applicant for assistant professor has a genuine interest in teaching and shows the potential to make clear contributions in both service/professional activities and scholarly/creative activities.

2.2.5.3 Associate Professor

Associate professors may be appointed with tenure, or alternatively must serve a probationary period, as specified in the appointment letter and the Terms of Appointment form, not to exceed four years before tenure is awarded.

In cases of exceptional merit, the probationary period may be shortened by the president at the request of the appropriate dean. Promotion to associate professor carries tenure unless otherwise justified by special circumstances. Minimum Academic Preparation: Appropriate terminal degree or equivalent preparation to serve the mission of UHD. Minimum Experience: Six years full-time college teaching experience, including two years at UHD for those being promoted. Minimum Criteria for Rank: As an assistant professor, the applicant for associate professor has achieved a record of excellence in teaching, has a sustained record of major contributions in both service/professional activities and scholarly/creative activities, and used his/her talents to benefit the department and the institution.

2.2.5.4 Professor

Professors are usually appointed with tenure but may be required to serve a probationary period. Minimum Academic Preparation: Appropriate terminal degree or equivalent preparation to serve the mission of UHD. Minimum Experience: In recognition of the wide range of accomplishments and other qualifications that may be possessed by applicants, no specific time sequence is required for promotion from associate professor to professor, but a minimum of six years as an associate professor is strongly recommended. Minimum Criteria for Rank: As an associate professor, the applicant for professor has achieved and sustained a record of excellence in teaching, leadership in both service and professional activities, major contributions in scholarly/creative activities, and has used his/her talents to benefit the department and university. Based on accomplishments as associate professor, and additionally as indicated by current work in progress, the applicant exhibits the potential for sustained continuation of excellence in teaching, leadership in service and professional activities, and major contributions in scholarly/creative activities after promotion to professor.

2.2.5.5 Professional and Administrative Staff

Full-time UHD professional and administrative staff who are carried at least 50% on teaching budgets accrue time toward tenure and promotion at the same rate as full-time tenure-track faculty. Those not carried at least 50% on teaching budgets do not accrue time toward tenure and/or promotion.

2.2.5.6 Initial Appointments

Initial appointments with ranks above assistant professor and/or with tenure must involve consultation with the majority of the tenured members of the appropriate department who will provide a written and signed recommendation to the appropriate administrators.

2.2.6 Confidentiality

Only those with a specific role in determining the outcome of the candidacy or in processing the candidacy (see Timetable) have access to a candidate's report. Both the report and recommendations (described in Timetable) are strictly confidential, but this does not prohibit the president from seeking additional advice. Specific information is released to the candidate at a time designated in the procedures section.

2.3 Rank and Tenure Procedures

Candidates for rank and tenure are recommended at five independent levels: the department (separate recommendations by department chairman and by the department rank and tenure committee), the dean, the university rank and tenure committee, the vice president for academic affairs/provost, and the president. Administrators seek promotion in academic rank and/or tenure as faculty members and follow the same specific procedures as other faculty members.

2.3.1 Probationary Credit for Years Prior to UHD Years

The number of prior years' service countable toward tenure at UHD is determined by the president in accordance with Section 2.2.4 of this policy statement and is communicated in writing to the faculty member at the time of initial appointment.

2.3.2 Preliminary Notification for Probationary Faculty

In April of the faculty member's second and fourth years of service counting toward tenure, the department chairman consults with the department rank and tenure committee and advises the faculty member in writing of progress toward attaining tenure. In other years the individual's progress toward tenure is discussed in the annual performance conference with the chairman, based on review and consultation with the department rank and tenure committee.

2.3.3 Duties of the Faculty Member Petitioning for Promotion and/or Tenure

Each faculty member who is scheduled for a tenure decision or who seeks promotion in rank so informs the department rank and tenure committee, department chairman, and dean by the first Monday in May of the year preceding the rank and tenure decision (The deadlines noted in these procedures are outlined in the Timetable). By the third Monday in May, the dean verifies eligibility and notifies in writing each petitioning faculty member of eligibility status. By the first Monday in October, each candidate submits a detailed rank and/or tenure report (prepared according to the attached guidelines entitled "Guidelines and Format for the Promotion/Tenure Report") to the department rank and tenure committee chair, to the department chair, and to the dean. A candidate does not participate in the closed discussion(s) of his/her candidacy or in the voting process on his/her own candidacy at any level of the procedure, and he/she may choose to abstain from all decision-making at the department level in the year of his/her candidacy.

2.3.4 Department Rank and Tenure Committee Procedures

The department rank and tenure committee includes all tenured members of the department except the department chair. The department chair, in consultation with the tenured faculty, convenes the first meeting for the department rank and tenure committee no later than the third Monday in September. The chair of the committee is elected from the membership. The exact procedure for this election is left to the committee but must include a written ballot. The newly elected chair notifies the department chair, the dean, and the vice president for academic

affairs/provost of the election results. The department rank and tenure committee members review the rank and/or tenure reports. Recommendations regarding promotion and tenure are based strictly upon approved criteria, professional considerations and documentation. Minutes of each meeting are to be kept and a file maintained. Votes are taken by written ballot, and the results are recorded for each candidate. Abstention or recusement from voting is strongly discouraged. Recommendations from the committee consist of a detailed written assessment of each candidate's past achievements and potential for future contributions, academic and professional experience, academic preparation, and performance at UHD. The recommendations must be solidly argued and based on detailed evidence. Fifty percent of all members of the department rank and tenure committee must vote "yes" to register a positive vote result. In the case of a divided vote, two reports are to be submitted. The report or reports are to be signed by all committee members in accordance with how they voted, i.e., those voting "yes" sign the "yes" report, and those voting "no" sign the "no" report. Recommendation reports, including the recorded numerical votes and the department's promotion and/or tenure criteria (developed according to the process described in PS 10.A.05, paragraph 2.1.1), are forwarded to the dean by the second Monday in December. After April 1st of the year of each rank and tenure process cycle, the chair of the department rank and tenure committee shares the committee's recommendation with the department chair.

2.3.4.1 Peer Review

For effective peer review, a department rank and tenure committee should have at least three members. In cases where no tenured member of the department has expertise in the candidate's discipline, other provisions for peer review may be made. The exact form of extra-departmental peer review, if needed, is determined by the department rank and tenure committee in consultation with the department chair and the dean. Faculty members from other areas of the university or from other institutions of higher learning may be invited to offer recommendations regarding (but in no case vote on) the qualifications of the candidate with respect to the stated criteria of the university for promotion and/or tenure. The candidate may be asked to have one or more letters submitted on his/her behalf. At the initiative of the candidate, external letters of recommendation may be submitted regardless of other forms of peer review.

2.3.5 Procedures for the Department Chair

Though it is understood that the department chair and the department rank and tenure committee may consult with each other and share factual information, the department chair reaches an independent conclusion and makes an independent recommendation. The chair's recommendation is a detailed written assessment of the candidate's past achievements and potential for future contributions, academic and professional experience, academic preparation, and performance at UHD. This report is forwarded to the dean by the second Monday in

December. After April 1st the department chair shares his/her recommendation with the department rank and tenure committee chair.

2.3.5.1 Chair Candidacies

A department chair who is a candidate for promotion and/or tenure must receive the support of both the department rank and tenure committee and the dean. A department chair may not submit a recommendation for him/herself for promotion and/or tenure.

2.3.6 Dean's Recommendations and Notifications

The dean makes a written recommendation concerning the merits of each candidate for promotion and/or tenure regardless of the recommendations of the department chair and the department rank and tenure committee. That recommendation is a detailed assessment of the candidate's past achievements and potential for future contributions, academic and professional experience, academic preparation, and performance at UHD. If the Dean's recommendation is different from the department committee's or the department chair's, or both, the dean must state clearly the specific reasons for the difference. This report is forwarded by the third Wednesday in January to the appropriate recipient(s) as detailed below.

2.3.6.1 Dean Candidacies

A dean who is a candidate for promotion and/or tenure must receive the support of the rank and tenure committee of the department in which he/she holds academic rank as well as of the chair of that department; a dean may not submit a recommendation for him/herself for promotion and/or tenure.

2.3.6 Procedures for the Dean

For a candidacy to progress beyond the dean's level, the candidacy must be supported by at least two positive recommendations from the following three sources: department rank and tenure committee, the department chair, and the dean. When a candidacy progresses beyond the dean's level, by the third Wednesday in January the dean forwards the candidate's complete report, including all supporting materials, the appropriate department's promotion and/or tenure criteria (developed according to the process described in PS 10.A.05, paragraph 2.1.1), the results of the past performance evaluations, and each recommendation from the three preliminary sources to the vice president for academic affairs/provost, who provides these materials and other staff services to the university rank and tenure committee. The dean also notifies the chair, the chair of the department rank and tenure committee, and the candidates that the recommendation has gone forward. After April 1st, the dean shares his/her recommendation with the department chair and the department rank and tenure committee chair. For a candidacy that does not progress beyond the dean's level, by the third Wednesday in January the dean forwards the candidate's report and each recommendation from the three preliminary sources to the vice president for academic affairs/provost. The dean also notifies the candidate by the third Wednesday in January and releases to the candidate the three separate recommendations and accompanying statements.

2.3.7 Procedures for the University Rank and Tenure Committee

2.3.7.1 Role

The role of the university rank and tenure committee is advisory to the vice president for academic affairs/provost and to the president. The committee is composed of senior members of the faculty who are to serve as a general academic review body on all cases of promotion and/or tenure. They do not serve as departmental representatives but rather are to bring to their deliberations an institutional perspective combined with the standards of the academic professoriat in the broadest sense.

2.3.7.2 Procedures

By the third Monday in September, the tenured full-time faculty members of each department elect by written ballot one of the tenured professors or associate professors of the department to serve on the university rank and tenure committee. The department chairman communicates the name of the department's representative to the dean and to the vice president for academic affairs/provost. To be eligible for election, a faculty member must have served on his department rank and tenure committee for a minimum of one full academic year at UHD. Committee members are elected to two year terms. As the term of each member expires, that person's successor shall be elected to a two year term. Candidates for promotion and/or tenure are not eligible to serve on the university rank and tenure committee. The department chair represents any department lacking a member who satisfies all these criteria. The vice president for academic affairs/provost convenes the university rank and tenure committee no later than the fourth Monday in January. The chair of this committee is elected from its membership. The exact procedure for this election is left to the committee but must include a written ballot. The vice president for academic affairs/provost provides the committee with department promotion and/or tenure criteria that have been provided by the appropriate college dean, each candidate's report including all supporting materials, and each recommendation from the three preliminary sources (see Section 2.3) and with such other support services as the committee may require. After April 1st, copies of the committee's final report(s) will be provided to the appropriate dean, department chair, and department rank and tenure committee chair. Minutes of the committee's deliberations are kept and transmitted, with the committee's final report(s), to the vice president for academic affairs/provost by the first Monday in March. The university rank and tenure committee evaluates each candidate's report and supporting documentation, taking cognizance of the information supplied by the vice president for academic affairs/provost. The members of the committee vote by written ballot on each candidacy. When the university rank and tenure committee considers a recommendation for promotion and/or tenure from a particular academic department, that department's representative on the committee may be requested to provide factual information but does not participate in discussions or decisions concerning that particular candidacy. Those voting in favor of a particular candidacy

draft a report giving the reasons for their support. Those voting against a particular candidacy also draft a report citing the reasons for their lack of support. These reports, together with a tally of the votes for or against each candidacy, are forwarded as stated above. Should a particular group be unable to agree on the contents of a single report, smaller groups or individuals may submit separate reports.

2.3.9 Role of the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost

The vice president for academic affairs/provost reviews each candidate's report and the recommendations from the department rank and tenure committee, department chair, dean, and university rank and tenure committee. The vice president writes a recommendation for each candidate and forwards that recommendation, all earlier recommendations, and each candidate's report to the president so that the president can make the necessary decisions by April 1. The vice president for academic affairs/provost is responsible for providing staff services to the university rank and tenure committee. The vice president for academic affairs/provost's office also serves as a depository for reports and recommendations generated during the rank and tenure process.

2.3.10 President's Recommendation

The president reviews each candidate's report and all recommendations regarding the candidate and submits recommendations to the chancellor of the University of Houston System on or before April 1. Each candidate is informed of the president's recommendation(s) and is provided, upon written request, a copy of the official report from each level of review.

3. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Party (Reviewer): Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Review: As needed



President

Policy History:

Issue #1: 08/11/1981

Issue #2: 08/15/1985

Issue #3: 06/10/1988

Issue #4: 08/01/1993

Issue #5: 11/15/1993

Issue #6: 10/16/1995

Issue #7: 04/01/2005

TIMETABLE*

MAY	<p>By the first Monday in May of the year preceding tenure and promotion decisions, each full-time faculty member who believes that he is qualified for a promotion in rank and/or tenure so informs the department rank and tenure committee, department chairman and the dean.</p> <p>By the third Monday in May, the dean determines eligibility and advises the candidate.</p>
SEPTEMBER	<p>By the third Monday in September, the department chairman, in consultation with the tenured faculty, schedules the first meeting for the department rank and tenure committee. The chairman of the committee is elected from the membership. In addition, one of the eligible full-time tenured associate professors or professors of the department is elected to serve on the university rank and tenure committee.</p>
OCTOBER	<p>By the first Monday in October, each candidate submits a detailed rank and/or tenure report, prepared according to the guidelines in <i>Appendix A</i>, to the department rank and tenure committee, to the department chairman, and to the dean.</p>
DECEMBER	<p>By the second Monday in December, the department rank and tenure committee and the department chairmen make their decisions and forward their recommendation reports to the dean.</p>
JANUARY	<p>By the third Wednesday in January, the dean makes his recommendation to the appropriate recipients. The university rank and tenure committee begins its work no later than the fourth Monday of January.</p>
FEBRUARY	<p>By the last Monday in February, the university rank and MARCH tenure committee offers the vice president for academic affairs/provost its best advice concerning the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate, expresses either support for or opposition to the candidacies and sends its recommendations, with detailed reasons, to the vice president for academic affairs/provost. The vice president makes a recommendation to the president during March.</p>
APRIL	<p>By April 1, the president makes his recommendation to the chancellor of the University of Houston System. Each candidate is informed of all recommendations and is provided, upon written request, copies of the official reports from each level of review.</p>

*These deadlines are binding on all parties involved. The only exceptions to the timetable are those made by the president.

GUIDELINES AND FORMAT FOR PREPARING A PROMOTION/TENURE REPORT

The promotion/tenure report should present an argument sufficiently supported by evidence to demonstrate the faculty member's qualifications for the rank and/or tenure that is sought. The report should build a case which supports the claim of excellence and which addresses, among other areas, service and creative activities. These terms are defined below:

Excellence is demonstrated by significantly exceeding in quality minimum expectations for continuing employment and by making a significant, positive impact on the institution. Excellence should be validated by means convincing to peers and understandable to a neutral observer.

Service and Professional Activities are the application or dissemination of knowledge or use of skills (in one's role as a professional educator or in one's role as a specialist in a particular discipline) for the solution of problems and/or the advancement of the institution, the profession, or the community.

Scholarly/Creative Activities are professional activities that add to the sum of knowledge or to the effective dissemination of knowledge. They are activities that involve original, professional work that leads to a tangible result.

In preparing the report, the faculty member should build a carefully constructed case demonstrating both professional excellence, as defined above, and a commitment to the goals of UHD. While the faculty member is not responsible for the recommendations of the department rank and tenure committee, department chair, dean, university rank and tenure committee, or vice president for academic affairs/provost, the faculty member must keep in mind that these recommendations will be based on the accurate, detailed, and specific information contained in the promotion/tenure report. These recommendations will assess the quality of the faculty member's past achievements and potential for high quality future contributions in those areas related to the criteria for promotion/tenure. For these reasons, the faculty member should provide all reviewers with the argumentation and the evidence necessary for favorable recommendations.

The preparation of this report is a significant undertaking. A faculty member should not hesitate to seek help, if needed, from the department chair or from peers qualified to offer advice on the organization or writing of the report.

Format For The Promotion/Tenure Report

The format used in preparing the report is designed to ensure uniformity among all reports. The guidelines are broad enough to enable each faculty member to explain all aspects of relevant achievements. The report should be written as a narrative where appropriate. References should be made to documents numbered and included in an appendix.

I. Curriculum Vitae

This section begins with a list of specific degrees held, with place and data of the awarding of each degree; the title of the thesis and/or dissertation; and a statement of major teaching areas. The curriculum vitae section also includes listings of employment history with job titles and brief descriptions of specific responsibilities in reverse chronological order; membership activities and/or offices held in professional organizations; panel appearances; papers read; publications or other kinds of creative activities; honors and awards; and significant public service.

II. Opening Statement

This section begins with the faculty member's rationale for deserving the rank/tenure for which he/she is applying. This statement should include an explanation of how one's philosophy of teaching, service and professional activities, and scholarly/creative activities meets the mission and goals of UHD. This statement should be as convincing, complete, and concise as possible.

III. Statements Concerning Performance Evaluation

This section should include the results of all the faculty member's annual UHD performance evaluations (Documentation is available from the department chair or the dean.). This section should also include an explanation of any other documentation of performance. The faculty member should explain why any evaluations have been less than satisfactory.

IV. Statements Concerning Achievements and Potential

Potential is best understood based upon past achievements. This section of the report demonstrates achievements in teaching, service and professional activities, and scholarly/creative activities:

A. TEACHING

1. A listing of the descriptive titles of all university-level courses taught, the institution at which each was taught, the level of each course taught, and the course numbers for UHD courses taught.
2. A description of a representative sampling of courses taught, which might include an explanation of course syllabi, special materials used, samples of student work demonstrating that course goals were met, and examples of methods and styles of teaching and testing.
3. A brief explanation and analysis of all available student evaluations (or summary data).
4. A description of other teaching activities such as workshops, non-credit seminars, etc.
5. A demonstration of contributions to the educational program of UHD which includes development or revision of courses or programs, including those offered by any recognized units at UHD.

B. SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES (See definition above)

1. A list of specific services to the university with explanation of contributions to UHD committees, special assignments or projects, or student service activities (such as advising, sponsoring student activities, or other specific student activities or services to students)
2. A list of professional services with explanation of any activity which benefits the faculty member's discipline(s) or profession in general
3. A list of public services with explanation of applications of the faculty member's professional expertise which benefit the community and contribute positively to the well-being of UHD.

C. SCHOLARLY/CREATIVE ACTIVITIES (See definition above)

A list of creative activities with brief explanation of publications, presentations at professional meetings or invited lectures, workshops, etc., and their significance, and also with explanation of the significance of work not formally published but either distributed or submitted for review.

V. Statement Concerning Minimum Experience

This section states that the faculty member's experience meets or exceeds the minimum qualifications for the specific rank/tenure sought (see Section 2.2.5).

VI. Statement Concerning Minimum Academic Preparation

This section states that the faculty member has a terminal degree or appropriate preparation (as defined by the faculty member's department) to serve the mission of UHD.