UNM College of Education  
Policy on the Definition of Excellence

Purpose

To clarify the definition of excellence for tenure and promotion decisions and to guide members of the COE Promotion and Tenure Committee in their decisions related to excellence. This policy is meant only to supplement B4 Faculty Review of the UNM Faculty Handbook and define excellence; it in no way changes the process delineated in the UNM Faculty Handbook.

Guidelines

The UNM Faculty Handbook states:

The tenure system consists of rules and procedures that establish an essentially self-regulated body of scholars, researchers, and creative artists enjoying the continuity of existence and economic security within which academic freedom is both fostered and protected (4.7.1 Purposes of the Tenure System)....Tenure is a privilege, not a right, and is awarded only after the most serious deliberation and review (B4.7.2).

Excellence in either teaching or scholarly work constitutes the chief basis for tenure and promotion. Service and personal characteristics are important but normally round out and complement the faculty member’s strengths in teaching and scholarly work (B1.2.1)

The process of making tenure and promotion decisions is grounded in the professional judgment of colleagues as they take a holistic view of the promotion and tenure dossier prepared by the candidate. The written recommendations of all reviewers are submitted to the Dean to inform his recommendation regarding tenure and promotion. All reviews are incorporated into the dossier as it proceeds to the university promotion and tenure committee and the Provost. The following criteria will be used to guide evaluations.

Scholarly Work

The UNM Faculty Handbook defines Scholarly Work in the following way:

The term Scholarly Work, as used in the Policy, comprises scholarship, research, or creative work. Scholarship embodies the critical and accurate synthesis and dissemination of knowledge. The term research is understood to mean systematic, original investigation directed toward the generation, development, and validation of new knowledge or the solution of contemporary problems. Creative work is understood to mean original or imaginative accomplishment in literature, the arts, or the professions.... The criteria for judging the original or imaginative nature of research or creative work must reflect the generally accepted standards prevailing in the applicable discipline or professional area. To qualify as scholarship or creative work, the results of the endeavor must be disseminated and subject to critical peer evaluation in a manner appropriate to the field in question....Publications, exhibits, performances, or media
"productions" may be “supplemented by evidence of integration of the faculty member’s scholarly work and teaching.” (B1.2.2)

To achieve the rank of Associate Professor, the Candidate “shall have demonstrated a basic general understanding of a substantial part of their discipline and have an established reputation within and outside the University in their fields of scholarly work” (B2.2.2).

Considerations for Excellence in Scholarly Work (including scholarship, research and creative work as defined above)

The candidate’s Scholarly Work Statement and accompanying Materials (curriculum vita, example publications) provide:

1) An overview of the substance and intent of the candidate’s scholarly work;
2) An accurate accounting of publications and presentations and their peer review (Review by Indigenous Nations is equivalent to academic peer review);
3) Explanation of the context and scholarly traditions within which the work was produced;
4) Examples of published work.

The Statement and materials are subject to review by colleagues, a departmental review committee, the department chair, scholars from institutions outside UNM, and the College of Education Promotion and Tenure Committee prior to submission to the Dean. Colleagues submit their judgments via departmental evaluation forms. All others write formal reviews that are included to advise the Dean in making the final Tenure and Promotion decision.

Criteria for excellence of scholarly work can include but are not limited to--

- **Coherence:** Candidate’s body of work has a well-explained coherence. It is clear 1) how current work builds on or differs from previous work and contributes to future research and 2) how it “embodies the critical and accurate synthesis and dissemination of knowledge” (B1.2.2)

- **Dissemination:** Candidate’s work has been “disseminated and subject to critical peer evaluation in a manner appropriate to the field in question” (B1.2.2). Candidate clearly indicates the nature of peer review for publications and presentations on the Curriculum Vita, and the accompanying Scholarly Work Statement explains the candidate’s research paradigm, why the level of review is appropriate for the completed work, collaborations, and other important aspects of the context for the work. Senior faculty and outside reviewers, who are members of the candidate’s discipline or professional area, consider the work excellent, given “generally accepted standards prevailing in the applicable discipline or professional area” (B1.2.2). Dissemination and recognition within and across Indigenous Nations is considered as part of a nationally and internationally disseminated body of work.
• **Quantity:** The College of Education values wide dissemination and stringent peer review and considers an academic responsibility to publish in high quality peer reviewed national and international journals as part of your scholarly work. No exact number of publications and presentations is required to achieve excellence.

• **Impact:** Candidate’s work has meaningful impact on communities, scholarship, and/or practitioners, and may include acting as a primary investigator or participating on externally funded grants. Candidate clearly explains the rationale for presented scholarly work, including the importance of the venue or forum for publication. Tenured faculty and outside reviewers consider the work as excellent, thoughtful, innovative, well theorized, meaningful, important, etc.

• **Integration:** Candidate’s scholarly work is integrated with teaching (B1.2.2) and service. Candidate explains the relationship between scholarship and other aspects of their position. Tenured faculty recognize the integration.

**Teaching**

Teaching is defined by the Section B.2.2.1 of the *UNM Faculty Handbook* as follows:

(a) Due to the variety of subject matter and student populations at the University, teaching occurs in various settings and via a diversity of forms of instruction, such as didactic lecturing, small group seminars, problem-based learning, and clinical practicum. The term teaching as used here includes, but is not restricted to, regularly scheduled undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, and professional instruction, and the advising, direction and supervision of individual undergraduate, graduate, post-doctoral, and professional students. Library faculty, in the discharge of their professional duties, shall be regarded as engaged in teaching. Teaching also includes the direction or supervision of students in reading, research, internships, residencies, or fellowships. Faculty supervision or guidance of students in recognized academic pursuits that confer no University credit should also be considered as teaching.

(b) Effective teaching is one of the primary qualifications for promotion and tenure. The educational experience provides a student with an increased knowledge base, an opportunity to develop thinking and reasoning skills, and an appreciation for learning. An effective teacher is best characterized as an individual who successfully promotes these goals. Although individual teachers bring to bear different sets of talents in pursuit of these goals an effective teacher, at a minimum, should:

- Demonstrate effective communication skills.
- Show evidence of strong preparation.
- Present material that reflects the current state of knowledge in the field.
- Demonstrate effective management skills.
- Organize individual topics into a meaningful sequence.
- Demonstrate an ability to interact with students in an encouraging and stimulating manner.
- Demonstrate a commitment to the discipline.
(c) Teaching is evaluated by students and faculty. Evidence to be evaluated for teaching during midprobationary, tenure, and promotion reviews must include student course evaluations, descriptions of courses taught and developed by the faculty member, and written reports of peer observations of teaching.

The candidate’s Teaching Statement and accompanying materials (list of courses taught each semester, chart of student evaluations, sample syllabi, written peer observations) provide:

1) An overview of the candidate’s philosophy of and approach to teaching;
2) An accurate accounting of courses taught by semester;
3) An accurate accounting of student evaluations by course;
4) Examples of syllabi from two different courses taught;
5) Letters from peers who have observed the candidate’s teaching;
6) An accurate accounting of advisement and mentoring activities (undergraduate and graduate)

The Statement and materials are subject to review by colleagues, a departmental review committee, the department chair, and the College of Education Promotion and Tenure Committee prior to submission to the Dean. Colleagues submit their judgments via departmental evaluation forms. A colleague also conducts an in-depth evaluation and adds a confidential review letter. All others write formal reviews that are added to the materials to advise the Dean in making the final Tenure and Promotion decision.

Considerations for Excellence in Teaching

In addition to the above qualities for effective teaching, considerations for a rating of excellent can include but are not limited to:

- Candidate clearly articulates a theory of teaching and learning that is illustrated by example materials and peer reviews.
- Candidate provides evidence that students have opportunities to reflect on own learning as it unfolds.
- Candidate demonstrates careful consideration of comments from peer reviews and students.
- Candidate demonstrates a clear commitment to quality advisement of students, including serving on or chairing graduate examinations, theses, and dissertations, both within and outside of the department.
- Mean and median student evaluation scores are consistently high or have a trajectory of growth that has led to higher student evaluations in all categories of the College of Education student evaluation instrument. Data from students is analyzed and informed by candidate’s philosophy of teaching, as well as the context and substance of the course.
• General agreement among faculty reviewers and students is that the candidate’s teaching is excellent, outstanding, memorable, etc.

• Candidate demonstrates innovation in instructional approaches, content, curricula, course development, delivery, and/or assessment.

Procedure

This definition will be included in all materials distributed to those preparing for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor and promotion to Full Professor.

The criteria will be included in materials used by departments, outside reviewers, the COE Promotion and Tenure Committee, and the Dean to guide their written evaluation of any tenure track faculty seeking promotion and/or tenure. The criteria will not be used as a rubric or checklist. Instead all reviewers should use the definition to guide their writing of a holistic evaluation.