

BioMed Reappointment Promotion and Tenure Committee Final Report May 2008

Overview

The purpose of this document is to report on the goals, discussions and recommendations of the BioMed Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Committee (BRPTC) that met during the academic year 2006-2007 (hereafter, the Committee). The goal of the Committee was to evaluate existing criteria for promotion, reappointment and tenure of faculty in the various departments of the Division of Biology and Medicine, and to examine whether the criteria were in need of revision given the changing landscape of biomedical research across the University and the across the country. The reappointment, promotion and tenuring of our faculty are the most important decisions we make as a Department, a Division, and a University. These decisions have a lasting impact on the directions, the standards, and the quality of intellectual pursuits by both faculty and students. Moreover, the procedures and guidelines for successful promotion and tenure have an important influence on how faculty choose to approach their research, and ultimately, their careers. It has been more than a decade since a Division-wide evaluation has been conducted to review the criteria for these important decisions. In light of the recent growth of the Division under the Plan for Academic Enrichment (PAE), there are many reappointment and tenure decisions that are facing Departments and there is wide variation in academic cultures across these Departments. With changing climates for funding, the pressure to publish in high profile journals, the expectation to excel as a teacher and mentor, and the huge investment the Division makes in new faculty, it is time for a close examination of the promotion and tenure process in the Division of Biology and Medicine.

Composition of the Committee

Dean Eli Adashi charged Professor David Rand with the task of assembling a committee of Tenured Professors representing each of the Departments in the Division of Biology and Medicine to review and evaluate the criteria for reappointment, promotion and tenure. The committee consisted of:

David Berson, Professor of Medical Science, Department of Neuroscience

Kim Boekelheide, Professor of Medical Science, Department of Pathology

Laurent Brossay, Associate Professor of Biology, Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology

Joseph Hogan, Associate Professor of Medical Science, Department of Community Health

Christine Janis, Professor of Biology, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Julie Kauer, Professor of Medical Science, Department of Molecular Pharmacology, Physiology and Biotechnology

Arthur Landy, Professor of Medical Science, Department of Molecular Biology, Cellular Biology and Biochemistry

Kimberly Mowry, Professor of Biology, Department of Molecular Biology, Cellular Biology and Biochemistry

Michael Paradiso, Professor of Neuroscience, Department of Neuroscience

David Rand, Professor of Biology, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (Chair)

Staffing: Pamela Ring, Dean's Office

Need for Review and Charge to the Committee

The Charge to the committee from Dean Adashi is reviewed below. This Charge was motivated by several concerns that have been evident to the Dean while overseeing the presentation of faculty cases to the Tenure, Promotion and Appointment Committee (TPAC). These concerns include:

- 1. Clarity of expectations.** Faculty are unclear about the required and expected levels of performance needed to meet or exceed the standards on the road to reappointment, tenure and promotion
- 2. Uniformity of criteria.** The Dean expressed a desire to have greater uniformity among departments in the criteria for promotion and tenure, as different departments have distinct cultures that make evaluation difficult to compare.
- 3. Consistent message on teaching.** The external review committee that evaluated the Undergraduate Biology Education Program explicitly recommended that the University write a new set of tenure criteria that make a realistic set of expectations for junior faculty so that the unique culture of education and research at Brown is not lost.
- 4. Consistency of standards.** There is a need for all departments to maintain a consistent interpretation of the University-wide criteria for promotion, including the weighting of different components of the overall criteria.
- 5. The currency of evaluation.** There is a need for clarification of the relative importance of the various components of the promotion package, including scholarship, funding, teaching and service.

Based on these concerns, the Charge to the committee was to review each of the following topics and make recommendations on how decisions should be made regarding reappointment, promotion, and tenure.

Charge to the Committee

- 1. Clarify the expectations from faculty on each of the following items:**
 - a. The quality and impact of scholarly work**
 - b. The record of peer-reviewed funding**
 - c. Teaching**
 - d. Service to the department and university**
 - e. The future potential of the candidate**
- 2. Review Departmental tenure rate data**
- 3. Review Departmental Policies and Criteria for promotion and tenure**
 - a. Review timing of reappointment and tenure schedule**
 - b. Consider distinct departmental cultures vs. uniformity**
- 4. Appointments at affiliated institutions (MBL)**
- 5. Comparison with peer institutions**

Recommendations of the Committee

The Committee concluded that the Report should consist of two documents: **1) a set of general recommendations** from the Charge that can serve as a guideline for updating departmental policies, and **2) a specific set of recommendations** that clarify what needs to be accomplished by each candidate to ensure satisfactory progress toward to the goals of reappointment, promotion and tenure. The general recommendations are described below, and the specific recommendations are attached as Appendix 1.

The Committee reviewed the University Policies stated in Chapter 16 of the Handbook of Academic Administration, and a statement by President Simmons in the December 2004 edition of the Faculty Bulletin. Both of those documents are attached as Appendix 2. The committee unanimously reaffirmed the letter and the tone of those documents. The committee discussed at great length the possibility of developing a metric for promotion based on the many available and quantifiable data related to scholarship and achievement in the Life Sciences (number of publications, impact factors of journals, citation records, grant dollars received, etc.). However, the committee was in complete agreement that no such metric should be developed, as these devices generally fail to recognize originality, novelty and the inevitably subjective nature of quality. The evaluation of quality can and should be done by the written evaluation of informed peers both inside and outside the university.

Recommendation 1a: Clarify the expectations for the quality and impact of scholarly work.

Scholarship is the single most important factor in both reappointment and tenure. The expectation for reappointment is that scholarly work must involve a candidate's Independent intellectual contribution to a question of significant interest in the life sciences. This must involve work done while employed at Brown. While collaborative scholarship is acceptable (such as the multiple-PI status on NIH awards, or extensions of postdoctoral or graduate research projects), the individual intellectual contribution of the candidate to this collaborative work must be evident. To aid Chairs in preparing dossiers for presentation to TPAC, candidates should state on their CV and personal statement precisely what their independent contribution was to collaborative projects. Moreover, work done as an Assistant Professor at another institution before being hired at Brown could count towards the scholarship criterion of work 'done while employed at Brown'. For promotion to tenure, this scholarly work must be of outstanding quality that ensures the candidate a national reputation in their field, based on evaluation letters from established individuals at other institutions.

Recommendation 1b: Clarify the expectations for peer-reviewed funding.

The committee was unanimous that a record of external, peer reviewed funding is not a requirement for promotion to tenure. The focus should remain on the quality of the scholarship, and the independent intellectual contribution to this scholarship. However, in most fields in the life sciences, substantial external peer-reviewed funding is required to achieve the expected level of scholarship. This is not true in all cases, so evaluation of a candidate should distinguish research scholarship from funding activity. The committee acknowledged conflicting messages on this topic: advertisements for tenure track positions in the Division of Biology and Medicine routinely state that successful candidates must develop an externally funded research program. If a candidate can develop a national reputation of outstanding scholarship without funding, and there is a clear promise to continue that scholarship, promotion to tenure should not be prevented based on a lack of external funds awarded.

Committee members polled peer institutions ('Ivy plus' group) and confirmed that similar language was present in promotion policies for those institutions. Clear statements requiring funding were generally absent from guidelines on successful promotion and tenure. The emphasis at peer institutions was consistently on the quality and impact of the scholarship, and the financial means by which that level of scholarship was to be obtained were not explicit.

Recommendation 1c: Clarify the expectations for teaching.

The committee reaffirmed the commitment to excellence in teaching, but recommends that more realistic expectations be stated regarding the importance of teaching in the evaluation for reappointment and tenure. The University policies clearly avoid the expectation that candidates for promotion will have attained excellence in teaching: "Demonstrated ability in teaching and service are necessary but not sufficient conditions for tenure." (from Chapter 16 of the Handbook). The external review by the Brown University Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Review (BUCR - Drs. Michael Dickinson from Cal Tech and Dr. Andrew Clark from Cornell – both Brown undergraduates) was highly critical of the mixed messages junior faculty receive about the importance of teaching. BUCR reported that high expectations were stated, but not actually used in evaluations. The BUCR stated that at present, valuable undergraduate teaching was done largely through the "good will" of faculty but that this might easily be lost in the future.

The BRPT Committee thus recommends that clearer language be provided that balances teaching and research expectations. It should be acknowledged that Brown has a unique culture of undergraduate education for a research university, and teaching is of great importance. That said, the expectation should not be so high that the time of junior faculty is siphoned away from research to the detriment of their career. The key word is balance, something that requires careful mentoring. Candidates for reappointment must demonstrate that they are effective teachers. These candidates should be provided with a formal program of peer review and should have ample opportunity to be mentored in the craft of teaching by specific colleagues in their department. This mentoring should involve review of the course syllabus and exams, and the observation of more than one lecture by a faculty colleague of the candidate's choosing. A colleague who team-teaches a course with a junior colleague can fill this mentoring role. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair to ensure that this peer review and mentoring of teaching is administered properly. Candidates for promotion to tenure must demonstrate progress in their commitment to excellence in teaching, and become accomplished teachers as deemed by peer evaluations. Student evaluations can be included in the evaluation of a candidate's teaching success, but these should be supplemented with teaching evaluations by graduate teaching Assistants as well as the faculty mentor.

The Committee also discussed teaching loads and concluded that the departments should set these loads. Many of the departmental policies for promotion have statements on teaching loads, but this is not true in all cases. It is essential that departments, and the Division in general, acknowledge the teaching of Independent Study students (BioMed 195-196). Most faculty, and many junior faculty, serve as advisors of independent research projects in their labs, and this involves a significant commitment of time to teaching that is not formally recognized. Moreover, there is no formal system to advise junior faculty on how to serve as a sponsor of an Independent Study project. Given the important role this kind of instruction plays in the education of our undergraduates, recognition of these efforts, and proper guidance on how to teach independent study students needs to be put in place.

Recommendation 1d: Clarify the expectations for service.

A candidate's service to the department and university is an essential component of the evaluation for reappointment and tenure. However, service alone is not sufficient for promotion. Candidates for reappointment are expected to contribute to the intellectual life of the department and to common responsibilities of citizenship for the Division of Biology and Medicine. It is expected that junior faculty will serve on graduate student theses and advisory committees if asked to do so, and will serve as undergraduate advisors if asked to do so. Candidates for tenure are expected to function as collegial contributors to departmental responsibilities, as the needs arise. Examples are: graduate admissions committees, curriculum committees, and Divisional policy committees, where their expertise is particularly important. It is the responsibility of Department Chairs to ensure that requests for service by junior faculty are fairly distributed, and that all candidates have an opportunity to provide service to the department of Division in time for reappointment or tenure.

Recommendation 1e: Clarify the expectations for future potential.

The Committee reaffirmed the University policies on the issue of future potential. As stated in Chapter 16 of the Handbook: "Younger scholars must have achieved a level of scholarly accomplishment and recognition that stands on its own, and moreover signifies great promise. ... the quality and not the quantity of scholarly production should be paramount. Promotion to full professor at Brown is contingent on fulfillment of the promise on which tenure was originally granted."

The issue of promise is particularly important for junior faculty considered for reappointment, and was the topic of much discussion by the Committee. Recognizing the substantial commitment of resources by the Division to hire and set up junior faculty, evaluation of future promise comprises a substantial component of the decision for reappointment. Details on the milestones to be achieved are provided in Appendix 1, and the issue of tenure timing is discussed below. The Committee recommends that the decision to reappoint a junior faculty be based on clear progress towards the scholarship on which the candidate was originally hired. Faculty are generally hired based on enthusiasm for the candidate's past progress and the potential of their proposed research program. Candidates must have made an effort to advance this program through submission of manuscripts or grant proposals, and the presentation of work at national meetings. Candidates for tenure must have attained recognition for their research, and must have a clear path of progress for future advances in this research or an equally promising research program.

A decision on the nature of this promise rests on the evaluation of peers, as stated in Chapter 16 of the Handbook: "Peer esteem, both within and outside the university, is a valuable indicator of scholarly ability and achievement." Candidates at all levels should be informed of the tremendous importance of the evaluation letters from scientists outside the university. These letters provide the most information on the impact a candidate's scholarship has had on any given field.

Recommendation 2: Review of Departmental tenure data

Data on the attrition and tenuring of faculty in each of the departments in the Division were provided to the committee, as tabulated by Jim Patti in the Dean's office. The Committee noted that the tenure rates were rather high (80-100%, across departments, based on fewer than 10

cases per department). However, the Committee did not recommend any specific guidelines regarding these tenure rates. Rather, the Committee felt that the most effective means of assuring the quality of the tenured faculty was to clarify the expectations for candidates, and the guidelines for departments. Ultimately the quality of the faculty depends on the quality of the applicant pool and the success of the candidates after arriving at Brown. The Committee noted that the pre-tenure departure rate was comparable to the tenure rejection rate. Any policies to actively reduce tenure rates was viewed as counter productive, relative to efforts to 1) enhance Brown's attractiveness to applicants, 2) provide competitive resources for junior faculty, and 3) provide supportive environment prior to reappointment and tenure.

Recommendation 3. Departmental Policies and Criteria for promotion and tenure

a. Timing of reappointment and tenure schedule

Before the Committee was assembled, Dean Adashi and the Chair of the Committee (Rand) met with Associate Provost Vince Tompkins and Dean of Faculty Rajiv Vohra to discuss the schedule of reappointment and tenure. Under Brown policies, junior faculty have an initial appointment of three years, and during the 3rd year are evaluated for a reappointment of two or four years. A re-evaluation is done in the last year of the reappointment term for either i) a second two-year term before the tenure decision, or ii) the actual tenure decision in the final year of the four-year reappointment term. Peer institutions have different tenure clocks or times to reappointment. The possibility was raised in the meeting with the Associate Provost and the Dean of Faculty that different tenure clock might be considered by the Committee given the reduced funding rates, increased competition for publication in high profile journals and access to the best graduate students. The outcome of that meeting was that the Committee, and the Division of Biology and Medicine, would not be able to administer a change of university policies on the issue of timing, without approval by the Brown Corporation. It was decided that the Committee could make recommendation about altering the timing of reappointment and tenure, but that a formal proposal would have to be prepared separately, and that proposal would need to be considered by the Corporation.

The Committee considered a number of different options for the timing of reappointment and tenure: a four year appointment followed by a three year appointment, two three-year appointments with an option to defer a year, a delayed tenure decision up to nine years, etc. The Committee eventually concluded that the existing policies should be retained, but recommended that more oversight should be established for the mentoring and guidance of the candidates. In short, the Committee recommended that more realistic criteria be defined for junior reappointments, while very high standards be clarified for appointment to tenure. These conclusions were motivated by the substantial commitment of resources that the Division makes to each new faculty member. Evaluation for reappointment after three years is initiated after the candidate has been at Brown for only two full years. This was deemed insufficient time to attain excellence in teaching, to have published independent papers based on work done at Brown, and to have obtained external funding as may be needed to advance the candidate's research program. The Committee recommends the clarified expectations listed above, and detailed in Appendix 1, as a way to have realistic goals for reappointment, while retaining high standards of scholarship for tenure.

The clear recommendation regarding the timing of reappointment and tenure relates directly to the oversight of progress under the existing schedule by faculty mentors and department chairs. This is detailed below.

Recommendation 3. Departmental Policies and Criteria for promotion and tenure

b. Distinct departmental cultures vs. uniformity

The Committee discussed the possibility of proposing a uniform set of guidelines that would apply to all departments, as per the Dean's concern that different departmental cultures were difficult to convey to TPAC. The Committee concluded that the general guidelines recommended here, and the specific guidelines detailed in Appendix 1, would provide sufficient uniformity for evaluating candidates across the various departments. Indeed, the Committee felt that the distinct departmental cultures should be welcomed as they represent the very nature of familiarity with specific disciplines within the life sciences. Since external evaluation is essential for promotion to tenure, departments are certain to vary in their familiarity with the leading researchers in particular fields, and thus who can provide an informed evaluation of a given candidate. The Committee settled on two recommendations that focus largely on procedural issues. 1) Department chairs should play an active role in coordinating the mentoring of candidates, and 2) in cases presented to TPAC, Department chairs should provide explicit interpretation of departmental uniqueness with respect to general BioMed and university criteria. These are detailed below

1) Department chairs should ensure that faculty mentors are actively engaged in mentoring junior faculty. The following steps should be followed:

- i) Annual meetings with the candidate, where a written record of the meeting is co-signed by the chair and the candidate. The record should detail accomplishments as well as any shortcomings that need to be addressed by the next annual meeting.
- ii) The chair should review the promotion and tenure policies with the candidate early in the candidate's initial appointment. A written copy of these policies should be provided as well.
- iii) The chair can offer examples of CVs and personal statements from successful reappointment and tenure cases submitted by recent colleagues who have been through the promotion process. These documents should be obtained with informed consent from the appropriate faculty.
- iv) The chair should provide an example of the tenure evaluation request letter that is sent to external reviewers. Again, the chair should clearly inform the candidate of the significant role these external letters play in the overall evaluation.

2) Department chairs should provide a written clarification to TPAC of departmental criteria as they apply to BioMed and University guidelines:

- i) For reappointment, clarify the context of the time taken to establish a laboratory vs. producing scholarly work
- ii) Clarify the importance of papers in individual journals vs. single authored books, as the latter are a less common form of scholarship for junior faculty in the empirical life sciences.
- iii) Place departmental guidelines in the candidate's TPAC folder and explicitly call attention to departmental cultures or uniqueness that could be misconstrued or under appreciated by members of TPAC from different disciplines. Make reference to the general guideline presented above, and the specific guidelines detailed in Appendix 1.

With a written record of this mentoring and guidance, a uniform process can be followed, while allowing distinct departmental cultures to be evaluated in proper context.

Recommendation 4. Appointments at affiliated institutions (MBL)

With the establishment of the joint graduate program between Brown and Marine Biological Laboratories (MBL), a number of MBL faculty have been appointed as professors of various rank in departments within Biology and Medicine. These appointments are listed with MBL in parentheses to clarify that they are not campus-based appointments. Other institutional affiliations are being sought as well (e.g. Oak Ridge National Labs), so evaluation of these appointments needs some special consideration. Since faculty at these institutions either do not teach, or have very different teaching environments than standard Brown faculty, the role of teaching is difficult to evaluate. Moreover, an appointment as a Brown faculty member carries some set of responsibilities that are often difficult to realize given the physical separation of the two campuses. The Committee's discussion on this issue was limited, but there was consensus on the following recommendations:

- i) MBL faculty should meet the same standards of scholarship expected of any tenure track faculty member in the Brown department with which the MBL faculty member will be affiliated. Some MBL programs focus on Center-based research that involves multiple investigators, so this should be considered when evaluating individual scholarship and productivity.
- ii) Appointments should be based on explicit programmatic needs that strengthen the Brown department and enhance the opportunities for collaborative research and teaching by the MBL faculty.
- iii) Chairs of Brown departments need to work closely with Directors of MBL Centers to clarify each individual appointment. Appointment of all MBL faculty in a Center should only be permitted if each faculty member meets the specific criteria of scholarship and contributes to a clear programmatic need related to the Brown/MBL affiliation.

Recommendation 5. Comparison with peer institutions

As part of an earlier review of reappointment criteria in the Department of Molecular Biology, Cellular Biology and Biochemistry (MBC), Profs. Mowry and Sedivy had conducted a survey of information from peer institutions. The results are varied, but the outcome of that survey is summarized in a document MCB prepared for clarifying reappointment criteria. The Committee was in wide agreement that the MCB document served as an excellent template for a Division wide document describing recommended milestones for successful reappointment and tenure. That 'milestone' document has been edited by the Committee and is provided as Appendix 1.

Summary

The Committee has provided a complete set of recommendations that clarify the expectations of faculty for the process of reappointment, promotion and tenure. The criteria for junior faculty have been spelled out in Appendix 1 that describes the nature of progress that is expected to attain reappointment and tenure. The reasoning behind those guidelines are provided in the full report above. The two most important conclusions of the report address issues that are the responsibility of the candidate, and those that are the responsibility of the Department Chairs. For the Candidate, the most important criteria of the promotion process are the quality of the scholarship and clear evidence of independent intellectual contribution to that scholarship. For the Department Chairs, a clear set of guidelines are recommended that must be followed and documented in writing so that the candidate, the Chair, and TPAC are fully educated about the stated expectations and realized accomplishments.

Appendix 1.

Biomed Criteria for Reappointment of Junior Faculty

Based on: MCB Department criteria for reappointment of untenured faculty

Candidates will be evaluated for progress in three areas: research, teaching, and service. In terms of weighting these areas of evaluation, research is the single most important factor, followed by teaching and then service.

Research

The candidate shall be evaluated for progress in the area of research by two criteria: publications and grant proposals. In the area of publications, satisfactory progress will be considered to be submission to a leading peer-reviewed journal of a research article incorporating research performed at Brown. In the area of grants, satisfactory progress will be considered to be submission of a major research grant proposal for consideration based on peer review (NIH, NSF, ACS or equivalent). It is recognized that this evaluation will be performed shortly after two years of residence at Brown, and that establishing a laboratory and hiring research staff will reasonably take up a significant part of the first year. Thus, it is recognized that at the time of the evaluation a paper may not yet be accepted for publication and a grant proposal may not yet be funded. Nevertheless, it is expected that to be evaluated as having made satisfactory progress, a candidate must have taken concrete and substantial steps in both areas. A failure to apply for external funding or to submit a paper for publication will be considered as a weakness in this area. Absence of both would be considered as failure. Initial research progress will also be judged by the criteria of setting up an active research laboratory or program of independent research, attracting graduate or advanced undergraduate students or postdoctoral researchers, and attending conferences where his/her preliminary results are presented.

Teaching

The candidate shall be considered to be making satisfactory initial progress in the area of teaching if he/she has successfully participated in a core Department course or has taught a specialty course that has been approved by the Department. Success will be evaluated by multiple criteria including student evaluations, examination of syllabi and other course materials, and attendance of classes by senior faculty. In weighing student evaluations, it will be taken into consideration that in large required core courses, compared to small elective courses, an instructor could receive lower scores even though he/she is performing equally well as a teacher. A complete evaluation of teaching progress will involve a peer review by senior faculty of student evaluations in conjunction with the class observation. Poor evaluation by one or more of the above metrics will be considered as a weakness in this area. A refusal to meet accepted teaching loads or to work on remedying teaching weaknesses will be considered to be a failure in this area. The Department Chair will be responsible for ensuring that these evaluations are completed.

Service

Service to the University is an important component of one's academic responsibility. The candidate shall be considered to be making satisfactory initial progress in the area of service if he/she has served on one or more Departmental or Graduate Program committees. Repeated refusal to serve on committees will be considered a failure in this area.

Overview

If the review indicates that the individual is making satisfactory progress in all of the areas of research, teaching, and service and is on a trajectory toward promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure, the Department will recommend reappointment for a four-year period. In some cases, a minor weakness in one area may be balanced by clear superiority in the other areas. In these cases, the Department may recommend reappointment for a four-year period while mentoring the candidate to concentrate on strengthening the area of perceived minor weakness. If there are substantial perceived weaknesses in one or more of these areas, then the Department may recommend reappointment for a two-year period. If there is a failure to meet the minimum performance requirements in one or more of these areas, and little perceived likelihood for immediate improvement, then the Department can recommend against reappointment.

Appendix 2.

Statement on Reappointment and Tenure From Chapter 16 of the Handbook of Academic Administration

Candidates for tenure at Brown must show evidence of outstanding scholarship. They must also be highly effective teachers, and be positive contributors to faculty governance as well as to the intellectual life of their department, university, and profession. Demonstrated ability in teaching and service are necessary but not sufficient conditions for tenure.

Peer esteem, both within and outside the university, is a valuable indicator of scholarly ability and achievement. Established scholars who come to Brown with tenure must be widely recognized as leaders in their disciplines. Younger scholars must have achieved a level of scholarly accomplishment and recognition that stands on its own, and moreover signifies great promise. In either case, the quality and not the quantity of scholarly production should be paramount.

Promotion to full professor at Brown is contingent on fulfillment of the promise on which tenure was originally granted. Specifically, full professors will have produced a distinguished body of scholarship since their previous promotion; will have achieved standards of excellence in teaching; and will have contributed regularly to faculty governance as well as to the intellectual life of their department, university, and profession.

All recommendations for appointment, reappointment, promotions and tenure at regular faculty ranks are sent to the Dean of the Faculty. Those actions that do not require review by TPAC should be sent in single copy; they will be reviewed by the AA/EEO Officer and sent to the Dean of the Faculty (Dean of Medicine and Biological Sciences) for final approval. Those actions that do require review by TPAC should be sent to the Dean of the Faculty in fifteen (15) copies. They are reviewed by the Dean of the Faculty. The Dean may require additional information from the academic unit, the tenure review committee, or outside experts. The Dean of the Faculty's office

will place the action on the agenda of TPAC and will notify the department chair and the concerned candidate of the Committee's review date.

On the Matter of Standards in Tenure and Promotion
Ruth J. Simmons, President
From: Faculty Bulletin, December 2004

Brown's faculty has a distinguished history. Known for excellence in teaching and mentorship, scholarship on an ever-advancing frontier, a collaborative approach to both teaching and research, and an admirable dedication to the mission of the university, the hundreds of talented men and women who make up Brown's faculty have, over time, been collectively responsible for the reputation of Brown as one of a small number of great universities in the history of the United States. This is no small accomplishment. The current health of the university has been purchased through the ongoing commitment of the faculty to continuous renewal, even at times of significant fiscal and physical constraints. In spite of limitations, departments and programs have frequently continued to excel, choosing novel paths that uniquely accommodate particular constraints. This is a sign not only of exceptional endurance but of also of estimable ingenuity.

The Brown faculty has adopted, as times have changed and demands have shifted, programmatic goals and academic criteria in keeping with the opportunities and the constraints of any given time. It is much the same in all institutions, whether public or private, for-profit or not-for-profit. When opportunity abounds, we take advantage of this window for innovation, growth and overall improvement.

At the current point in time, we have chosen to undertake a course of academic enrichment that, I believe, rightly insists on ambitious goals across every dimension of university life. The various initiatives we have set forth for faculty growth, facility renewal, financial aid, and other areas are intensely demanding with respect to capital and human resources, time, effort and energy. That the faculty, administration and Corporation have chosen this challenging path is entirely laudable and correct for, if we were not to seek improvement in periods of relative prosperity, we might well miss an important chance to advance our mission. Not surprisingly, though, these positive efforts can cause strains. Yet, I believe that these strains are entirely manageable.

Let me say that I am not at all fearful of questions as to whether we are considering adequately during this period the value of what has come before. Any new leadership would be wise to avoid the pitfall of assuming that only that which is new is good. I certainly hope we do not make that mistake. Yet, there is an obvious and unavoidable tension between our efforts to take full advantage of the opportunities available to us in this period and our commitment to do so in a way that respects what is currently in place. We should pay heed to that tension by engaging this topic very openly and directly. We should also be certain, as a community of scholars, to resist the temptation to focus our attention – and our laurels – on only that which is new. As I noted above, the strength of this university is the product of the faculty who have served here with great distinction over the past years and decades. The colleagues who are joining us in this period of growth are doing so because of the collegial environment of excellence in scholarship and teaching created at Brown many years before.

Amidst the changes inherent in this time of transition and growth, one specific question that has arisen for some is whether the criteria for faculty appointment, promotion and tenure have become more demanding, creating an inequitable and unfair situation for those already in the tenure and promotion pipeline. They ask where we are headed with respect to such standards,

and on what basis candidates are to be considered for promotion and tenure in the coming years.

When it comes to the all-important question of who should be given a permanent place on the faculty, a decision that is a decades-long commitment of university resources and, at the same time, a decades-long limitation on the flexibility of a department's teaching and scholarly agenda, the answer is extremely important with extraordinary implications for the long-term health of the University. However, this has always been so. The fact is that neither standards nor rules for tenure and promotion at Brown have changed recently.

The rules of all faculties provide that candidates on tenure-track have the opportunity to demonstrate over a protracted probationary period (usually, six or seven years) that they are fit for tenure. This protracted probationary period allows the candidate adequate time to strengthen his or her teaching, to take part in university life, and to develop and produce appropriate scholarly output that overwhelmingly indicates that this individual will, over a lifetime appointment, continue to be an excellent teacher and scholar.

At Brown, all three dimensions of faculty performance are especially important. As a university with a stated mission that incorporates teaching as a principal aspect of excellence in its faculty, Brown requires its assistant professors to build a portfolio of courses and evaluations of their teaching effectiveness that can help tenure committees predict the probability of a long term commitment and success as a teacher. Many may be asked to excel in courses that provide limited opportunity for student enthusiasm. Yet, in spite of this, faculty find appealing avenues to engage student interest, invoke a commitment to learning the subject and make the subject come alive in ways important to the general preservation and advancement of knowledge and the intellectual growth of the individual student. A very significant dimension of learning rests on the shoulders of those who devote time to making different fields of compelling interest to successive cohorts of students.

Service to the university is an important indicator of whether candidates are likely, over the long term of a career, to be contributing members of the academic community. There is always a risk that individuals may become in the maturity of their careers, focused more on their own professional goals than on the broader demands and needs of the university, their students and their profession. While one wants to believe that only the high minded select a career in university life, there is much in university life to appeal to the self-interested: the independence of much of scholarly pursuit, the seduction of the contemplative life, the intellectual stimulation that comes with association with scholars of similar bent, and so much more. However, hundreds of iconoclasts, acting solely in their own interest, do not a faculty make. It is on the collective activity of faculty that the direction and quality of a university rests. On their ability to make sound judgments. On their commitment to be fair, open-minded, and collegial. On their capacity to be disciplined and yet innovative in their teaching and scholarship. On their commitment to prepare future cohorts of scholars equally committed to the advancement of knowledge. Without excellence in service, a long term tenure might yield but a small percentage of what it could mean to the life of the university.

Scholarship is the most important dimension of the tenure decision in a research university. Without its full measure of advanced scholarship, a university is a modest extension of an excellent secondary school where teaching and service are robust. Without the requisite high standards for scholarship, we fail in our mission even if we achieve well in the areas of teaching and service. Today, it is scholarship that most indelibly marks a university's long term health. Faculty given lifetime tenure at Brown are expected to produce scholarship of the sort that,

because of its innovation, originality, utility, and importance adds significantly to what Brown is able to accomplish as a university. Outstanding scholarship enhances the profile of individual programs and departments, making it possible for them to attract able students, garner excellent resources, recruit outstanding colleagues, and have a significant impact on the field. Since the reputation of a research university arises principally from the scholarship of its faculty, Brown's insistence on preserving and enhancing that reputation through continued emphasis on excellence in scholarship is not only entirely appropriate but necessary.

Many would say, of course, that scholarship takes many forms and that we should be mindful that formulaic approaches to the assessment of scholarship could result in unfortunate errors. Naturally, in any tenure system where a central committee is asked to recommend on tenure decisions, it is important that members have a sense of what meaningful and legitimate standards one should apply when considering so many different fields, from the medical sciences to the arts. It remains for the experts in a field to determine and explicate why any work in any format is original, important and useful, but it is for the Tenure, Promotion and Appointments Committee (TPAC) to determine whether the experts have actually made a compelling case that such work is evidence of readiness for tenure. I believe that this process is appropriately rigorous at Brown today, incorporating levels of review that achieve fairness for the candidate and excellent oversight for the university.

Even though we often blend the various aspects of the tenure and promotion process, in reality and by mandate of the Faculty Rules & Regulations, each is distinctive, with a particular perspective intended to consider carefully and fairly each candidacy for tenure and promotion. We begin with a departmental committee that examines fully, based on a candidate's input as well as that of outside experts, whether an individual has satisfied the standards for tenure and promotion at Brown. A department then votes on a case, based on the in-depth assessment by the committee but with input from others in the department who are knowledgeable about the field in which the candidate is working. The candidate's dossier, along with the department's vote and analysis of the case, is forwarded to the Tenure, Promotion and Appointments Committee that must independently examine all the evidence available and determine whether the department's recommendation is consistent with the evidence presented in the dossier. The Committee determines whether to second the department's judgment and, in the event that the Committee judges that the dossier does not support the departmental recommendation, it may recommend a different action. TPAC's recommendation goes to the dean of the faculty or the dean of medicine & biological sciences, as appropriate, and the provost, with the dean then providing his own recommendation on the case. The provost, the chief academic officer of the University who is responsible for the overall academic quality and integrity of the academic program at Brown, considers the recommendations and decides whether it should be accepted. If the provost finds that questions remain as to the suitability of the candidate for tenure, he is obligated to seek clarification through additional relevant input. The candidate's dossier and all evidence used by TPAC in its review is the foundation of the provost's review.

If the departmental recommendation was in favor of promotion and/or tenure and if, after review by the Committee, the Provost approved it, notice is given to the faculty member that, subject to the approval of the President and the Brown Corporation, the promotion and/or tenure has been awarded. If the departmental recommendation was for promotion and/or tenure and if, after review by the Committee, the Provost's decision is negative, notice is given to the faculty member and the Subcommittee on Diversity in Hiring (SDH) that the promotion has been denied and/or that tenure has not been recommended. The SDH has responsibility for reviewing denials of promotion, tenure, and re-appointment for adherence to the Corporation Statement on Nondiscrimination and must submit findings, in writing, to the TPA and the Provost. The

president considers the decision of the provost and passes a final recommendation to the Corporation, which acts on the case.

These manifold perspectives are, I believe, important to the process, assuring decisions that help to maintain a strong, productive faculty. At each stage in the process, we have an opportunity to determine whether the weight of evidence in a case supports tenure and promotion. Each stage is distinctive and meaningful. Notwithstanding the fact that many see a department's recommendation as final and the rest of the process as essentially a rubber stamp, each level involves a serious process that separates interests and perspectives in a useful way. The Tenure, Promotion and Appointments Committee must examine carefully the work of the department to determine whether the case they present is based on the evidence at hand. The Committee also has the opportunity to examine whether the department's treatment of the candidate is consistent with other applicable university guidelines and practices and whether the candidate meets university standards of excellence.

The provost has the responsibility to consider recommendations with an eye to whether all of the questions with regard to the candidate's performance have been answered satisfactorily. Where questions remain, he is obliged to put them to rest by seeking additional opinions or asking for assistance in that examination from others, and he must carefully document those consultations and his findings for the record. He may also wish to question whether institutional needs and interests are being appropriately served as well as whether TPAC has considered these questions adequately. In any event, the provost is not a mere seconder for the TPAC recommendation. His decision is meant to be independent. If the provost's decision is negative with regard to promotion, tenure and/or reappointment, there is a further provision for review by a faculty committee (the Subcommittee on Diversity in Hiring) for assurance of adherence to the Corporation Statement on Nondiscrimination.

The president, after receiving the decision of the provost, generally undertakes no independent examination of the merits of the case submitted. If, upon learning of a negative decision by the provost, a candidate wishes to appeal such a recommendation, the president hears the appeal before advancing a recommendation to the Corporation. In such appeals, the president generally considers evidence of irregularities of procedure, discrimination, or departures from policy and procedure, and determines whether they may have inappropriately influenced the decision. While appropriately limited in scope to these areas of inquiry, this review must be done with care and precision. As a result, it takes some time. Upon reaching a decision on the appeal, the president informs the candidate of her decision and forwards the case to the Corporation for final disposition.

This extensive review is warranted by the seriousness of the awarding of lifetime tenure. The dean of the faculty or the dean of medicine & biological sciences, responsible, along with the Department, for assuring that candidates are informed about the process and standards for tenure and promotion, provides timely information to faculty as to the review process. We must make every effort during the probationary period to ensure that candidates are aware of the process as well as the various stages in the review. The Rules and Procedures are readily available to candidates on the Dean of the Faculty and FEC web sites.

As to the question of whether standards are currently undergoing change, as I said at the outset, every university judges candidates for appointment based on the opportunities they have in a particular window. However, once a candidate is appointed and given assurances of what they must do to be successful in the tenure track, our decisions should be informed by those representations. No individual department may unilaterally change those standards on the eve

of tenure. Of course, a department may change the demands on a candidate after hiring if those demands can be reasonably met by the time that the tenure decision is to be made. Given the partnership between the department and the dean of the faculty or the dean of medicine & biological sciences in such matters, it is always better for the candidate and the department for changes to occur in consultation with the appropriate dean.

Standards will always, I hope, be moving upward. Brown could not continue to be in the first ranks of universities if that were to cease being the case. Yet, however much we enjoy the opportunity to improve, we must never do so unfairly for our reputation as a fair employer is vital to our being a great university. Of course, we may not wish to grant tenure in areas where there is no need or demand. But in more usual circumstances, the duality of responsibility that we bear should prevent us from errors. The first responsibility is on the department to incorporate clearly in the employment and assessment process an objective evaluation of a candidate's success in meeting the department's needs and standards. The second is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that he or she is well-informed about and responsive to the department's guidance. Those we place on the tenure track should expect that we will hold to the assurances given them when they were hired, adjusted based on department needs and assessment of the candidate's performance. They should also feel confident that they will be examined on the terms, conditions and standards we set for them. Such standards may be reasonably amended if done in an expeditious fashion, giving the candidate a fair chance to address the change in requirements by the time of the tenure decision.

The dean of the faculty and the dean of medicine & biological sciences are both available to help the department and the candidate meet their responsibilities. They will provide information to departments as to the suitability of the guidance given probationary candidates in each department and program. The deans' offices will also provide guidance to junior candidates as to their rights and opportunities during the probationary period. Both departments and candidates are encouraged to seek information of the appropriate dean at any point in the process that an aspect of the tenure review process becomes unclear.

There is no more important task for a faculty than to choose the faculty well, to train new faculty in their duties and, when the time comes, to assess those same faculty objectively against the standards the department and the university have set for their performance. The assessment of peers is a great burden but the health of the university depends on the faculty's commitment to this crucial process