FACULTY MEETING
April 6, 2018

Motion: Changes to Promotion Language

MOTION: The Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs moves to change the language in the Faculty Handbook regarding promotion as indicated below.

Rationale:

Individual faculty career paths post-tenure do not follow a uniform trajectory, and within one's own trajectory, the path may take on different foci than during pre-tenure years. Therefore, some flexibility in evaluating the work Associate Professors who stand for promotion is warranted. The proposed language explicitly acknowledges that some faculty, in service and leadership roles at the institution, are called upon to shift their attention from their disciplinary focus, and such a profile may be considered worthy of promotion. The new language validates Skidmore College's dedication to the teacher-scholar model but calls for an evaluation of a candidate's file in which the three criteria are evaluated in combination with, and in relation to, one another.

Proposed Language:

1. Promotion

Guidelines for Advancement in Rank

a. Promotion at Skidmore is awarded not on the basis of time in rank but because of the candidate's demonstration of accomplishments that satisfy the applicable standards at the level specified for the desired rank. Faculty may stand for promotion at their discretion.

b. For the rank of Associate Professor, the appropriate terminal degree (or its professional equivalent) normally is required. The absence of the appropriate terminal degree is not an absolute deterrent to advancement to any rank. Other qualifications, however, shall be closely scrutinized by the department, CAPT, and the administration for evidence of extraordinary merit.

c. For the rank of Professor, the appropriate terminal degree (or its professional equivalent) normally is required. Promotion to this rank shall be granted to faculty who have shown evidence of continuing high- quality teaching (or, in the case of Library faculty, librarianship) as well as sustained and significant creative or scholarly growth; and significant involvement in the affairs of the college.

The criteria for promotion reflect institutional needs. Teaching, scholarship/creative work, and service are all essential for the success of the institution. Thus, work in each area is valued when evaluating faculty for advancement in rank, and ~~To merit promotion, a faculty member must present evidence documenting having met relevant standards in three areas: teaching, scholarship, and service. In promotion,~~ the teacher-scholar model remains the primary focus (see Part One, Article VIII, Preamble and Section A). Yet, having made a life-long commitment to faculty members in their tenuring, it is the college expectation that, with promotion to Associate Professor, and more so with promotion to Full Professor, senior faculty are in a position to take on an increasingly significant share of the responsibilities for service. There is, then, an expected trajectory of service from untenured faculty, whose service is expected to be relatively modest, to Full Professors, who are expected to be the sustaining pillars of college service.

More precisely, a candidate for promotion to Full Professor must ~~demonstrate~~ present evidence that demonstrates the following:

- sustained high-quality teaching across the range of assigned courses so as to show mastery of the craft of teaching in the candidate's areas of competence. As accomplished teachers, Full Professors are expected to excel in their own classes and, as reflective practitioners of the craft, should also be able to serve as a teaching resource for other faculty. Full Professors are expected to remain committed to their own continuing development as teachers.

- a record of sustained and significant engagement with the candidate's discipline(s), continued development as a scholar or artist, and evidence of success in completing some substantial aspect(s) of research or artistic agenda beyond the candidate's accomplishments at the time of promotion to Associate Professor. This may include new scholarship/creative work in areas similar to their previous work or advances in new directions. Through their research or creative work, Full Professors are expected to have developed a mature perspective on their field(s) that enables them to situate both their own work and the work of their students in the landscape of their discipline(s). Full Professors are also expected to continue their engagement with their scholarly or artistic discipline(s).

- a record of sustained, significant, and effective contributions in service. The college as a community cannot flourish without the contribution of senior faculty. Accordingly, a candidate's service record must be evaluated on its merits and also be used to guide the expectations for a candidate's teaching and scholarship. In addition, given the college's commitment to faculty in their tenuring, senior faculty are expected to play a leading role in the service that sustains the college community.

When evaluating faculty members for promotion to the rank of Professor, it is especially important for the college to recognize that individual faculty career paths do not follow a single trajectory. Faculty members pursue different interests at different points in their careers and may demonstrate excellence in fulfilling the college's model of the teacher-scholar in varying ways. Consequently, the evaluation of faculty members for promotion to the rank of Professor should entail a flexible application and weighting of the criteria for teaching, scholarship/creative work, and service.

It is essential to consider the question of promotion from an institutional perspective. Certain institutional needs require some faculty to take on intensive administrative and leadership roles at moments that may not align with the standard path to promotion. In cases where faculty members shift their attention from their disciplinary trajectories to forms of scholarship and service related to administration, leadership, and other issues in higher education, this work should be factored into assessments of promotion candidacies.

Precise weights thus cannot, and should not, be attributed to each criterion; no two promotion files are exactly the same. All successful candidates for promotion are expected to demonstrate that they have met the standards for promotion in teaching, scholarship/creative work, and service. However, all three criteria should be evaluated in combination with, and in relation to, one another. While teaching will remain paramount, a successful candidate for promotion will have made a distinguished contribution in at least one of the two remaining areas.