

## Report of the Task Force on Personnel Policies

### Introduction

The Task Force on Personnel Policies was created by the Fredonia University Senate in April 2007 in response to issues raised in the Memorandum of Understanding between Fredonia and the SUNY Provost's Office.

The Memorandum of Understanding, dated January 2007, read in part:

#### *5.4 Faculty review: tenure and promotion*

In addition to teaching effectiveness, scholarship and service are important for tenure and promotion at SUNY Fredonia. Promotion to full professor requires effective teaching and service, in addition to extensive faculty scholarship. SUNY Fredonia last performed an extensive review of each department's personnel procedures in 1999-2000 to ensure conformity with Board of Trustees requirements, and intends to do so again in 2007-08. Specifically, a task force will be formed and charged to consider the following questions regarding tenure and promotion on an institutional level:

- How can tenure and promotion criteria reflect a broad view of scholarship, with particular attention to Fine and Performing Arts and the scholarship of engagement?
- How should teaching effectiveness, scholarship, and service be weighted in tenure and promotion evaluations?
- How can departmental guidelines clarify ways to document and evaluate effective teaching?
- Should SUNY Fredonia institute a requirement of external review for tenure (not currently a practice in most departments)?
- To what extent should tenure and promotion procedures and committee structures be consistent across the institution?
- How might the current schedule of reviews be modified in the best interests of candidates, review committees, and other evaluators?

After discussion in the University Senate and in Academic Leadership meetings, departments will then review their guidelines in light of the recommendations of the task force and have their guidelines approved for the Campus Handbook.

The Task Force membership approved by the Senate during its April 30, 2007, meeting was Maggie Bryan-Peterson, Co-Chair (Chair of the Faculty and Professional Affairs Committee in 2007-2008 and a professional in Academic Affairs); Richard Reddy, Co-Chair (volunteer from the Senate Executive Committee, representing Social Sciences); Kerrie Wilkes (Librarian); Jodi Rzepka (Professional, Administration area); Averl Otis (Professional, Student Services area); Julia Wilson (Natural Sciences); Tom Loughlin (Arts); Nancy Hagedorn (Humanities); and Cynthia Smith (Education). Cynthia Smith was unable to serve and was replaced by Lawrence Maheady (Education). Shortly into the fall semester, Averl Otis was unable to continue to serve and was replaced by Monica Smith (Student Affairs).

### **Task Force Activity**

The Task Force met regularly, often weekly, throughout the academic year. It created a series of open forums during October for various campus constituencies (teaching faculty, professionals, and librarians) to identify and discuss the issues directly associated with its charge as well as the wider issues associated with our personnel policies. It also developed surveys for each of those groups (teaching faculty, professionals, and librarians), which were distributed and responded to early in the spring semester.

The Task Force reported to the University Senate regularly throughout the academic year on its progress, including detailed reports on the results of its surveys and on the responses and recommendations it was developing. It also met with Vice President Horvath on three occasions, once in June 2007 and twice during the Spring 2008 semester (in March and April).

Those recommendations have now been finalized. They are based on the insights and understandings the Task Force developed through the hearings, through its survey results, through its meetings with Vice President Horvath, and through its own extended discussions and deliberations throughout the 2007-2008 academic year.

These recommendations are offered to the University Senate and to our administration for their consideration and, where appropriate, further action. Upon submission of this final report and recommendations, the Task Force considers its work complete.

It should be noted that the six issues identified in the Memorandum of Understanding related almost exclusively to teaching faculty on our campus. As a result, the portion of this report dealing with the teaching faculty focuses on those issues. However, from the beginning it was clear that a somewhat different set of personnel policy issues were of vital importance to our professionals and to our librarians. The Task Force presents those issues and its recommendations regarding them below.

**Comment [VH1]:** The draft policies do address these issues in three separate sections, V, VI, and VII.

## The response to the Memorandum of Understanding issues (teaching faculty issues)

The Task Force recognizes that personnel policies and procedures are just that—formal ways of describing *what* is to happen and *how* it is to happen. While ideally framed to be equitable, fair, and transparent, such written policies and procedures are not guarantees of such outcomes. Equity, fairness, transparency, and other desirable qualities (including collegiality, professionalism, and a mentoring, positive, constructive and formative spirit, for example) are the products of what we actually do, what choices we actually make, and what behaviors we actually model—not of the words we use to describe how things *should* be done.

We do believe that, in the end, Fredonia (each of us individually and all of us collectively) should value and support these characteristics of equity, fairness, transparency, collegiality, and so on as desirable *ends* in and of themselves, rather than merely the means associated with personnel actions.

Ideally, each of us will be committed to those characteristics within our immediate spheres of activity and responsibility and for Fredonia as a whole. Healthy and functional offices/programs/departments/schools are good places within which to work.

However, when the atmosphere in offices/programs/departments/schools becomes less functional, the initial responsibility clearly is to be found at the individual and interpersonal levels within that group, and ideally such problems should be resolved there. However, leadership at the office/program/department/school level may need to take appropriate, thoughtful action to enable the group to move toward the resolution of difficult issues and to restore a healthy, positive working environment. Those at higher levels may need to be actively and sensitively involved in some cases to foster that end.

### 1. “How can tenure and promotion criteria reflect a broad view of scholarship, with particular attention to Fine and Performing Arts and the scholarship of engagement?”

- a. In most instances current Fredonia and departmental criteria are not specifically based on the broader understanding of scholarship described by former SUNY Chancellor Ernest Boyer in his *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Princeton University Press, 1990). Boyer discussed and identified four types of scholarship—those of discovery, integration, application, and teaching.
  - It would be desirable for departments to consider how their criteria might be expanded, where appropriate, to reflect this now widely accepted understanding of scholarship.
- b. The “scholarship of engagement” is another way of saying “scholarship of application,” which involves applying knowledge to consequential problems, using knowledge to help individuals and institutions, and engaging in scholarly investigation in the hope of helping

**Comment [VH2]:** This section provides principles of operations in departments and units, and most of these principles are reflected in the draft policies, as the comments below illustrate. Although this section is primarily about department faculty, some of the principles are consistently applied in sections of the draft policies for library faculty and for professionals.

**Comment [VH3]:** The draft policies reflect this recommendation in V.E.2.b, which includes Boyer’s and campus definitions of these terms and lists broad possibilities for departments to consider. For library faculty, this recommendation is in VI.E.2.b.

**Comment [VH4]:** This statement is a misunderstanding of Boyer’s terms and the draft policies correct this.

to solve social problems. Often, new intellectual understandings develop in the very act of such application.

- There is reason to believe that this type of scholarship may be problematic in some instances since departments may not clearly understand or agree whether this sort of activity “counts” as research or as **service**. Departments should review their personnel policies to elucidate how the scholarship of engagement will be considered in their own personnel **actions**.

**Comment [VH5]:** The draft policies attempt clarification and encourage departments to discuss in their own handbooks/policies/by-laws.

**Comment [VH6]:** The draft policies encourage this in V.E.3, VI.E.3, V.F.1, and VI.F.1.

- c. Recognizing that practices do differ substantially between disciplines and professions, one additional area for consideration here might involve the role of collaboration in the pursuit of scholarship. That is, there seem to be differing perspectives on the importance of and need for candidates to work collaboratively with others on scholarly endeavors. While in some disciplines and professions scholarly collaboration is uncommon, in others it is normative. Clearly collaboration may serve to facilitate scholarly work and enhance its quality. Yet fairly assessing the contributions of an individual to the end product is often difficult for colleagues.

- Department policies may wish to address the interpretation of single-**authored** versus multiple-authored peer-reviewed publications, as well as how to assess the order in which contributors or authors are listed (the significance of which may also vary by discipline or profession), including specifying the expectations they would have for evidence that would permit them to better understand the role of the candidate in any given collaborative venture.

**Comment [VH7]:** The draft policies do not propose a campus-wide weighting of these kinds of publications but encourage departments/library to address specific discipline-based perspectives on weighting (see V.E.3, V.F.1, VI.E.3, VI.F.1).

- d. Finally, just as is the case for creative activity, questions may arise as to the legitimacy and/or relative significance of different forms of scholarly publication and presentation. For example, do on-line refereed publications count as “real” publications since the publication does not end up in a printed, bound volume? Exactly what does “scholarly” look like in an electronic world of blogs and other vehicles for sharing understandings and perspectives, evaluations and critiques, and “knowledge” in general?

- It may be desirable for departments to consider how to recognize new modalities for presentation of **scholarship**.

**Comment [VH8]:** The draft policies do not propose a campus-wide weighting of these kinds of modalities but encourage departments/library to address specific discipline-based perspectives on weighting in department/ library reviews (see V.E.3, V.F.1, VI.E.3, VI.F.1).

## 2. “How should teaching effectiveness, scholarship, and service be weighted in tenure and promotion evaluations?”

Flexibility is preferred here.

- a. It is not at all clear what minima would be adequate in each of these three areas, but there seems to be widespread acceptance of the idea that different candidates may bring different strengths in the three areas and that these should be taken into consideration, perhaps even valued, in the review **process**. Some departments are more quantitatively oriented and may even permit their candidates to determine the relative

**Comment [VH9]:** This view is echoed in the draft policies language of V.E.2.b and VI.E.2.b, particularly the paragraph that discusses the “mosaic of talent” that may exist in departments.

weighting of each of the three categories, within determined ranges, to which we usually give attention (teaching, research/creativity, and service).. Most departments, however, avoid quantification. That being said,

- Any weighting process should be collegial and formative. The Task Force recommends that departmental policies ensure that pre-tenure faculty have a strong voice in planning their own path to continuing **appointment**. If there is to be any “weighting” of these three factors, the candidate should have a meaningful role in determining that scale in collaboration with the personnel committee, the chair, and the department. Some candidates may opt to place more emphasis on scholarship than teaching, others the reverse. This flexibility would also give departments the ability to balance their faculty in terms of quality teaching and superior scholarship as well as to recognize and capitalize on individual candidates’ strengths without forcing all department members into a single mold.
- b. Many department policies do cite the primacy of teaching, followed by scholarship/creative activity and then service, in making reappointment and promotion decisions. However, while reappointment and promotion are rewards, there is a perception that other aspects of the reward system, notably discretionary salary increases, the distribution of travel funds, and the granting of leaves give highest priority and recognition to publications/performances and other scholarly/creative work.
- If, as a university, we value teaching most highly (as it appears most department policies indicate), then we must support that through consistent action in terms of both reappointment and **DSI**. There might be a good deal more incentive for faculty to carefully document their teaching if there were tangible and commensurate rewards for outstanding teaching as well as for scholarly/creative work.
- c. Service in most instances seems at best to be a weak handmaiden to the other two areas of expected **endeavor**. “Service,” of course, may take on many forms and includes essential work done within and on behalf of departments, programs and the campus as a whole, work done for professional groups and associations, as well as service to the community, where it can be expressed through Boyer’s “scholarship of engagement.” Yet, we are often lacking a clear articulation and understanding of what, exactly, constitutes service and how it should/could be meaningfully and effectively documented beyond a mere list of committee memberships, for **example**. Giving fair weight to significant service may be especially important at a time when demands for often time-consuming service commitments to assessment and accreditation efforts have been markedly increasing.
- Service needs to be evaluated with the same rigor as teaching and scholarship/creativity if it is ever to have significant and credible weight among the big three. The Task Force encourages departments and the broader university community to consider these issues as part of their reevaluation of their own reappointment and promotion **policies**.

**Comment [VH10]:** This prescription that candidates negotiate the weighting of their own professional efforts is not specifically dictated in the draft policies, but such a view may be an important component of departmental guidelines if deemed appropriate (see V.E.3, V.F.1, VI.E.3, VI.F.1).

**Comment [VH11]:** Although the draft policies do not address DSI—as that is not their purpose—the high value of teaching in reappointment is stated explicitly in V.E.3 and VI.E.3, where librarianship is emphasized as a form of teaching.

**Comment [VH12]:** Clear statements on the importance of service appear in V.E.2.c, VI.E.2.c, V.E.4-6, and VI.E.4-6 of the draft policies

**Comment [VH13]:** The draft policies address this in V.E.2.c, VI.E.2.c, and V.G.3.e and will be elaborated in the Appendices that offer more specific suggestions—not policy—on documentation.

**Comment [VH14]:** The draft policies support this principle and demonstrate it in dossier outlines that include evidence and narratives about service (V.G.3.e and VI.G.3.e).

d. As part of the broader issue of how to define and evaluate service, exactly where advising fits and whether it deserves to be considered as a separate category is not universally addressed in departmental policies. Typically, in fact, little or no attention is how effective advising could or would be measured.

- The slogan “Advising is individualized teaching,” if it is to have meaning and relevance among faculty, should move us towards the notion that advising should be a factor in the evaluation of teaching. Departmental policies should be reviewed and revised, where appropriate, to indicate how effective advising can/will be measured.
- Realistically, if advising is to be evaluated as part of the reappointment and promotion process, whether as service or as teaching, then some effective training for faculty advisors should be implemented.

e. Finally, there are, of course, five criteria not three, to be considered in matters of reappointment and promotion—mastery of subject matter and professional development are also included in the Policies of the Board of Trustees. Mastery of subject matter and professional development are intimately related in a rapidly changing world. It is unlikely that mastery can be sustained without considerable on-going professional development.

- Departmental personnel policies should be reviewed to ensure that they recognize the importance of and expectations for on-going professional development for all candidates.

**Comment [VH15]:** Advising is referred to explicitly in the draft policies: V.E.2.a mentions the evaluation of artifacts and peer review of advising as examples of scholarly approach to teaching, and V.G.3.c mentions dossier contents should include advising materials.

**Comment [VH16]:** The draft policies support this view in V.E.3, V.F.1, VI.E.3, and VI.F.1, which encourage departments/library to review their guidelines.

**Comment [VH17]:** A good point but outside the scope of the draft policies.

**Comment [VH18]:** The draft policies emphasize these five criteria in V.E.1 and VI.E.1, as well as a parallel for professional staff in VI.E. The draft policies align campus practice with the Board of Trustees Policies by elaborating on these criteria and matching dossier contents to these criteria (see V.G.3 and VI.G.3).

### 3. “How can departmental guidelines clarify ways to document and evaluate effective teaching?”

a. If the Fredonia faculty and administration really do care about teaching, we need to make a more concerted effort to make sure that we do the best and most thorough job we can in assessing it.

Departments generally do mention a number of ways of assessing teaching and learning performance in their policies. However, there appear to be a number of cases where departmental policies may be incomplete or do not incorporate required institutional practices or, alternatively, where existing written policies are perceived by those subject to them to be inconsistently or inaccurately applied or implemented. Training and other forms of augmentation may be necessary to ensure better understanding and more effective implementation of personnel policies regarding teaching effectiveness.

- Improving peer classroom observation is one issue that needs to be addressed institutionally and departmentally. Not all departments have instigated peer classroom observation as part of the reappointment and promotion process (despite the institutional policy requiring it). They should do so. Further, no norms, best practices, or training have been offered to assist faculty and departments in

**Comment [VH19]:** This view is reinforced in the draft policies’ statements about dossiers and documenting effectiveness in teaching.

**Comment [VH20]:** This is a good idea but outside the scope of the policies themselves. The draft policies do, however, reinforce the value of ongoing professional development activities.

**Comment [VH21]:** The draft policies are explicit in support of peer review, defined more broadly than simply “classroom observation.” See V.E.2.a, VI.E.2.a, V.G.3.c, and VI.G.3.c.

effectively and rationally implementing such observations. Senior faculty should be offered simple workshops on how to observe and evaluate colleagues' classroom performance.

- b. A related issue, which needs to be resolved at both the departmental and institutional levels, is whether such observations are intended primarily to be formative (for improving teaching and learning) or summative (to determine whether or not to reappoint or promote).

- This issue needs to be addressed and discussed institutionally and then, based on the outcome, included in departmental personnel policies.

- c. Changing and improving student course evaluations is another important issue.

- Although student course evaluations are only one part of the evaluation of effective teaching—and some would argue only a minor one since there are so many other things to look at and assess closely—faculty and administration need to review what is actually being done in this area across the institution. The forms currently used, in many instances, assume that lectures rather than other modes of instruction predominate and do not give much attention to how effective the faculty member has been in facilitating and fostering actual learning (which, presumably, is the true measure of effective teaching). Moreover, many course assessment surveys include questions that students are ill-equipped to evaluate meaningfully. For example, except in the most glaring cases of faculty incompetence, students are not in a position to assess the expertise of a faculty member.

- d. Another key piece of the assessment of effective teaching is self-reflection on one's own teaching strengths and weakness and development as a professional educator at the college level.

- As part of the personnel review process, candidates should be both encouraged and expected to offer self-reflections on their teaching and learning efforts, enumerating their perceived strengths and as well as weaknesses. In the case of the latter, they should explain how they are addressing perceived weaknesses and the progress they believe they had made. While self-reflections, too, are required by our campus policy, they are not necessarily explicitly included in all departmental policies.

- e. Finally, while allowing for flexibility among departments and disciplines, all departmental policies should operate within the general, stated institutional policies and parameters noted above,

- All department policies and faculty handbooks should be reviewed to ensure that they include and adhere to a clearly outlined process conforming with stated and agreed upon institutional policies.

**Comment [VH22]:** Any review the candidate includes in a dossier is clearly part of the record used for summative purposes, but the formative uses of peer review are encouraged in the draft policies, which emphasize the candidate's own reflection on such peer reviews as a means of informing pedagogical practice. See V.E.2.a, VI.E.2.a, V.G.3.c, and VI.G.3.c.

**Comment [VH23]:** The issue of changing and improving course evaluations is being addressed separately at SUNY Fredonia. In the draft policies, course evaluations are assumed to be one of many kinds of evidence about teaching and learning. See V.E.2.a, V.G.3.c, VI.E.2.a, VI.G.3.c.

**Comment [VH24]:** The draft policies support this view and include such reflection as an important part of department faculty dossiers (see V.G.2.a-f), library faculty dossiers (see VI.G.2.a-f), and documentation that professionals may submit (see VII.G.3.c).

**Comment [VH25]:** This recommendation is stated explicitly in the draft policies (see III, V.F.1, V.F.2, VI.F.1, and V.F.2).

4. “Should SUNY Fredonia institute a requirement of external review for tenure (not currently a practice in most departments)?”

Considerably more faculty have opposed or expressed strong reservations about requiring external review for tenure than have supported it in an unqualified way.

There is a fairly long list of what seem to be reasonable objections to requiring external peer review, including possible difficulties in finding appropriate reviewers and the reality that most scholarly and creative work is already peer reviewed externally.

- Based on what the Task Force has heard from faculty and on our own deliberations, we recommend that the following principles be a part of any further discussion on the question of external review of teaching faculty being considered for permanent appointment (tenure):
  1. If there is peer review, the process should begin well *before* the final review for tenure and should be performed by a reviewer (or reviewers) at institutions comparable to (and understanding of/sympathetic to) the relevant Fredonia departments/schools, whether within SUNY or not.
  2. There is diversity of opinion as to whether the review should deal only with scholarship/creative performance or whether it could be expanded to include teaching and service. Most seem to prefer to limit such review to the former. Although these parameters might be determined institutionally, if it is not, if and when departments choose to include and elaborate on peer review in their policies, they should specifically address this issue.
  3. External review immediately prior to the tenure decision may appropriately be an option at the choice of the candidate or the department, depending on the specific circumstances. Such options, however, should also be clearly stated and explained in relevant departmental policies.
  4. Individuals chosen as reviewers for such reviews immediately prior to tenure should *not* be considered as having a “vote” in the decision, but viewed as simply offering viewpoints and perspectives on the work of the candidate in order to provide additional insight into the candidate’s case. How much weight should be given to such reviews needs to be addressed and clearly delineated in relevant policies.
  5. Institutionally, we must recognize that timing is problematic for such external reviews and the process of seeking reviews needs to be started early enough that reviews will be arrive sufficiently ahead of required departmental (and institutional) deadlines and actions.
  6. External review, if performed early in a candidate’s career at Fredonia may be desirable and salutary, if the process is viewed as formative rather than summative. Such reviews, for example, might offer useful insights on potentially fruitful future directions an individual might pursue in the three or four years prior to the tenure

**Comment [VH26]:** The draft policies, based on this recommendation, do *not* include external review as a requirement for continuing appointment or any other personnel review.

decision. As a matter of policy, faculty members might even be encouraged to seek out the ideas and suggestions of off-campus peers throughout their careers, but especially in the early stages of their professional development.

7. External review might well be considered as a part of an arbitration process when there is disagreement or a perceived lack of knowledge or understanding of a candidate's area of expertise within a department or unit. In such cases, external review might be available as a desirable option instigated by either the candidate or the department/personnel committee. In such cases, however, both parties should have some input in the choice of reviewer(s).

**Comment [VH27]:** The option of including review by an expert outside SUNY Fredonia is implicit in the draft policy mention of "other support documents" that candidates may include in the dossier appendices (see V.G.3.g, VI.G.3.g).

## 5. "To what extent should tenure and promotion procedures and committee structures be consistent across the institution?"

There appears to be an intellectual acceptance of the reasonableness of consistency, but this acceptance is also clearly tempered by the desire that everyone should do what their own departments do.

1. Most departmental policies effectively cover most critical areas. However, areas often in need of additional coverage and/or clearer explanation include:
  - a. Appeals procedures
  - b. External review policies (if desired)
  - c. Departmental assistance available to candidates (e.g., mentoring, explicitness of promotional criteria)
  - d. Policies and/or timelines for updating information, either after scheduled periodic program reviews or when changes occur in college policies
  - e. Policies for reviewing the expected nature and content of candidate dossiers as well for reviewing reappointment procedures with new faculty members
  - f. Attention to criteria for promotion to the full professor level
  - Departmental personnel policies should be reviewed to assure that they effectively cover each of these areas.
2. Some departments have "personnel committees" that range from full voting participation by all tenured and tenure-track faculty on all personnel actions to those that allow all tenured and tenure-track faculty to review dossiers and participate in the interview process but restrict voting on personnel actions to those of the same or higher rank than that sought by the candidate. Other departments rely exclusively on a clearly defined personnel committee, variously composed and selected, for all phases of the process.
  - Since departmental policies typically have not been reviewed regularly or often and there has been no broad effort to identify effective policies/processes or best practices, it would be desirable for departments to review what they do in light of other departments' practices regarding both procedures and stated criteria for reappointment and promotion.

**Comment [VH28]:** In many cases, departmental practices are so inconsistent that these principles are mutually exclusive. The draft policies attempt to distinguish standard campus practice from those practices that are best determined at the department level based on the specifics of the discipline.

**Comment [VH29]:** The draft policies provide a clear process for appeal at each level of review (see V.D.1.d, V.D.2.b, V.D.4.b, VI.D.1.d, VI.D.2.b, and VI.D.4.6). For professionals, the opportunity for review and response of the supervisor recommendation is described in VII.D.

**Comment [VH30]:** This is not included in the draft policies for the universities, although departments/library may choose to include it in their guidelines for candidates in the discipline.

**Comment [VH31]:** Points c and d here could be addressed in department/library guidelines.

**Comment [VH32]:** The draft policies address this directly in V.G.3 and VI.G.3, with options for departments/library to be more specific based on the discipline and unit priorities.

**Comment [VH33]:** The draft policies address this in V.E.7 and VI.E.7 (for promotion to Librarian).

**Comment [VH34]:** The draft policies address this in V.F.1 and VI.F.1.

**Comment [VH35]:** The draft policies define department/library committee structures in V.D.1 and VI.D.1.

- One possible model for ensuring regular review and revision of departmental policies would be to make such reviews a consistent part of the five-year program reviews mandated by SUNY.

Given the rather broad outlines and general program areas that each department covers, it could be argued that it would be advisable for reappointment and promotion processes be as uniform as possible, so that every pre-tenure faculty member within the university undergoes the same fundamental process and experience. If this kind of uniformity is adopted, the process should be clearly delineated and become part of the revised Campus Handbook, so that it applies across all departments and disciplines within the university.

**Comment [VH36]:** It is a good idea to include department and institutional policies in program reviews, accreditation reviews, and division reviews. Mandating this, however, is not within the scope of the draft policies.

**Comment [VH37]:** The draft policies support this view, stated explicitly in the emphasis on fairness in II.

**Comment [VH38]:** This is the goal once there is an approved draft of personnel policies.

## 6. “How might the current schedule of reviews be modified in the best interests of candidates, review committees, and other evaluators?”

Faculty who participated in the Task Force forums and surveys overwhelmingly favor two-year initial appointments for new teaching faculty.

- If such appointments are not deemed possible or desirable by the administration, the elimination of the current first-year review for reappointment to a second year—a process that takes place toward the end of the fall semester—is paramount.
- The first year should be dedicated solely to mentoring and formative processes that do not result in any summative evaluation or appointment decision. One possible solution would be to make the reappointment to a second year essentially a *pro forma* decision, unless clear problems arose during the first semester of employment. In such rare cases, a decision not to reappoint would be the only relevant action taken and would have to be made by a specified date early in the second semester (mid- to late January), in compliance with UUP contract notification deadlines. In most cases, reappointment would be “automatic” and a “formative” review of the candidate, largely self-reflective and goal-oriented, would take place sometime later in the spring semester (perhaps mid-March) solely at the department level.
- Since a great deal of the burden of this process eventually falls on administrators above the department level, it is clearly beneficial to both administrators and departments to offer multi-year appointments when situations clearly warrant it. This practice would stagger the number of reviews administrators need to perform at any given time in any particular year.
- A uniform submission date for ALL faculty dossiers to departments should be considered—perhaps October 1 of each year—after which departmental reviews could proceed at a reasonable pace for the various groups of candidates in accordance with UUP contract deadlines.

**Comment [VH39]:** The draft policies support this view (see next comment).

**Comment [VH40]:** The draft policies revise the process and criteria for first-year review, emphasizing a formative process with documents related to professional development plans instead of accomplishments in the first three months. See V.C.1 and VI.C.1.

**Comment [VH41]:** The draft policies reflect careful attention to timetable, with multi-year appointments in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of reappointment. See V.A.1 and VI.A.1.

**Comment [VH42]:** The draft policies support this view for department faculty (see V.B.1). It is not possible to have a uniform date for library faculty, who are renewed based on initial date of hire. The draft policies do include a clear timetable for library faculty review in VI.B.1.

**Comment [VH43]:** This date is revised in the draft policies to encourage probationary faculty to be finished with dossier preparation before the semester begins. Input from these probationary faculty and from departments (who can best determine how reviews fit the rhythms of their work) is essential in determining whether September 1, October 1, or another date is most appropriate. The annual schedule in the draft policies can easily be adjusted once there is agreement on a submission date.

Dossier contents need to be streamlined and more clearly defined, particularly for pre-tenure **reappointments**. Administrators need only the highlights, particularly in the case of unanimous department recommendations for reappointment at the pre-tenure **level**. The complete dossier should always be readily available for review at any time in the process, but it is advisable that a clear and recognized format for condensing the content of dossier be **considered**.

**Comment [VH44]:** The draft policies reflect this view and offer outlines for content in V.G.3 and VI.G.3.

**Comment [VH45]:** The draft policies do not reflect this view, seeing each level of review as independent judgment, not simply an endorsement of previous levels of review and oversight of process.

**Comment [VH46]:** The draft policies do not reflect this view, as there were concerns about who would condense contents and whether critical statements/evidence from candidates would be omitted. Emphasis instead is on producing clear, concise, professional dossiers that are viewed by all who recommend on personnel actions.

## Final Report on Library Faculty Issues

During the 2007-2008 academic year, library faculty were given the opportunity to comment on the state of promotion and tenure on the Fredonia campus. While librarians have faculty status according to the *Policy of the Board of Trustees*, this committee kept the forum responses and the surveys separate from the teaching faculty. The reasons for these are twofold: Library faculty are given separate distinction by the *Board of Trustees* from both teaching faculty and professionals. Also, as a more practical distinction, librarians are twelve-month employees at SUNY Fredonia, which directly affects their road to tenure and promotion. This latter distinction reoccurred as a theme throughout this process as one area that often negatively impacts library faculty pursuit of tenure and promotion.

This report gathers its data from library faculty participation in the Fall forums and a library faculty survey. Librarians participated wholly in this discussion, participating fully in both the Fall forum for library faculty and with complete survey participation. From these interactions, the following is a summary and recommendations/suggestions for possible follow-up.

During the forums and in the survey, library faculty addressed the six questions posed in the memorandum of understanding (MOU). A noted difference is in the area of *teaching effectiveness*. Due to the nature of the library, not all librarians are teachers, in the traditional classroom sense. As a result, *teaching effectiveness* is more broadly interpreted as *effective job performance*. However, as members of the faculty at SUN Y Fredonia, many of the recommendations included in the faculty portion of this report are also applicable to the Library Faculty. These issues will not be addressed separately in this report; rather, issues unique to Librarians in reference to the MOU are discussed here.

**Comment [VH47]:** The draft policies address this issue by defining library faculty "teaching effectiveness" as "librarianship." See VI.E.2.a and VI.G.3.c.

Additionally, questions addressing the "normalization" of the tenure-track timeline for Library Faculty and the current structure of the Reed Library personnel committee were included. Finally, an initial review of the current library tenure and promotion guidelines was compared to this task force's *Overview of Departmental Personnel Policies*.

### **Issues Unique to Librarians :**

Two areas of concern for librarians in relation to tenure and promotion practices on campus are the "normalization" of the tenure-track timeline, and the current structure of the library's personnel committee.

## 1. Normalization of the tenure track timeline:

SUNY Fredonia prepares the Academic Affairs calendar to assist faculty and administration in navigating the appropriate timelines for the dossier review for reappointment, tenure and promotion. However, because librarians at SUNY Fredonia are on a twelve month timeline and are hired at any time during the year, the timeline established in the Academic Affairs calendar is not applicable. This lack of a consistent timeline has led to undue stress for the person being reviewed, the personnel committee and administration. In the past, librarians being reviewed have been misinformed about their review dates, and dossiers have been forgotten to be reviewed, resulting in late reappointment letters.

Concern about this issue has led to discussions about how to “normalize” librarians to have their review timelines match those of the teaching faculty. While no consensus on a viable alternative was reached during the forums and through the survey results, *librarians have discussed this issue at length, and above all else are united in the idea that any normalization of dates with the teaching faculty **should not** come at a penalty to the person being reviewed.*

### **Recommendations for future action:**

Recently, there has been a concerted effort by the Library Director and Human Resources to improve communication with the personnel committee and the librarian being reviewed. A spreadsheet with projected review dates has been established by the Library Director and shared with all parties. It is recommended that this dialog and the spreadsheet be continued, reviewed and revisited, when needed.

Subsequently, a discussion with the V.P.A.A. and the Personnel Task Force Committee have revealed that a resolution for a consistent review date for librarians, independent of their hire date, be investigated and eventually established. This date could be aligned with the Teaching Faculty or could be a unique date just for Library Faculty reviews. It is the recommendation of this committee that Library Faculty begin this process by consulting with Human Resources to investigate the timeline issue in accordance with the appropriate notification dates, per the UUP contract. Secondly, the establishment of this new timeline should be discussed in consultation with the Library Director, the VPAA and UUP, where needed. Thirdly, once a timeline is established, it must be included in the Academic Affairs Calendar. Finally, the establishment of this consistent review date **should not** come at a penalty to the person being reviewed.

## 2. Restructuring the Personnel Committee:

Currently, the Reed Library Personnel Committee consists of three members of the library faculty that are voted on by their peers. The members of the personnel committee can be both tenured and tenure-track faculty members. The personnel committee reviews the dossier of those up for review, and alone makes the decision for reappointment, tenure and promotion. While past practice has been for the committee to unofficially solicit opinions from members of the library faculty, there is no formal input from the faculty as a whole. In 2001, the Reed Library Faculty was asked by Vice-President Reck to create an appeals process at the faculty

**Comment [VH48]:** The draft policies reflect this view and outline a clear structure and process for review of library faculty in VI.A.1, VI.A.2, VI.B.1, and VI.B.2.

**Comment [VH49]:** These suggestions should be addressed within the library and the by-laws for library faculty review.

**Comment [VH50]:** The draft policies do not reflect this view. Because each library faculty member has a unique timetable for review, the Academic Affairs calendar would not publish each person's review schedule.

**Comment [VH51]:** The draft policies address library personnel committee structure in VI.D.1.a.

level. The result was the current structure of three, with an appeal going to the faculty as a whole.

**Problems** that have occurred as a result include: a conflict of interest among tenure-track faculty serving on the personnel committee, lack of a rigorous peer evaluation by the whole library faculty, and an overburdening of a small number of faculty with a difficult task. Tenure-track faculty have also indicated feeling pressured into serving on the personnel committee, and cited the potential for abuse of a system where tenure-track faculty are reviewing other tenure-track faculty and where tenure-track faculty are reviewing tenured faculty and potentially supervisors for promotion. In recent years, the personnel committee has often had only one tenured faculty member.

**Comment [VH52]:** The draft policies do not address such unit-level issues but do encourage library faculty to ensure that the library faculty by-laws attend to these issues.

### **Recommendations for future action:**

A review of the current structure of the Reed Library committee is **needed**. Survey results indicate that half of the current library faculty members favor a personnel committee that organizes the evaluation process, but does not make the final recommendation. While a current consensus on how to change the evaluation process has not been reached, it is clear that reevaluation of current policy is both wanted and needed.

**Comment [VH53]:** This is a unit-level action that the draft policies support but do not dictate.

Specific recommendations to assist in restructuring the Personnel Committee include: researching 'best practice' models on campus, discussing expectations with the current Vice-President of Academic Affairs and consulting the Library Director, and UUP, if needed. The Vice-President of Academic Affairs has discussed the appeals process with this committee, and indicated that all appeals should begin at the "next level" during the review process. This idea, coupled with a review of current campus practices on appeals will assist library faculty in creating a new appeals policy, along with the restructuring of the Personnel Committee.

### **Overview of Departmental Personnel Policies**

Reed Library has a document entitled *Guide to Achieving Reappointment, Continuing Appointment and Promotion in Reed Library*. This document is given to all incoming librarians along with the *Board of Trustees Manual*. This document gives examples of what types of activities constitute service, effective performance, and professional activities/accomplishments. It also describes the expectations of each rank, what should be included in a dossier, and what documents the personnel committee should use in evaluation. The mandatory assignment of a mentor is also established in this document. The expectations for a mentor are also discussed. This document, does not, however, weigh the importance of these areas relative to each other. A large percentage of librarians (80%) felt that these guidelines, were not clear enough, and required more detail. There is also no discussion of the option for an outside evaluator.

The Reed Library Faculty By-laws work hand in hand with the Personnel Policies. It is the by-laws document that establishes the workflow for the reappointment, tenure and promotion process. One area that is very different from other policies on campus, aside from the aforementioned appeals process and personnel committee structure, is the lack of a second layer of review at the faculty leadership level. Currently, a librarian's dossier goes from the

personnel committee to the Library Director (M/C administrator), to the V.P.A.A. and finally to the President. Teaching faculty dossiers go from the personnel committee, to the Department Chair (faculty), to the Dean (M/C administrator), to the V.P.A.A., etc. The By-laws have an established Library Faculty President, but their role is not seen as the equivalent of a Chair, on campus. Currently, the Library Faculty President's only role in the review process is as an alternate member of the Personnel **committee**.

**Comment [VH54]:** The draft policies do not propose a clear restructuring to address this issue, but a revision coming from the library faculty to define the chair/president role would certainly be appropriate.

The current Faculty By-laws also do not address the following areas: the role of the mentor in serving on the personnel committee, the role of the supervisor in serving on a personnel committee of someone in their department, and the appropriate level of disclosure of the supervisor's letter of review. Currently, the Library Director receives a letter from a supervisor at the time of review. Because not all librarians have a department supervisor, and instead directly report to the Library Director, it is unclear whether only the Director sees the letter or if the personnel committee should also consider it during the review process. Currently, there is no mention of the letter or the role of the supervisor in the personnel review process in any Reed Library policy.

#### **Recommendations for future action:**

A review of the aforementioned issues should occur at the Library Faculty level, in consultation with Human Resources, the V.P.A.A. , the Library Director and U.U.P, as needed. In addition to consulting campus 'best practices', it would also be appropriate to consult other SUNY campuses to see how their governance structures work, especially in regard to the role of a chair and supervisors. Additionally, consulting American Library Association criteria for library faculty could assist in creating clearer policies for **librarians**.

**Comment [VH55]:** All of these suggestions would be good ideas for the library faculty as they examine the library faculty by-laws.

#### **Responses to Questions Posed in the Memorandum of Understanding.**

The two areas where librarians have unique concerns relative to the six questions in the MOU are as follows.

##### **1. The difficulty of the twelve-month **appointment****

**Comment [VH56]:** Details about workload are not addressed in the draft policies.

In general, librarians felt the most difficult aspect of the tenure process was the expectation that all areas set forth by the *Board of Trustees* be addressed while working a twelve month contract, and in theory, a 7.5 hour day. Devoting sufficient time to scholarship was cited as the most difficult to "fit in" without the breaks that teaching faculty have during intersession and the summer, to complete. Many librarians saw their primary job duties as the most important aspects of their positions, while others felt that service should play a larger role, with less emphasis on scholarship.

#### **Recommendations for future action:**

It is recommended that a time be established during the year for exclusive research/writing days, where nothing else is scheduled (reference shifts, etc.) for those seeking both tenure and **promotion**. This would be established with the Library Director and supervisors, if appropriate. Additionally, the Library Faculty should consult the book *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of*

**Comment [VH57]:** This may be a good idea but is outside the scope of personnel review policies.

*the Professoriate*, by former SUNY Chancellor Ernest Boyer. This work discusses a broader view of scholarship to include: discovery, integration, application (or engagement) and teaching. Understanding and then establishing guidelines that reflect this broader view of scholarship may assist librarians in achieving the scholarship activities needed for tenure and promotion. Finally, a dialog between the V.P.A.A, the Library Director and the Library Faculty in regard to the unique workload issues for librarians seeking tenure and promotion should be ongoing.

**Comment [VH58]:** This broader view of scholarship is reflected in the draft policies in VI.E.2.b.

**Comment [VH59]:** This is outside the scope of the draft policies.

## 2. External review

The current library policies for tenure and promotion do not address even the option of external review. While *librarians overwhelmingly did not think that external review should be mandatory*, the option of having an external review was appealing. Library faculty felt that the external review should take place two years prior to the review for continuing appointment, and that the external review be fundamentally a formative one.

Generally, librarians were in favor of soliciting an external reviewer. Librarians felt that the evaluator should be from peer institutions that reflected the culture of our library and not necessarily SUNY libraries. Concerns about the interpretation of campus practice and the effect on the tenure-track timeline were expressed. Because of the variety of positions held by library faculty, (ex. Cataloger, Archivist, Music Librarian), having outside reviewers to help discern the uniqueness of the faculty member's position and scholarship was seen as helpful in the review process.

**Comment [VH60]:** This option is available to those who wish to include "other support documents" in their dossier appendices (see VI.G.3.g) and in the idea that the library faculty by-laws could include such a requirement.

### **Recommendations for future action:**

While reviewing current policies and procedures, the Library faculty should add a component addressing the option for external review. Consulting campus 'best-practices' and SUNY library policies is recommended. Clear guidelines as to the how, what, when and why a reviewer is chosen are crucial to the successful implementation of this option afforded to both the faculty member being reviewed, and the personnel committee using the information from the reviewer in an appropriate manner. These guidelines should be created in consultation with the Library Director, the V.P.A.A. and U.U.P. Additionally, these guidelines should reflect similar policies on campus.

**Comment [VH61]:** See previous comment.

### **Final Overall Recommendation**

The Library Faculty should establish both a priority list of action items based on these recommendations, and a timeline for completion. Work on these action items should begin prior to the Fall 2008 semester.

**Comment [VH62]:** Although this makes sense as an action plan for library faculty, it is outside the scope of the draft policies.

## Professional Staff Personnel Policy Recommendations

Issue to be Addressed	Recommendations
Unfamiliarity with Criteria & Process for Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline in Performance Programs</li> <li>Hold Informational/Education Sessions</li> <li>Expand HR website to include Performance Evaluation criteria &amp; process guidelines</li> </ul>
Lack of Clear Dept/Division Evaluation Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include evaluative items in vision &amp; mission statements</li> <li>Include in Performance Programs</li> <li>Make the development of guidelines a performance objective for Dept &amp; Division Chairs/Directors</li> </ul>
Use of Secondary Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use only in appeal process (mandatory-external source must be agreed upon by both parties)</li> <li>Use secondary sources as a performance evaluation tool if included in Perf Program and agreed upon in advance</li> </ul>
Overall lack of understanding and knowledge surrounding Performance Programs, Performance Evaluations, Promotions, Reappointment Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly Professional Performance Management "tips" (listserv email)</li> <li>Campus wide training; "Train-the-Trainer" programs for ongoing training efforts</li> <li>Annual "orientation" to cover all topics</li> <li>Standardized forms for Performance Programs, Evaluations, Request for Promotion, DSI nomination</li> <li>Written guidelines/policy manual provided to all new hires as part of "first day" orientation</li> </ul>
Responsibility of Employee in establishing Performance Program & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish standardized, campus wide responsibility of all employees to contribute to performance program and evaluation process</li> </ul>

**Comment [VH63]:** This chart, reflecting the complete Task Force recommendations for review of professional staff, includes many good ideas that relate more to communication and orientation than to policy about how such reviews are conducted. The UUP Agreement (Appendix A-28) outlines the procedures for such reviews, so any language in VII could not contradict or add to the principles and processes of the state-negotiated Agreement.

**Comment [VH64]:** The Agreement addresses the issue of performance programs.

**Comment [VH65]:** This may be a good idea but is not a campus policy issue.

**Comment [VH66]:** This is not a campus policy issue.

**Comment [VH67]:** This may be a good idea but is beyond the scope of individual performance evaluation.

**Comment [VH68]:** This may be a good idea but is beyond the scope of individual evaluation.

**Comment [VH69]:** This may be a good idea but is beyond the scope of individual evaluation. The campus needs to have in place similar documents that clarify processes for chair appointment, review, and reappointment, and this recommendation suggests development of a parallel document for supervisors.

**Comment [VH70]:** The UUP Agreement addresses the issue of secondary sources.

**Comment [VH71]:** These five recommendations may all be good ideas for orientation and professional development, but they are outside the scope of what campus-wide policies can address.

**Comment [VH72]:** This view is addressed in the draft policies (VII.G.1), which offers the option—but does not require—professionals to submit narrative and documentation of their work related to the criteria for professionals outlined by the SUNY Board of Trustees Policies.