

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** July 13, 2012

**TO:** University Senate Executive Committee

**FROM:** Campus APT Committee and  
Juan Uriagereka, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs

**SUBJECT:** 2011-2012 APT Committee Annual Report

### 2011-2012 Committee Members:

Robert Chambers, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics  
Carol Espy-Wilson, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
Julie Greene, Chair, Department of History  
Marie Howland, School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation  
Seppo Iso-Ahola, Department of Kinesiology  
Carl Lejuez, Department of Psychology  
Subramanian Raghavan, Robert H. Smith School of Business  
Jennifer Rice, Department of Education Policy and Leadership  
Lawrence Sita, Department of Chemistry

#### Cases Handled by Campus APT Committee 2011-2012

TOTAL Cases that entered the APT Process (as of 6/1/12)					
	YES	NO	WITHDRAWN	PENDING	TOTAL
Promotion to Associate Professor/Senior Agent	49	7	5	0	61
Promotion to Professor/Principal Agent	26	1	7	0	34
New Associate Professor/Senior Agent	5	0	0	3	8
New Professor/Principal Agent	6	0	0	3	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>112</b>

### Comments on the APT results

The data above can be compared with numbers for the last decade in the Faculty Affairs archives. **Denials in 2011-2012 at the level of promotion to Associate Professor/Senior-Agent are at 10%, as compared to the 6% rate since 2000.** In turn denials at the Professor/Principal-Agent level are at 3%, as has been the case since 2000 (last year these spiked up to 20%). Data on withdrawals (i.e. those who dropped from the APT process for academic reasons – not a better offer elsewhere) has only been kept since recently; **for 2011-2012 withdrawals are at 8% of the cases originally expected for Associate Professors** and at 21% for Professors (in comparison, last year they were at 16% for Associate Professors and 33% for Professors). The Appendix has a discussion of associated demographic data.

### Issues that need attention

Most of the following issues have been noted in previous reports – even with a different Associate Provost running the Office of Faculty Affairs.

## 1. The use of criteria to guide APT analysis

APT committees rely on units' criteria to frame their evaluations of each dossier, as should external referees. The APT Policy states that:

Each college, school, and department shall develop brief, general, written Criteria for Tenure and/or Promotion. The criteria to be considered in appointments and promotions fall into three general categories: (1) performance in teaching, advising, and mentoring of students; (2) performance in research, scholarship, and creative activity; (3) performance of professional service to the university, the profession, or the community. The relative importance of these criteria may vary among different academic units, but each of the categories shall be considered in every decision.

So ideally the discussion of each case should be organized around evaluations of the extent to which candidates meet the criteria. However:

- Some of the criteria submitted by units are vague; often, generic campus criteria were explicitly or implicitly used to contextualize a dossier.
- Occasionally units ignored their own criteria and were inconsistent in the application of these standards.
- Some of the criteria provided were outdated.

The Office of Faculty Affairs will work with units and colleges to communicate the importance of APT criteria and also to consider to what extent these criteria: (i) Are consistent with those of our peers, (ii) are used by referees in each field and faculty from distinguished institutions, and (iii) are reflective of the kind of institution that our policies and strategic plans expect. **Administrators (deans and chairs) are ultimately responsible of ensuring that criteria are rigorously applied.**

## 2. The assessment of teaching and mentoring

Teaching, broadly construed as classroom performance and student mentoring, is a central aspect of academic life in a university. The policy quoted above in fact lists “performance in teaching, advising, and mentoring of students” as its very first criterion for Tenure and/or Promotion. However:

- Some of the units appeared to have disregarded teaching in their evaluation.
- Often teaching evaluation charts were either missing or incomplete; even for included charts often college means or even scales (four point, five point, etc.) were missing, decontextualizing scores.
- Because teaching is often discipline-specific, committees need explanations of performance: from contextualizing undergraduate classes to describing how graduate education is integrated into the life of a department.
- Evaluation is facilitated when summary tables track teaching performance over time; the last five years of raw course evaluations should be included.
- It is helpful to provide specifics of whether the candidate is directing theses or dissertations, acting as an advisor or general mentor, where students or postdocs were placed, the candidate's role in co-authoring with mentees and whether a department allows advising by junior faculty.
- Peer evaluations are only truly meaningful if they start taking place at the very beginning of a new faculty member's career, as opposed to during the semester when the person is undergoing an APT review.

- **The best way for a faculty member to contextualize teaching is through a Teaching Dossier, including customary evaluations, but also syllabi, exams student reactions, self-reflections, etc.** [Note: The teaching dossier can be included as supplemental materials and it should normally be reviewed at lower levels of the APT process. Reports from the first level should summarize the highlights of the dossier for higher-level committees.]

### 3. Evaluation Letters

Evaluation letters are central to APT. It is required to provide evaluation criteria as discussed above to external referees and important to select these referees very carefully, keeping in mind that these are the experts that much of the decision rests on. Therefore:

- Conflicts of interest (e.g. former advisors, co-authors or direct colleagues) should be strictly avoided, and letter writers should in general be full professors and come from at least a peer institution; candidates often need advice on how to suggest reviewers under such parameters.
- Once an assessment is received it should be treated seriously, honestly and realistically presenting the facts in the letter. Non-committal letters may also raise issues and should be addressed in the report.
- Evaluation letters are strictly confidential; chairs and deans must refrain from referring to their content in correspondence with candidates, especially in letters informing them of the outcome of a step in the process.
- All correspondence with referees should be in writing (typically e-mail), and part of the dossier; **verbal consultation with the referees on these matters is strongly discouraged as it could be prejudicial.** [Note: to ensure that this rule is satisfied by units and candidates, a letter log will detail the various steps in the correspondence; unusual discrepancies (e.g. in dates of request) should be explained to higher committees.]

### 4. Negative Evidence

Negative evidence in a dossier, whether critical letters, negative votes or even absence of information from what is to be expected in normal judgment, is as central to a dossier as positive information is. Because of this, it is important to:

- Explain negative (or abstention) votes to the extent that this is possible.
- Understand that a letter's assessment should not be second-guessed and the greater the number of such comments in a dossier, the more problematic they become. It is not normally helpful to criticize the writer.
- Declines must be listed in the letter log, and a copy of the decline itself (email, letter, etc.) must be provided.
- Non-responses by letter-writers can only be dismissed if they are absolute (i.e. a solicited letter has not received even an acknowledgement).
- **Any communication with reviewers to the effect that a letter will not be written can be seen as evaluative, particularly if the number of non-responses approximates the number of letters, unless explanation is provided.**

5. The changing face of scholarship

Interdisciplinarity and associated large teams are central to present-day academic practices and expectations. Yet evaluating the intellectual contribution of a single investigator has become challenging. Units and colleges should clarify the matter to the extent possible, emphasizing **to what extent contributions by a candidate are independent**, including the appropriate intellectual distance from his or her mentor. It may also be necessary to provide detailed explanations for the role of evaluators who, in some emergent fields, may seem too close to the candidate to be impartial. Other ways of appropriately contextualizing interdisciplinary circumstances ought to be pursued, although the matter is extremely complex throughout the world. Perhaps a role ought to be sought for affiliate faculty in units, especially in cases in which it becomes difficult to evaluate contributions that go beyond what is expected in narrower disciplinary efforts. It is even possible that present policies need to be reconsidered.

6. Mechanical Problems that slow the APT Process and disadvantage candidates

Ways should be found to expedite the APT Process. The following slow the process:

- Non-searchable PDFS.
- Inclusion of materials in main dossier that should be supplemental.
- Meeting dates and votes in letters & transmittal forms that conflict.
- Missing candidate notifications or notification was just verbal or too informal (e.g.: cc: in an email).
- Dates on CV and personal statement are later than the date sent to external evaluators or an updated CV is substituted for the original CV. (Updated publications, grants, etc. can be submitted as supplemental.)
- Date on Summary Statement less than 2 weeks before Department meeting.
- Evaluators not given time to respond (less than 2 months).

**Concluding Remarks**

The APT Manual, detailing procedures and best practices, has now been carefully vetted by the Council of Associate Deans for Faculty Affairs (CADFA). In 2012/2013 the document will be reviewed by a Senate Task Force, as required by the APT Policy. The Office of Faculty Affairs recommends that matters of the sort outlined above be considered by the Task Force.

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cc: Ann Wylie  
Diane Krejsa  
Campus APT Committee

### Appendix: Demographic data

These demographics are about “promotions” (from within the ranks at UMD) and not “appointments” (hired into UMD). Again, withdrawn cases concentrate on those that **renounced** the APT process without a better academic offer (henceforth “renounced”). Participation demographics remain indistinguishable from last year: 36% of those in the APT process were women, vs. 33% last year; 39% were minorities vs. 38% last year.

Cases that went through the Promotion Process (as of 6/1/12)							
	Total	% Female vs. male		% Asian	% Black	% Hispanic	% White
<b>Assistant to Associate</b>	61	39%	61%	24.5%	10%	6.5%	59%
<b>Associate to Full</b>	34	29%	71%	26%	0%	9%	65%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>25.3%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>61%</b>

As was the case last year, the negative data below are so small (twenty individuals) that they should not be over-interpreted. In that regard, the combination of denied and renounced cases (called “unsuccessful” in the final chart) offers the safest representation, given the sample size. Overall, women were unsuccessful 40% of the time (which is comparable to their 36% proportion in the APT population). If there is one other generalization of relative statistical significance this is the proportion of non-promoted minorities. Last year the overall rate of participating to unsuccessful APT cases for minorities was 35% to 38%. In contrast this year the rate is 39% (participating) to 65% (unsuccessful). In other words, while the participation of minorities in the process this year is insignificantly greater, the proportion of those who failed is significantly greater.

Cases that were denied during the Promotion Process (as of 6/1/12)							
	Total	% Female vs. male		% Asian	% Black	% Hispanic	% White
<b>Assistant to Associate</b>	7	71%	29%	14%	29%	14%	43%
<b>Associate to Full</b>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>50%</b>

Cases that Renounced the Promotion Process (as of 6/1/12)							
	Total	% Female vs. male		% Asian	% Black	% Hispanic	% White
<b>Assistant to Associate</b>	5	40%	60%	60%	0%	0%	40%
<b>Associate to Full</b>	7	14%	86%	72%	0%	14%	14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>25%</b>

Cases that were UNSUCCESSFUL (DENIED or RENOUNCED) in the Promotion Process (as of 6/1/11)							
	Total	% Female vs. male		% Asian	% Black	% Hispanic	% White
<b>Assistant to Associate</b>	12	58.3%	41.6%	33%	17%	8%	42%
<b>Associate to Full</b>	8	12.5%	87.5%	62.5%	0%	12.5%	25%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>35%</b>

