

HISTORY DEPARTMENT TENURE POLICY

Applies to faculty members beginning their tenure-track appointments 9/1/2007 or later
(DRAFT REVISIONS PENDING APPROVAL OF DEAN OF LAA AND PROVOST)

Overview

Academic tenure is a status granted to college faculty members after a probationary period in the profession. It protects them against involuntary suspension or termination of employment except upon stipulated grounds and in accordance with specified procedures. Such protection is intended to safeguard the faculty's freedom to pursue truth and to enunciate it as they deem correct and proper. Accordingly, this freedom enables the University to develop and maintain a faculty of the highest possible quality for the purposes of enlarging, refining, preserving, applying, and transmitting knowledge. Thus, tenure is essential to fulfilling the University's responsibility to conduct itself for the common good as an instrument in a democratic society. A decision to accord tenure to an individual means that the appropriate tenured faculty members have determined that the candidate has a high probability of making long-term contributions to the goals of the University and the profession, as indicated by explicit evidence accumulated during the probationary period.

The History Department at Stephen F. Austin State University follows the University Tenure Policy described in Policy E-50A, revised 15 July 2008. The History Department also conforms to the tenure policy of the College of Liberal and Applied Arts. Even though the Department hires only those likely to attain tenure, the tenured members will yearly conduct an internal review of non-tenured faculty. The annual reviews, conducted between those required by University policy, are internal, departmental reviews. Tenured faculty will discuss with the chair the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate. The chair will summarize those comments, discuss them with the candidate, and make recommendations for any needed improvement. If, at any point during his or her service, a faculty member's probationary appointment will not be renewed, the chair must so inform that faculty member, in writing. The Department does not have to state a reason for non-renewal.

General Standards for Tenure

The History Department's tenured faculty will recommend the granting of tenure based on an applicant's record of teaching, service, and scholarship. Although the Department expects quality teaching, it does not require the applicant to excel equally in all three categories. Instead, the Department looks for the applicant to be active in teaching, service, and scholarship. The Department, therefore, will consider each individual case on its own merits. Finally, the Department believes that the quality of contributions is of greater importance than the quantity.

1. Teaching Expectations

To recommend tenure, the Department requires a consistent record of quality teaching and a positive attitude toward students. The Department also supports the University's attempt through its Master Plan and Core Curriculum Initiative to increase students' mastery of reading, writing, and analytical skills. During internal reviews, as well as through informal mentoring, tenured members will help non-tenured faculty work to improve their teaching to meet tenure standards. In accordance with Part IV, Section C of the University's policy, the Department will also take into account the applicant's credentials and the Department's programmatic needs. To gain the Department's recommendation for tenure, the applicant must demonstrate his or her teaching effectiveness. Evidence of teaching ability may include, but is not limited to:

- Student evaluations that show that the applicant's courses meet the Department's expectations
- Positive evaluations by tenured faculty mentors who have observed the applicant's performance in the classroom
- Recognitions or awards for distinguished teaching
- The satisfactory development of new courses
- Syllabi that meet Department standards
- Positive written comments from students, faculty, and/or administrators
- A grade distribution that does not promote grade inflation

- Practicum and internship supervision
- Thesis direction or service on a thesis committee
- Regular holding of office hours
- Assignment of a variety of course materials
- Supervision of independent studies
- Participation in study abroad programs
- Familiarity with and adherence to the History Department Teaching Guidelines

2. Service Expectations

The Department also requires the applicant to present evidence of satisfactory professional service. The Department believes that quality of service is more important than quantity. Service may take a variety of forms that may include, but are not limited to:

- Service on Department, College, and University committees
- Academic Advising
- Recruiting and retention efforts
- Placement efforts for graduating students
- Academic/professional organization membership
- Office-holding or committee membership in academic/professional organizations
- Professionally related community service
- Professional consulting
- Directorship of university programs
- Working with student organizations

3. Scholarship Expectations

Finally, the Department expects the applicant to engage in a continuing pattern of demonstrable scholarship. As all scholarship is not of equal value – a monograph, for example, requires much more time and research than a book chapter – the Department will take this into account when evaluating the applicant’s record. Generally speaking, the Department expects candidates to publish one book/monograph or at least two peer-reviewed research-based publications. Publications released by “vanity presses” will not be considered evidence of demonstrable scholarship. The Department will review an applicant based on a verifiable record of performance, in accordance with Part I, Section D, Paragraph 1 of the University’s policy. The non-tenured faculty should submit complete copies of research to the department during the annual reviews. Examples of scholarly activity may include, but are not limited to:

- Monographs
- Article contributions to international, national, and regional historical journals
- Papers presented at international, national, and regional historical conferences
- Chapters in monographs or collections of articles
- Securing internal and/or external grants
- Book reviews in international, national, and regional historical journals
- Chairing a panel at an international, national, or regional conference
- A paper in a collection of published conference papers
- Participation in the writing of a textbook
- Refereed on-line publications that meet the same departmental standards as print publications

The Department understands that the publishing process can take a long time, so it will accept evidence of imminent publication in lieu of the actual publication if necessary.

Note: This policy applies to departmental faculty who started on the tenure track during the fall semester of 2007 or later. Tenure decisions relating to faculty who started on the tenure track before that semester are governed by the policy approved on 1/18/07.