

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

Accepted by the Professional Standards Committee on September 27, 2001

The Department has agreed on several goals for our work together, and these goals are listed below. In order to merit advancement, any member of the Department must have achieved these goals in a manner that satisfies his or her colleagues. As faculty, excellence in teaching and professional growth is more important to us than anything else, but we realize that teacher/scholars are people of differing temperaments and professional interests, and there is no one best definition of success as a professor. Accordingly, we do not use our criteria in a fixed or quantitative manner, for this might hinder rather than help us form a judgment about someone's overall effectiveness and importance to the Department.

I. Teaching

The Department of Religion endorses the University's commitment to excellent teaching. Faculty will bring disciplinary expertise to their teaching and offer an appropriate range and variety of courses that contribute to a well-rounded departmental curriculum. In the classroom, an excellent teacher conveys an enthusiasm for learning that may spark a complementary excitement in students; promotes students' critical thinking and self-reflection; helps students acquire knowledge and insight; and demonstrates the interrelatedness of knowledge. In addition, the Religion Department commends its faculty for availability to students beyond the classroom. The instruments for judging teaching excellence include but are not limited to the following: student evaluations that may be both formal and informal, testimony from colleagues who visit classes, course syllabi and other materials. The Department recognizes the following components of teaching for evaluation:

- A. Providing a stimulating classroom environment for careful and systematic study of religion and religious traditions. This study may include examination of primary texts; the origin and historical development of religious traditions; philosophical, ethical, and social aspects of religions; and the relationship between religion and other disciplines.
- B. Helping students improve the following skills:
 1. Reading carefully and critically
 2. Thinking analytically and synthetically
 3. Expressing ideas effectively, both orally and in writing.
- C. Supporting our curricular programs.
 1. Offer courses that support the Religion Major.
 2. Offer courses that support the University's Core Curriculum.
 3. Where appropriate, supervise Independent Study projects and Senior Theses.
 4. Where appropriate, offer courses in interdisciplinary programs.

II. Professional Growth

The Department recognizes that scholar-teachers profess a devotion to the pursuit of truth and advancement of general and specialized fields of knowledge for the benefit of the common good. Professors demonstrate their commitment and contribution to these endeavors in a variety of forms. For the purposes of evaluation, "professional growth" shall be evaluated on the basis of modes of academic discourse: the presentation of original thinking, scholarship, research, and translation through publication and the presentation of papers and lectures. The publication of books, monographs, translations, articles, chapters, edited volumes and reviews are the strongest indication of a professor's intellectual and scholarly vitality. This creative dialogue with communities of learning demonstrates a professor's willingness to have her or his work intellectually reviewed and to participate in a public exchange of ideas and knowledge. The Department recognizes no quotas for publication, but expects sufficient evidence to warrant the assumption of a commitment to continued intellectual inquiry, scholarly excellence and ongoing professional growth. Advancement to the rank of full professor is contingent upon evidence of distinguished service and a strong record of publication in addition to sustained growth in other areas. Furthermore, the Religion Department strongly endorses the University's commitment to academic and intellectual freedom and recognizes that professors, when guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, will pursue truth and the common good in various directions and manners, and that the individual's freedom of inquiry must never be seriously compromised.

III. University Service

The excellence and reputation of the University depend on the excellence and reputation of its Departments. Consequently, we view "university service" as including all activities beyond the classroom that contribute to the welfare of either the departmental or the university-wide "body politic." Here we recognize two basic modes of activity:

- A. Serve as appropriate in such ways as working on University or departmental committees, working on departmental projects, contributing to interdisciplinary programs, helping develop special programs and lectures, taking part in cooperative ventures with other departments, and doing research or writing on behalf of the Department or the University.
- B. Contribute to learning activities beyond the classroom. (These activities recently have been called "cocurricular" to distinguish them from "extracurricular" activities such as attendance at parties or sporting events.)

IV. Academic Advising

Tenure-track faculty in Religion are expected to advise a reasonable number of students. Faculty shall be available at appropriate times and give the attention required for good advising. Although students are ultimately responsible for their academic programs and their success in pursuing them, the Department recognizes the need for advisors to have a general working knowledge of essential University requirements and procedures as outlined in the *Bulletin* and *The Logger*.

V. Service to the wider community beyond the University

Service can include contributing to the life of religious groups or other organizations in ways that draw on one's professional expertise and skills. The groups served may be local, regional, national, or international.

Procedures for Evaluations

All evaluations of Department of Religion faculty will be conducted in accordance with the current Faculty Code. Prior to departmental evaluations, Religion faculty will review chapters 2-4 in the Code, and the head officer (the Chair, or a designate if the Chair is being evaluated) will give the evaluatee a copy of the most recent version of the departmental statement of Evaluation Criteria and Procedures.

The following departmental procedures are based on the procedures specified in the Faculty Code.

1. The evaluatee will prepare a file that will consist of the following parts:
 - a. a statement of professional objectives, both short- and long-term, and a self-analysis of teaching, scholarship, advising, and service;
 - b. the evaluatee's curriculum vita;
 - c. copies of course syllabi, examinations, and other pertinent material on all courses evaluated by students;
 - d. information concerning scholarly activity, including copies of relevant prepared materials;
 - e. information concerning successful advising;
 - f. information concerning University service;
 - g. information concerning community service;
 - h. other materials deemed useful by the evaluatee;
 - i. student evaluations of all courses taught during the most recent two semesters of teaching in promotion, 3-year, or 5-year evaluation cases, and during the most recent four semesters of teaching in tenure cases.
2. The file will be made available to departmental colleagues by an appropriate date determined by the head officer in dialog with the evaluatee. Thereafter the evaluatee may make changes in the file up to no later than one week before the other members of the Department meet to discuss the evaluation, and the evaluatee will notify all departmental colleagues whenever making changes that are substantial.
3. Tenure-line members of the Department will participate in the evaluation, unless excused by the Chair for due cause such as illness or sabbatical leave. They will:
 - a. read the file;
 - b. visit the evaluatee's classes a reasonable number of times to assess the quality of the evaluatee's teaching (and they will also record the dates of the visits for inclusion in their letters of recommendation);
 - c. talk with the evaluatee, as needed;
 - d. write a letter of recommendation that will judge the degree to which the evaluatee demonstrates excellence and meets University and departmental standards;

- e. give the letter to the head officer prior to a general departmental meeting that will include departmental faculty other than the evaluatee (or, as specified in the Faculty Code, send the letter directly to the Dean of the University);
 - f. participate in the general departmental meeting (except when the individual has sent his or her letter directly to the Dean).
4. At least one week before the file is due in the office of the Academic Dean all tenure-line members of the Department participating in the evaluation who have submitted letters to the head officer will meet to discuss their recommendations and make an overall departmental recommendation. Following that meeting, a participating member of the Department may write an addendum to his or her individual letter of recommendation and submit it to the head officer.
5. After the general departmental meeting and the possible reception of addenda, the head officer will write a departmental letter of recommendation that will include:
 - a. a summary of the criteria used in the evaluation process;
 - b. a summary of the Department's deliberations and the departmental recommendation;
 - c. a summary of the substance of the letters (except in the case of an open file) and possible addenda;
 - d. a list of the names of individuals who submitted letters to the head officer; and
 - e. a list of the names of individuals who participated in the departmental deliberations (all or part of the group who submitted letters to the head officer).
6. Copies of a draft of the departmental letter of recommendation will be given to all members of the Department who sent letters to the head officer; they in turn will review the departmental recommendation letter and work with the head officer to edit the letter as needed to ensure that it reflects departmental letters, deliberations, and addenda.
7. The head officer will finalize the departmental recommendation letter and send copies of the letter to all members of the Department who sent letters to the head officer.
8. All materials, including a copy of the most recent version of the Department Statement of Evaluation Criteria and Procedures for Evaluations, will be sent to the Academic Dean prior to the deadline. A copy of the final departmental recommendation letter will be given to the evaluatee at that time, and the head officer will meet with the evaluatee to discuss the content of the recommendation letter.
9. Within one month of receiving the report of the evaluation from the Advancement Committee, the head officer will meet with the evaluatee to discuss the results of the evaluation and possible goals and objectives for the next evaluation period.