

PROPOSAL FOR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

GENERAL DEPARTMENT GOVERNANCE

Overall Organization

- Within the Department, the ultimate authority resides in its voting members except in those instances when the College or University has vested authority in the **Chair**. Voting members of the Department are those who are budgeted to the Department and hold the rank of assistant professor or above. Operation of the department is conducted by the **Chair, Steering Committee Graduate and Undergraduate Coordinators, and Standing and Ad hoc Committees**.
- The **Chair** is the chief administrative officer of the department. S/he oversees the professional office staff and all aspects of the academic program, such as: teaching assignments, recruitment, space, promotion, tenure, and annual evaluation of faculty. The **Chair** appoints and supervises the **Graduate and Undergraduate Coordinators** and selects and supervises the members of all committees. On a routine basis, the **Chair** supervises the day-to-day activities of the Department and in conjunction with the coordinators and committees assures that all policies and procedures are carried out. In addition, the **Chair** acts as a liaison between the Department and the College.
- The **Chair** is also the chief financial officer of the Department. S/he is responsible for the final recommendations for salaries and leaves. The **Chair** supervises all receipts and expenditures and prepares the annual academic program review and budget proposal to the Dean. All budget documents shall be available to any voting member of the Department on request. In addition, the **Chair** acts as a liaison to the College development officers who aid in outside fund raising for the Department.
- **Standing Committees** include the **Steering Committee, the Graduate Admissions Committee, and the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee**.
- The **Steering Committee** serves as an advisory council to the **Chair** on all departmental matters, including merit raises. This committee consists of three members appointed by the **Chair** in consultation with the previous **Steering Committee** and approved by the Department serving one-year terms.
- The **Graduate Admissions Committee** is responsible for the admission of graduate students and for reviewing conduct related to the successful performance of graduate student requirements. This committee consists of three members appointed from the chair including the **Graduate Coordinator** who chairs the committee. Members serve two-year terms that may be renewed at the discretion of the **Chair**.
- The **Undergraduate Curriculum Committee** is responsible for the undergraduate curriculum. This committee consists of two members plus the **Undergraduate Coordinator** as chair. Members serve two-year terms that may be renewed at the discretion of the **Chair**.
- **Ad hoc Committees**, such as **Faculty Search Committees**, are appointed by the **Chair** and from time to time for a fixed duration to meet departmental needs.

- The **Graduate Coordinator** is a faculty member appointed by the **Chair** for a three-year term and is given an annual course reduction. S/he is responsible for the administration of the graduate program: including correspondence with prospective students, coordination of admissions, teaching fellowships, and, in consultation with relevant faculty, the regular evaluation of graduate students. The appointment may be renewed for up to an additional three-year term at the discretion of the **Chair**
- The **Undergraduate Coordinator** is a faculty member appointed by the **Chair** for a three-year term and is given an annual course reduction. S/he is responsible for undergraduate advising and in consultation with the **Undergraduate Curriculum Committee** oversees the undergraduate curriculum. The appointment may be renewed for up to an additional three-year term at the discretion of the **Chair**. Same again
- Faculty meetings are called by the **Chair** as needed. The **Chair** presides at these meetings and determines the agenda, in consultation with the faculty. Fifty percent or more of the number of voting members of the Department excluding those on leave constitute a quorum.
- Faculty meetings can be called by full-time faculty members if at least one-third of them initiate the request..
- Faculty on leave or absent from a meeting are permitted to vote on any specific motion or matter provided they are fully informed of the issues under discussion.
- The secret ballot will routinely be employed in making personnel decisions. On all other matters, the secret ballot will be employed upon a motion and second to that effect.
- The Department **Chair** is responsible for sending periodic email bulletins to the faculty (and others, as appropriate) about events and developments that affect the Department.
- The Department preference is for a rotating Chair that shall pass among a diverse range of faculty. Accordingly, chairs will normally serve a four-year term. Should the faculty choose, a **Chair's** term may be extended for a second term. Former chairs may serve again following a full term out of office.
- The **Chair** will be evaluated in a review organized by the Department's senior faculty.
- **Visiting** faculty are welcome to attend general departmental faculty meetings, and may be recognized by the **Chair** in general discussion. However, **Visiting** faculty do not have a vote on departmental business.
- The **Chair** may appoint **Visiting** faculty to serve on department committees (including field committees) what is a field committee as part of their service assignment, and they may vote in those committees.
- Faculty who are recruited by a search and who are appointed to Visiting Faculty lines for administrative reasons in anticipation of an imminent appointment to a tenure-track or tenured faculty position have full participation and voting rights on all department matters (subject to limitations in College and University rules). For example, a foreign national who is appointed as Visiting Assistant Professor while awaiting the completion of

Immigration procedures will generally be considered as an Assistant Professor for purposes of department governance.

- Lecturers are welcome to attend and participate fully in general departmental faculty meetings, and, as a rule, they have a vote on all matters EXCEPT those that assess or address research or affect the composition of the tenure-track faculty.

Release Time

- Alteration of the usual 2-2 teaching load, course reduction, and research leave are all possible within the Department. Such actions are taken with clearly understood criteria, in consultation with the **Steering Committee**, and ultimately at the discretion of the **Chair**.
- Current Department policy allows two instances of release time:
 - ❖ Junior faculty may be given a semester of research leave within their first three years with the expectation of increased research productivity. Here research leave is understood as release from all teaching and service requirements.
 - ❖ The **Graduate Coordinator** and **Undergraduate Coordinator** are granted a one course annual reduction in exchange for their service. Here course reduction means teaching one less course in a year while continuing to participate in the normal life of the Department including assigned committee work.
 - ❖ The expectation of increased productivity or reward for service or some combination of the two should guide the granting of release time. In evaluating a request for release time, the **Chair**, in consultation with the **Steering Committee**, will consider such factors as: how recently and how often the individual faculty member has received time off, results of past leaves or course reductions, whether or not an effort has been made to secure outside funding, what service is being rewarded or being offered in return, class coverage and responsibility to graduate students, and the overall fairness and practicality of the request in the context of the competing needs and desires of other faculty members.
- Types of release time include:
 - ❖ release from all teaching and service requirements (research leave) and
 - ❖ course reduction of one or two courses without administrative release (course reduction).
- Requests for release time need to be in the **Chair**'s hands in sufficient time for the **Chair** and the **Steering Committee** to make a decision before the class offerings are submitted for the semester in question.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Merit Pay Criteria

- Meritorious achievement is recognized for those who contribute to the realization of the Department's goals in pursuing excellence, and to the intellectual life of the Department and that of the larger academic community.
- The Department **Chair** shall determine which faculty members will be awarded merit pay increases when such money is available. There shall be a departmental **Merit Committee** with responsibility for recommending to the **Chair** those individuals who

should be eligible for such awards. The committee shall classify each faculty member's contribution and performance as highly meritorious, meritorious, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory. The **Chair**, in consultation with the **Merit Committee**, shall determine merit awards between and within these categories. Each member of the **Merit Committee** will be excluded from the discussion of her or his own assessment. The assessments of each member of the **Merit Committee** will be made by the remaining members of the committee. The committee's assessments will be based on the Annual Activities Reports, which include each faculty member's yearly report and vita, as well as the accompanying letter from the **Chair**.

- The **Merit Committee** shall consist of three tenured faculty chosen from among those budgeted in the Department. The **Merit Committee** member with the greatest length of service on the committee will serve as **Chair**.
- Determinations of merit shall be based on consideration of faculty's research, teaching and service record. The faculty member's Departmental work assignments may be taken into consideration when making merit assessments.
- It is assumed that the service duties of junior faculty will be lighter than those of their senior colleagues.
- For purposes of evaluation, the category of research shall include (but not be entirely restricted to):
 - ❖ articles in professional refereed journals
 - ❖ scholarly books or monographs
 - ❖ textbooks
 - ❖ edited books
 - ❖ chapters in books
 - ❖ convention papers
 - ❖ fellowships, grants and other financial awards
 - ❖ research proposal development
 - ❖ fundraising
 - ❖ invited papers and addresses
 - ❖ book reviews, commentaries, research notes and research reports
 - When evaluating research productivity, consideration will be given to quality and quantity. Distinctions will be made between publications in leading journals and others in the field and its subfields and among publishing houses.
- For purposes of evaluation, the category of teaching shall include undergraduate and graduate instruction, thesis and dissertation supervision (both within and outside the Department of Geography), intern supervision, course and curriculum development, the cultivation of new graduate students, and other related activities.
- For purposes of evaluation, the category of service shall include:
 - ❖ Attendance at faculty meetings, work on standing and ad hoc departmental committees
 - ❖ Undergraduate advising, and attendance at recruitment colloquia
 - ❖ Exceptional performance of normal departmental responsibilities
 - ❖ Service as departmental graduate coordinator, undergraduate coordinator, data lab and consortium management, and related activities

- ❖ Service on College or University committees, participation in or supervision of special programs and initiatives, and other significant contributions to the College or University
- ❖ Serving on editorial boards, as an officer in a professional association, a Chair or section leader for a major professional conference or other professional program participation, a reviewer for professional journals and other publications, a reviewer for professional research funding agencies, and a contributor to projects associated with professional work or other activities enhancing the reputation and visibility of the Department, College or University
- ❖ Serving as a journal or academic series editor
- ❖ Membership on government boards or commissions, leadership in community organizations, and election to public office or other activity enhancing the reputation and visibility of the Department, College or University
- ❖ Service to primary or secondary schools

Mentoring

- The **Chair** will facilitate the appointment of a mentor for each untenured member as early as possible in their first semester. The choice of mentor need not be based on similarities of academic work. The emphasis should be on finding someone the untenured member can talk with freely about all matters concerning the tenure process.
- The **Chair** will seek to assign a modest amount of administrative duties to tenure-track faculty while bearing in mind the need to balance the administrative load among all faculty.
- Untenured members will be encouraged to share their work with their mentor. They will be especially encouraged to discuss with their mentor decisions regarding their course preparations, paper presentations, research, and publishing activities with the mentor helping to evaluate these decisions in the light of the best possible tenure and promotion portfolio.
- The mentor will encourage and guide the untenured member in seeking funding for research projects or release time.
- Prior to the end of each academic year before tenure, the **Chair** will consult with the mentor and meet with the untenured member before writing the end of the year evaluation letter.

Peer Teaching Evaluations

- Each academic year the **Chair** will request teaching evaluations from a tenured geography faculty member of every untenured faculty member. The faculty member may be selected by the untenured faculty member, if approved by the **Chair**.
- Evaluations will be based on classroom visits and examination of syllabi, hand-outs, paper and exam assignments, web-related materials, and any other information the faculty consider relevant to judging his/her teaching.
- These evaluations will be particularly concerned with techniques, style, and effectiveness of teaching as well as the content or substance of instruction, which reflect an individual's command of and fluency in one's field of expertise.

- Tenured faculty are encouraged to request another tenured faculty member to carry out teaching evaluations at least every two years.

Tenure-Accruing Faculty: Policy on Third-Year Review

- The midterm review process provides structured and constructive information to assist candidates to meet college and university requirements for tenure and promotion. The review is normally done in the third year. It should be designed to provide the faculty member with constructive comments to strengthen the eventual tenure packet and provide the faculty member with a true assessment of how her/his efforts are perceived by peers within her/his own discipline. It also will assist that faculty member, in that peers, other than her/his own Chair, will provide an evaluation of the faculty member's efforts.
- The fact that the review process takes place at the end of the third year of service should allow for proper review of the faculty members teaching, research and service efforts and will allow enough time for the faculty member to make any modifications necessary for the successful award of tenure in the future, if any deficiencies are noted in the review. Likewise, it could also be used to assist the faculty member in the choice as to when she/he would most likely be successful in applying for tenure.
- The review should begin early in the third year of appointment. The dossier will include:
 - ❖ An abridged tenure and promotion packet
 - ❖ A research/scholarship portfolio including all of the candidate's research publications, papers submitted for publication, grant proposals, and similar information
 - ❖ Annual letters of evaluation from the **Chair**
- The dossier will be made available to the tenured faculty of the Associate and Full Professor rank. A committee appointed by the **Chair** and the mentor of the candidate will review the dossier and assess the candidate's performance. The assessment will address the issues normally considered in tenure and promotion deliberations and will determine if the candidate is making satisfactory progress toward promotion and tenure. The committee will prepare a report for a meeting of tenured faculty in the Department which will discuss the candidate's progress toward tenure and promotion and advise the Department **Chair** on what might be included in his/her letter of review to the candidate. The Department's faculty would typically address the following questions:
 - ❖ Is the candidate's teaching at or above department norms and expectations or making steady progress in that direction?
 - ❖ Has the candidate presented papers in appropriate venues and are the number and quality of those papers acceptable?
 - ❖ Has the candidate published at an acceptable rate and in appropriate journals?
 - ❖ Is the candidate beginning to establish a regional and national reputation in her/his field?
 - ❖ Is the candidate preparing her/himself to attract external funding to support her/his scholarly work?
 - ❖ Has the candidate gained Graduate Faculty Status and served on master's and doctoral committees?
 - ❖ Does the candidate's record suggest a teaching and research trajectory that is likely to lead to the rank of Associate (and later Full) Professor?
 - ❖ Is the candidate appropriately involved in professional service activities at the local, state, national, or international level?

- The Department **Chair** will draft a letter of review based on the candidate's dossier, the committee report as well as the discussion and other information from the Department faculty.
- The letter should consider the candidate's annual work assignments and any support the Department may have provided the candidate. It should identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in the candidate's record and make clear recommendations, if any, on how the candidate may improve her/his dossier and performance. The goal is to give thoughtful and constructive assessments and suggestions that will help the candidate meet college and university requirements for tenure and promotion. The letter will be explicit in stating that the letter itself is not a decision for tenure and promotion but is rather a mid-course evaluation.
- Before April 30, the Department **Chair** will meet with the candidate to provide a copy and discuss the letter of review. The candidate and Department **Chair** should discuss strengths and weaknesses in the candidate's dossier; what the candidate might do, if anything, to strengthen her/his papers in the future; and what assistance might be available in the department, college, and/or university to address candidate needs and improve performance, if needed. In making these recommendations the **Chair** and tenured faculty members are not entering into a contractual relationship with the candidate such that if these recommendations are fulfilled the candidate is assured of tenure. Rather they are recognizing and acting upon their responsibility to support the candidate in her/his final years before tenure. A copy of the letter of review will be placed in the candidate's personnel file. The faculty member has the right to submit a written response to the report if so desired, and the response will be placed in the faculty member's personnel file for future reference. The **Chair's** letter will not become part of the tenure and promotion packet.
- The Department **Chair's** letter of review will be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs by the end of the Spring semester.

Tenure and Promotion Criteria

- Candidates for tenure and/or promotion will be evaluated with respect to their accomplishments in teaching, research and service. The department requires that candidates demonstrate significant achievements in all three areas. Especially notable achievements must be evident in research and in at least one other area.

Tenure and/or Promotion to Associate Professor

- **Research:** Candidates must have established a program of original research or writing that has gained recognition in refereed journals and/or published books. The expectation is that the candidate will have published a book and/or a significant number of refereed articles, that are either first-authored or for which the candidate is the major author/researcher. Also considered important will be textbooks, scholarly monographs, edited books, chapters in books, book reviews, commentaries, research notes and research reports. The reputation and quality of the journals and publishers will bear on the assessment of publications. Generally, some publications will be derived from the individual's doctoral dissertation. Some publications or ongoing scholarship (likely to result in new publications) should clearly extend beyond such dissertation research and demonstrate new research initiatives. The seeking and/or successful attainment of fellowships, grants and awards, and fundraising will enhance the candidate's standing.

Candidates are also expected to have given paper presentations at conventions or other scholarly meetings.

- **Service:** Candidates must have demonstrated commitment to enhancing the life of the Department, College and University. The service contributions of untenured assistant professors are kept relatively light to facilitate excellence in teaching and research. Nonetheless, some student advising and committee work is expected. Scholarly service to the discipline (e.g. reviewing submissions to journals and panel participation at professional meetings, editorial activities in profession) is also expected. Service contributions to the community, state, or nation are considered important.
- **Teaching:** Teaching effectiveness will be evaluated in a number of ways, including peer evaluations of classroom performance, instructional materials (e.g. syllabi, exams), student evaluations, intern supervision, course and curriculum development, and participation in thesis and dissertation committees. Candidates must demonstrate a sustained commitment to excellence in teaching.

Promotion to Full Professor

- **Teaching:** Teaching effectiveness will be evaluated in a number of ways, including peer evaluations of classroom performance, instructional materials (e.g. syllabi, exams), student evaluations, intern supervision, course and curriculum development, and participation in thesis and dissertation committees. Teaching performance must be exemplary to merit promotion to full professor. Normally this will include supervision of Masters theses or Ph.D. dissertations. Innovative curriculum development is expected.
- **Research:** Candidates must have established a national and/or international reputation for excellence in scholarship, as made evident by the number of publications and the quality of their journals and presses, by book reviews, by citations of work, and by assessments of recognized authorities. There must be evidence of substantial publications since the candidate was last promoted, indicating a sustained research program. Significant success in winning grants, fellowships, and/or awards is expected.
- **Service:** Candidates must have established a notable record of service to the Department, College and University, as well as to the profession. This service should include the assumption of academic, professional, and administrative leadership roles (e.g. chairing committees, administering programs, organizing and convening sections for annual meetings, membership on editorial boards). Contributions to the community, state, and/or nation are also expected.

Promotion to Distinguished Professor

- Full professors (with the exception of endowed chairs and graduate research professors) may be nominated by the department **Chair** for promotion to the rank of Distinguished Professor in recognition of well-established national and/or international reputations in their fields of endeavor and exceptional records of achievement (beyond that expected of full professors) in the areas of teaching, research and professional and public service.

Lecturer Promotion Criteria

- Candidates for promotion to senior/master lecturer will be evaluated primarily with respect to their accomplishments in teaching and, secondarily, their service record (if service responsibilities were assigned). Other scholarly activities and/or membership in

graduate student committees are not expected but will be considered. The department requires that candidates demonstrate significant achievements in teaching.

SELECTION PROCEDURES FOR NEW AND EXISTING GRADUATE STUDENTS/TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Admission and Funding

- All graduate student candidates are first ranked by the **Graduate Admissions Committee** on whether they will be accepted or not and second ranked on funding merit.
- The Department's goal is to provide funding to assist new M.A./M.S. students for two years and new Ph.D. students for three years.
- New funding allocation decisions give priorities first to Ph.D. and then to M.A. applicants.

Graduate Student Admissions

- Although exceptions can be made, the Department seeks to accept only those graduate students who meet the following minimum criteria:
 - ❖ GRE's greater than 1,000 (foreign student scores will also be evaluated for competence in English language skills)
 - ❖ Overall GPAs greater than 3.0. Last two years of undergraduate work may be considered more heavily.
 - ❖ Letters of evaluation by others both inside and outside University of Florida.
 - ❖ Other requirements, once the above are met, will consider student-Department fit in regards to topic area, methodological focus, and both the short-term and long-term availability of an appropriate faculty member.
- Completed files are evaluated by **Graduate Admissions Committee**, appointed by the **Chair**.
- Acceptable files are transmitted to potential advisor(s) to confirm willingness to **Chair** their committees.
- Only candidates meeting minimum academic criteria, who can be linked to particular faculty advisors, and admission is approved by advisors are accepted.
- Candidates will be ranked according to merit:
 - ❖ High priority
 - ❖ Medium priority
 - ❖ Low priority
 - ❖ No funding recommended
- Letters of acceptance are sent out immediately after committee decisions.