



## Tenure Standards in the Honors College

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### Preamble

As faculty of the Honors College, we are committed to teaching primary texts written by great thinkers of the past and the present. Therefore, and especially in the context of Baylor University's mission, *Pro Futuris*, and *Illuminate*, we believe certain qualities are essential for our tenure-track colleagues:

- Strong commitment to teaching and scholarship
- Interdisciplinarity of teaching interests and research activity, where possible
- Faith and learning integration in teaching and research, where possible
- Active involvement in a church or synagogue
- Community service

### Teaching

We expect teaching in the Honors College to focus on primary texts, dialectical pedagogy, and cultivation of high-level conversations that are open-ended without being relativistic. We also highly value the development of excellent oral and written skills.

Teaching is appraised through student evaluations, peer evaluations, and graduation interviews or essays. Student evaluations alone are dispositive of neither success nor failure in teaching, although they may provide evidence of either, always subject to analysis, interpretation, and judgment. In particular, quantitative evidence can be no more than the starting point for a conversation about the quality of a candidate's pedagogy. As a result, we value modes of student evaluation that include information gleaned from student essays and exit interviews as well as unsolicited notes from students that describe the tenure candidate's impact on them. Grade distribution profiles may also be involved as a supplement to student evaluation results.

Peer evaluations should, whenever possible, be conducted by senior colleagues both within and beyond the tenure candidate's primary academic discipline. Prior to each biennial review, the program director will invite senior colleagues involved in the evaluation process to attend the classes of the faculty member under review. The observations and recommendations of senior colleagues about the quality of the teaching will be discussed during the review, and a summary will be included in the program director's letter of evaluation. At each review the candidate will provide written reflection on his or her current performance and on plans for improvement, and, led by the program director, the senior faculty members will offer evaluation and advice.

### Scholarship

Successful tenure candidates' scholarship will be based in research specialization. Because we are a multi- and interdisciplinary faculty, we also value scholars' ability to address expertise to broader questions and audiences.

There are two common pathways to tenure:

- Six to eight peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, or the equivalent during the time on the tenure-track at Baylor.
- A peer-reviewed book plus two articles, book chapters, or the equivalent during the time on the tenure-track at Baylor.

Numeric ranges are guides rather than inflexible standards. Especially within STEM fields, expectations for the number of peer-reviewed articles range higher and commonly include multi-authored work. Research publications prior to tenure-track service at Baylor serve as indicators of a tenure-track faculty member's ability, but the pace of producing publications while on the tenure track at Baylor should be proportionate to that described above.

Scholarship should be assessed with the following in view:

- The quality of peer-reviewed journals and presses is of utmost importance in evaluating scholarship.
- Several kinds of peer review are potentially acceptable. Double-blind review utilized by many scholarly journals is always acceptable, as is the review process (usually blind only on one side) for university press books. Invited work may also be considered peer-reviewed when an editor, editorial board, or other entity must approve the publication. Of invited work, the tenure candidate must clarify the level of review and the rigors of the actual review process his or her work has undergone.
- Co-authorship of books or articles can count toward tenure, especially in fields where such activity is expected. In each case, the candidate should specify and demonstrate the extent of his or her contribution to a given publication.
- Editorship of a volume can count toward tenure if the significance of editorial contribution, quality of the volume as a whole, and standards of peer review warrant.
- Translations of and commentaries on primary texts are recognized as a form of scholarship. Generally, publications of these sorts will count more than a single article and less than a monograph, with merit judged based on scope and significance of the published work.
- The scholarship of teaching and learning is also valued and should be counted in the same way as other scholarship. In cases, however, where the candidate's primary discipline lies elsewhere, the scholarship of teaching and learning should not displace disciplinary scholarship.
- Submission of at least one external grant proposal is an expectation of tenure-track faculty. In the event of a grant or combination of grants funded in excess of \$25,000, this may be regarded as the equivalent of a peer-reviewed article, but no more than one such equivalency may be made as part of the overall case for tenure.

During regular reviews, the director, in conjunction with senior faculty, will provide an assessment of the candidate's trajectory toward tenure and short-term advice concerning the research agenda. The more precise a candidate's own description, in the notebook, of his or her publication agenda, the better the advice will be from the committee.

The candidate's publication record must demonstrate continuous scholarly activity over the course of the career leading to potential tenure. Research must develop in a coherent trajectory and indicate deepening expertise. In the fourth year, the candidate's five-year research plan should indicate new areas of inquiry that have developed from the previous research agenda.

The Honors College expects the candidate to provide evidence of a habit of ongoing research and publication, with recognition by the wider academic world of past success and future promise. To aid those making decisions on tenure, external letters will be solicited as part of the determination of whether to grant tenure. Candidates will be asked to submit names, but the final decision on which scholars will be invited to review the candidate's work will be made by the program director, who may seek the advice of tenured members of the program, in consultation with the dean. The identity of the external reviewers will not be disclosed to the candidate. The program director will make the request of each potential reviewer and receive the written reviews for dissemination to tenured faculty and the dean at the appropriate time in the tenure review process.

### **Service and Interpersonal Relationships**

For successful tenure consideration, the candidate must demonstrate a sustained engagement in the social and intellectual life of the college, the university, the academy, the local community, and the church. This will be measured by evidence of highly esteemed activities and qualities such as:

- Encouragement of students toward the examined life.
- Commitment to learning as discovery.
- Academic leadership.
- Mentoring students inside and outside the classroom.
- Commitment to authentic conversation on matters of both intellectual and spiritual significance.
- Public intellectual activity such as writing for public opinion journals or newspapers, giving community lectures, or offering testimony before local, state, or federal authorities.
- Creative work that enriches artistic, literary, or cultural life.
- A positive disposition to teamwork, to collegiality, and mutual encouragement.
- Participation in community life beyond the campus, including both church and the larger society.
- Participation in guild organizations.

In teaching, scholarship, and service—each of which involves interpersonal relationships—we expect our faculty to exhibit at all times charity and courtesy towards students, colleagues, and others. This is not an encouragement to stifling conformity, but it is to suggest that members of the Honors College are expected to express disagreement within the boundaries of a high order of mutual respect.