Administering the APT Process

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Agenda

1. General Considerations
2. Expectations of APT Committees
3. What the University committee looks for in an APT package
4. Discussion
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Tenure is...

- ...earned, and is intended to protect academic freedom
- ...granted to those who demonstrate a capacity for a lifetime of scholarship, teaching, and service by an academic institution...
- ...a commitment by the University and State of Maryland to continuously support faculty for the next few decades
Tenure is not...

- ...just about the candidate
  - Department, College, University, USM, and State of Maryland
- ...protection against demonstrated incompetence, moral turpitude, professional or scholarly misconduct, willful neglect of duty
Playing by Uniform APT Rules

- … doesn’t have to mean being uniform in all counts
- The departments are the experts in their area
- Departments should establish the criteria for excellence in their areas
In a Nutshell...

- One size does not fit all, **though we all use the same rules**
- We should **all seek excellence** in the pursuit of truth for the common good
- Excellence is **the cornerstone of tenure**: research, teaching, and service
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From the USM Policy

“The criteria for tenure and promotion in the University of Maryland System are:

(1) teaching effectiveness, including student advising;
(2) research, scholarship, and, in appropriate areas, creative activities; and
(3) relevant service to the community, profession, and institution.”

ALL THREE, and especially the TOP TWO, are taken very seriously.
From the UMCP policy

- “The University of Maryland is dedicated to the discovery and the transmission of knowledge and to the achievement of excellence in its academic disciplines” (l. 28).

- Administrators are ultimately responsible for implementing this policy

- Hiring and tenure practices are critical to such efforts
The APT Committee

- Seeks to understand **the candidate** and his/her work in **your unit**
- The most important thing a dossier does is **tell a story**, in particular the candidate’s story
- It is a narrative with several layers
  - Told by 3 different committees and 3 different university officers
- The goal and hope is that the conglomerate does justice to the case
The APT Process

Candidate

Dept. → Chair
College → Dean
Campus → Provost
Committees

- Lower level committees emphasize surface/operational aspects of case
- Higher level committees (College, University) focus on a professional evaluation of quality and impact indicators
- **Administrators should ensure a clear, precise and concise presentation in the dossier**
Common Sense

- For example, familiarizing oneself with the standard dossier is a good idea.
- Asking questions from Faculty Affairs when doubts arise.
- Producing searchable documents is a must.
- Even if this means having to go the extra mile to prepare them.
Things To Think About

- Double check the dossier for accuracy
- Use your best **academic instincts** in advising the candidate and the unit
- Don’t procrastinate. The best way to get an early answer is to **process the dossier early**
- Be proactive: **ask questions** when in doubt
- **Gather data** if available (and when in doubt about their relevance, ask!)
Things That Should Be Avoided

- **Cutting corners** (higher committees will notice)
- **Don’t assume** that others understand your research/fields
- Take seriously the **negative reactions** from evaluators or faculty at your level
  - (Peer judgment is arguably the most important indicator to the President)
  - Don’t dismiss the evaluators you have chosen
  - Don’t dismiss the faculty at your level who disagree with promoting your candidate
- Take the matter with **academic rigor, arguing points as needed**
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Indicators

- Every field is generally unique
  - That being said, what are the indicators of excellence in that field?
  - How do they apply to the present case?
  - The best strategy is to clearly determine these indicators, and then to show how your candidate follows them
Key Questions To Ask (and Answer)

- What counts as "peer review" in your field? Are these standards applied in peer institutions?
- What counts as "metrics of impact" in your field? Are these taken seriously in peer institutions?
  - (What will external reviewers use to assess the candidate’s record)?
- How does your field define “regional”, “national” or even “international”?
- How do you delineate the differences between research/creativity, teaching/mentoring and service?
- What is considered entrepreneurial and innovative in your field?
The University is Changing

- An emergent culture of cooperation and interdisciplinarity is growing
- Great societal issues (climate change, renewable energies, social justice, international cooperation) are more and more central
- The University is beginning to value innovation and entrepreneurship
- If the candidate’s creativity falls into these dimensions...
  - At this point in time you need to make a special effort to spell-out what this means in the case
  - (So that your colleagues understand and appreciate the approach)
APTPolicy Changes

- [http://faculty.umd.edu/policies/changes.html](http://faculty.umd.edu/policies/changes.html)
  - Broader definition of scholarship as the discovery, integration, engagement and transmission of knowledge
  - Recognition of entrepreneurial activities that enhance one or more of the three categories of teaching, service, and scholarship
  - Mandatory teaching portfolio: begin now
  - Mandatory peer reviews of teaching: ask for
  - Faculty may request modified criteria for tenure or promotion (e.g., if engaged in scholarship in multiple fields or that crosses boundaries of traditional disciplines)
  - Assignment of a mentor for Associate Professors
In A Nutshell

- Help prepare an **informative dossier**
- Help identify **substantive external letter writers**
  - Be sure to follow rules regarding collaborators in seeking external letters
  - Learn how to **interpret** letters—particularly if they are negative
- Keep the process as **clean and transparent** as policies allow
- **Participate** in the process of updating the APT mechanisms
In A Nutshell

- Ensure you are following the new tenure policy
  - **Initial e-mails** to potential letter writers
  - **Updated letter** seeking external review
    - No longer asking about tenure at their institution
    - If appropriate, include tenure delay language
  - **Candidate verification/sign off**
    - [https://faculty.umd.edu/policies/documents/verification.docx](https://faculty.umd.edu/policies/documents/verification.docx)
  - If there are **modified tenure criteria**, be sure you are using them for the review
In A Nutshell

- Communicate with...
  - Faculty Affairs
  - Unit staff preparing dossiers for transmission
  - Others as necessary
- ...to ensure that all runs smoothly
- When in doubt, ask
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