Administering the APT Process

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Agenda

1. General Considerations
2. Expectations of APT Committees, Chairs, Deans
3. What the University Committee looks for in an APT package
4. Discussion
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3. What the University Committee looks for in an APT package
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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
Playing by Uniform APT Rules

• Doesn’t have to mean being uniform in all ways
  • Departments are the experts in their areas
  • Departments should establish the criteria for excellence in their areas and articulate those to members of the department and beyond
Playing by Uniform APT Rules

• Though we all use the same rules, one size does not fit all

• Excellence is the cornerstone of tenure:
  • Excellence in
    • Research
    • Teaching
    • Service

• You and your department colleagues are responsible for articulating how candidates have achieved “excellence”
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4. Discussion
You Need to Know

• USM Policy
• UMD Policy and Guidelines
• Departmental Criteria
• Process
  • Department
  • College
  • Campus
• Expectations
• Culture
• Why a particular candidate was hired
• What the expectations are/were for the candidate
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.”
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).
The APT Committees

• Seek 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 and parts*
  
  • Told by 3 different committees (Department, College, Campus) and 3 different university officers (Chair, Dean, Provost)
  
  • The goal and hope is that the compilation does justice to the case
  
  • [Ultimately, it is the President who has the most information in the decision to grant tenure]

* There may be more layers if there is a joint appointment
The APT Process

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Committees

• Lower level committees emphasize field and departmental expectations (metrics, criteria) as well as technical (documents) aspects of a case

• Higher level committees (College, University) focus on a professional evaluation of quality and impact indicators
  • By field
  • By department (guided by written criteria)
  • By external evaluators

• Administrators should:
  • Ensure a clear, precise, and concise presentation in the dossier
  • Ensure no procedural or due process violations have occurred
Common Sense

• Familiarize yourself with the standard dossier ahead of time

• Don’t pass on to higher levels problematic dossiers (procedure, due process)
  • If you think there is a problem, chances are other levels will too
  • Don’t be afraid to ask questions of lower levels or even send dossier back
    • If you don’t, others may, causing delays and other issues

• Ask questions from Faculty Affairs when doubts arise
Things To Think About

• Double check the dossier for accuracy and completeness

• Don’t procrastinate: your delay causes delays throughout the process
Things That Should Be Avoided

• Ignoring the guidelines
  • Length of personal statements (5 pages max)
  • Not using recommended external evaluator letter request
  • Using collaborators as external evaluators

• Not adhering to standard unit procedures
  • It may be useful to assemble the APT committee ahead of time to get ready
  • Avoid “rogue” processes

• Cutting corners (higher committees will notice)
• Creating a problem for the candidate
Things That Should Be Avoided

• Assuming that others understand candidate’s research/field

• Ignoring/downplaying the negative reactions from evaluators or faculty at your level
  • Peer judgment is critical to the process
  • Don’t dismiss the evaluators you have chosen
  • Don’t dismiss the faculty at your level who disagree with promoting the candidate

• Bottom line: Ensure a rigorous and fair process, arguing points as needed
Agenda

1. General Considerations
2. Expectations of APT Committees
3. What the University committee looks for in an APT package
4. Some Observations
Indicators

- Every field is 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 are considered metrics of impact in your field?
  • (What will external reviewers use to assess the candidate’s record)?

• How does your field define regional, national or even international?
Key Questions To Ask (and Answer)

• What is considered *entrepreneurial* and *innovative* in your field?

• How is *collaborative research* viewed and measured in your field?
The University is Changing

• A 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
• Your fields may not have ‘caught up’ to how UMD is changing
  • If a candidate’s activities fall into these dimensions
    • You may need to make a special effort to spell-out what this means in the case
APT Policy Changes (2015)

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

• Teaching portfolio: TLTC/OFA workshops for guidance
  • https://tltc.umd.edu/portfolios

• Peer reviews of teaching
  • https://umd.app.box.com/v/tltc-peer-obs-guide
Matters Related to Teaching

• Teaching is a significant portion of expectations for a tenure track/tenured faculty member

• The emphasis on teaching in the revised APT policy and guidelines reflect this

• Teaching does not come down to a single data point (CourseEval)
  • Teaching dossier
  • Peer evaluation
  • TLTC initiatives
  • Student mentoring
Matters Related to Teaching

• We should recognize that there may be bias in student evaluations and comments

• Key questions to answer:
  • Are there signs of bias?
  • Are there challenges in the classroom?
  • Are there key factors at play?
    • GenEd, large lecture, core course, difficult topic, demanding course

• Contextualizing the candidate’s teaching is critical
In Conclusion

• Help prepare an **informative dossier**
  • Provide **context**
    • Help others better understand the candidate’s record

• 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 or raise concerns

• Keep the process as **clean and transparent** as policies allow

• **Review** departmental APT guidelines and procedures periodically
In Conclusion

• Ensure you are following the tenure policy and guidelines, e.g.:
  • Initial e-mails to potential letter writers
  • University letter seeking external review
    • If appropriate, include tenure delay language
  • Candidate verification/sign off
    https://faculty.umd.edu/policies/documents/verification.docx
  • If there are modified tenure criteria, be sure you are using them for the review
In Conclusion

• Communicate with
  • Faculty Affairs
  • Unit staff preparing dossiers for transmission
  • Others as necessary

to ensure that all runs smoothly

• When in doubt, ask OFA
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