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08/21/2025

Memorandum

From: Dr. Amy L. Atchison, Chair, Department of Political & Global Affairs

To: Dr. Sidney McPhee, President MTSU

Via: Dr. Leah Lyons, Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Dr. Mark Byrnes, University Provost

Re: Request review and approval of the PGA Department's *Policies on Tenure and Promotion*.

This is the first tenure standard adopted by the Department of Political and Global Affairs. It was adopted unanimously on 8/20/2025 by the voting members of the Department. We ask that you review and approve.

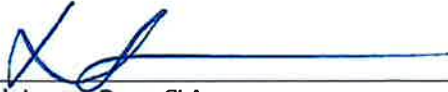
Amy L.
Atchison

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8/20/25

Amy L. Atchison, Chair

Date



Leah Lyons, Dean CLA

9/4/2025

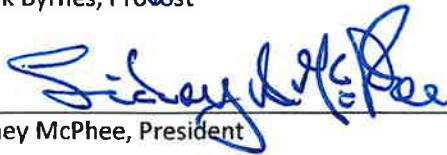
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Mark Byrnes, Provost

2/10/26

Date



Sidney McPhee, President

2/12/26

Date

Criteria for Tenure and Promotion

Per MTSU Policies 204 (Sections III–V) and 205 (Sections V–VI), the departmental review process for tenure and promotion recommendations involves independent evaluation by both the Departmental Chair and the Departmental Tenure and Promotion Committee.

A. Criteria for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

The Department Criteria for Tenure, as outlined in MTSU Policy 204, Section VI, A, Criterion 2, is further expanded as follows:

Although the specific criteria for tenure recommendations vary based on the nature, mission, and goals of the college, department, or academic discipline, all faculty members under consideration for tenure will be assessed based on their performance in: (i) teaching, (ii) research, scholarship, or creative activity, and (iii) service or outreach. Faculty members are expected to demonstrate high-quality performance in teaching, high-quality performance in one of the other two areas, and quality performance in the remaining area. Pre-tenured faculty are expected to meet annually with the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee, whose responsibilities include evaluating, mentoring, and supporting tenure-track faculty in addressing areas identified as deficient by the Department Tenure and Promotion Committee.

Additionally, all faculty in the Department of Political and Global Affairs should demonstrate professional integrity, cooperation with colleagues, and commitment to the programs and students of the department, the college, and the University, as these qualities are essential to fostering a respectful and productive academic environment. Ethical and collaborative behavior is evaluated in tenure decisions, especially if it significantly impacts teaching, research, or service. Ethical and collaborative behavior, however, does not mean self-censorship or excessive deference to departmental norms, as respectful criticism, debate, and dissent are vital to academic freedom and strengthen the department. Candidates are also expected to meet classes regularly and adhere to university requirements for on-campus hours. Persistent ethical, professional, or collaborative issues that impact performance or departmental functioning can be important factors in tenure and promotion decisions.

It is the faculty member's responsibility to include all relevant information in their submitted materials via the faculty software of record and clearly indicate the categories under which they believe each activity should be classified.

i) Teaching: Faculty in the Department of Political and Global Affairs are required to contribute to the breadth, depth, and needs of the department in the courses they teach and will implement specific teaching strategies to foster a positive learning environment that supports equitable learning opportunities. The candidate's teaching will be evaluated using multiple measures of

teaching performance. A recommendation for tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor will be based on the following:

- Evidence of course content and evidence of course improvement over time.
- **Student Evaluations** from all courses taught during the period under review.
- A minimum of **two peer review** classroom observations by senior faculty in the department during the probationary period. In addition, annual observations conducted by the department chair should also be conducted during the probationary period. These observations should be arranged by the candidate.
- Evidence of student mentoring and advising.

The Committee will consider the candidate's continued growth, innovation, and mentorship in student learning and best practices based on evidence in any of the categories listed below.

Service and mentorship

- Supervision of specialized instructional activities, such as student research, thesis and dissertation guidance, experiential learning, service learning, internships, co-op programs, and similar endeavors
- Invited lectures
- Student mentoring and advising
- Published and presented scholarship with students
- Advising of student organizations
- Student Engagement and Achievement including - student presentations and awards, student job attainment/advancement, and other student recognition

Innovation and continued growth

- Education/study abroad offerings
- New course design and development
- Course and/or program redesign and development
- Effective development of online courses
- Innovative use of teaching technologies and platforms
- Attendance and participation in teaching workshops, e.g., LT&ITC or those offered at conferences
- Teaching adaptation in response to things learned at workshops and conferences
- Experiential or Community Service learning
- Integrating in person and/or virtual field trips and/or guest speakers into teaching

Impact beyond the instructional setting

- Certifications relevant to teaching

- Teaching honors and awards and nominations
- Media appearances on teaching matters and activities
- Authorship of textbooks or other teaching materials
- Publication of laboratory manuals
- Evidence of external impact of teaching strategies or materials
- Developing new department and/or interdisciplinary degrees or certificates or other aspects of credentialing
- Grants for course improvement
- Design of public outreach materials based on expertise.
- Engagement in teaching collaborations (ex. syllabus sharing)

Note: Other claims of teaching effectiveness and contributions from activities not listed above may be considered if candidates present a compelling case for them.

ii. Research, Scholarship, or Creative Activity

Tenure-track faculty are expected to provide evidence of satisfactory scholarly research and activity by meeting the following requirements over the presumptive five-year tenure review or probationary period. The value, appropriateness, and quality of the submitted scholarly work will be evaluated by the Tenure and Promotion Committee. The Department highly values candidates who produce scholarly publications in discipline-specific areas, or publish a book, or contribute to other creative works. Non-peer-reviewed and additional creative activities can enhance a case, but cannot take the place of peer-review in the substantive center of the tenure case. For example, the Department looks favorably on candidates with at least three peer-reviewed publications or the publication of a book when considering tenure. Examples of creative works may include but are not limited to substantive collaboration on a documentary or creating a public archive. To be considered under this category, items must demonstrate their value in the potential to increase knowledge, insight, and/or understanding on the part of the public on a subject that is relevant to a candidate's discipline. Accepted or in-press publications are allowed as part of a tenure and/or promotion case; documentation must be included in the faculty software of record to support a designation of accepted and/or in-press as per MTSU Policy 204 and 205.

While the Committee prioritizes these standards for tenure and promotion, candidates who do not meet this threshold may still be considered. In such cases, the Tenure and Promotion Committee, in consultation with the Department Chair, will assess the quality of additional evidence of scholarship to determine whether tenure and promotion standards have been met.

Evidence of ongoing direct involvement and productive contributions in research, scholarship, or creative activities shall include:

- Authorship or co-authorship of peer-reviewed journal articles

- Authorship, co-authorship, or editorship of books by academic and major trade publishers
- Authorship or co-authorship of book chapters in well-regarded academic publications or edited volumes
- Production of digital videos, academic documentaries, audiovisual works, or other multimedia projects that are regionally or nationally distributed and/or exhibited in juried festivals, curated exhibitions, or hosted on peer-reviewed platforms

The Department will further consider additional evidence of ongoing scholarly activity, such as:

- Pursuit of internal and external research grants
- Internal and external awards recognizing achievements based on expertise
- Service on editorial boards of peer-reviewed journals
- Consistent presentations at academic conferences
- Authorship or co-authorship of textbooks that are nationally distributed
- Invited lectures at other universities, research institutions, and high-impact public events
- Research presentations at academic and community workshops
- Other relevant documentation that faculty members choose to provide

iii. Service or Outreach

All faculty are expected to contribute to the success of the Department, the College of Liberal Arts, Middle Tennessee State University, and/or local communities through the devotion of time and effort to committee activities, program and coordination tasks, outreach, projects, etc. A record of institutional citizenship and competent performance in university, professional, and/or community service is necessary to achieve a favorable tenure or promotion recommendation.

The Department recognizes that some committees require more work and have greater impact than others. Likewise, leadership roles often carry a greater time commitment than general membership. The level of service activities is expected to vary according to faculty rank and experience. For tenure-track faculty working toward tenure and promotion to associate professor, the Department recognizes that the expectations associated with research and teaching reduce the service demands that should be made on a tenure-track person. Accordingly, although some record of service is expected of all candidates for tenure or promotion it does not provide sufficient basis for tenure or promotion in the absence of satisfactory performance in teaching and research/publication.

Evidence of ongoing involvement and productive contributions in service may include:

- Participation (including membership or leadership) in department, college, or university committees
- Representing the department in university governance
- Performance as a faculty advisor to MTSU-recognized student organizations or services.

- Organization of or contributions to department, college, or university events
- Efforts contributing to student recruitment and retention activities, including but not limited to, involvement with student organizations, orientation activities, and organized outreach to potential students
- Coordination of professional conferences or workshops
- Participation (including membership or leadership) in committees of professional organizations relevant to discipline
- Support and/or leadership in community and public service that is related to faculty expertise, which may include student-education in general
- Sharing information with university or community groups related to faculty expertise
- Administrative duties including but not limited to program leadership (e.g., coordinator, director), outreach efforts to support the enrollment of students, and coordinating collaborations between the department and other university entities or entities outside the university

B. Criteria for Promotion to Professor

For promotion to the rank of professor, faculty must demonstrate sustained excellence and high-quality productivity in research, service (including leadership), and teaching since the last promotion to associate professor. It is the faculty member's responsibility to include all relevant information in their submitted materials via the faculty software of record and clearly indicate the categories under which they believe each activity should be classified.

i. Teaching

Faculty in the Department of Political and Global Affairs are expected to support the department's breadth, depth, and needs through their teaching, using strategies that foster a positive learning environment and promote equitable learning opportunities. For promotion to professor, a candidate's teaching will be evaluated through multiple measures of teaching performance. Recommendations for promotion will be based primarily on the following criteria:

- 1) Student evaluations from all courses taught since the last promotion. Peer reviews may also be included in addition, but not in lieu of student evaluations, if preferred by the candidate.
- 2) Contributions to Student Learning and Instructional Best Practices: Faculty must demonstrate contributions across multiple dimensions, selecting at least two from each of the following categories (as outlined in the associate professor section): a) service and mentorship, b) innovation and continued growth, and c) impact beyond the instructional setting

Note: Other claims of teaching effectiveness and contributions from activities not listed above may be considered if candidates present a compelling case for them.

ii. Research, Scholarship, or Creative Activity

In accordance with MTSU Policy 205, Section VI, A, Criterion 4, individuals promoted to the rank of professor must have "national recognition," demonstrated through quality research, scholarship, and/or creative activity that garners national or international recognition in their field. The Department of Political and Global Affairs will consider the following as examples of success in achieving or sustaining national or international recognition.

Publications and other scholarly activity:

- Multiple publications in national and/or international peer-reviewed journals in the candidate's field
- Authorship, co-authorship, and editorship of books by academic and major trade publishers
- Authorship or co-authorship of textbooks that are nationally distributed
- Authorship or co-authorship of scholarly monographs that appear as technical publications of government agencies or cultural institutions that have national or international significance
- Authorship or co-authorship of book chapters in well-regarded academic publications or edited volumes
- Consistent presentation/participation based on original research at national and/or international academic conferences or workshops, particularly in the candidate's field
- Production of digital videos, academic documentaries, audiovisual works, or other multimedia projects that are nationally or internationally distributed and/or exhibited in juried festivals, curated exhibitions, or hosted on peer-reviewed platforms

The Department will further consider as evidence of national and international recognition, in addition to the evidence above:

- Service on editorial boards of peer-reviewed journals
- Encyclopedia entries
- External awards recognizing achievements based on national or international expertise
- Pursuit of external grant in furtherance of nationally or internationally recognized research
- Pursuit of internal grants in furtherance of nationally or internationally recognized research
- Contributions to the scholarship of pedagogy
- Invited lectures at other universities, research institutions, and high-impact public events
- Significant citation of the candidate's work in scholarly literature
- Organization of panels and paper sessions at academic conference
- Non-peer reviewed publications and conference proceedings
- Other participation in academic conferences, such as panel participation/ discussants, organizers, posters, colloquy, etc.

- Development of new research collaborations within or outside MTSU
- Peer-based scholarship mentoring
- Evidence of innovation in research methods
- Other relevant documentation that faculty members choose to provide

Note: Other claims of scholarship contributions and creative work not listed above but which have occurred since the last promotion to associate professor may be considered if candidates present a compelling case for them.

iii. Service, Leadership, and Outreach

Generally, the same considerations of service governing tenure and promotion to associate professor apply to those seeking promotion to professor. However, an associate professor seeking promotion to professor is expected to take on greater service and outreach responsibilities whether internally to the university or externally (e.g., professional, community).

In addition to the evidence of ongoing involvement and productive contributions for tenure and promotion to associate professor, the department will also look for evidence of leadership. Significant and continued growth, development, and accomplishment in service and leadership since promotion to associate professor must be demonstrated in both areas: 1) the department, college or campus, and 2) community or profession. Evidence of leadership may include but is not limited to the following:

- Taking on the role as chair in a department, college, or university committee with significant workload or high impact
- Performing as a coordinator/director for program-specific subfields in the department.
- Senior roles in faculty governance
- Administrative roles in centers
- Leadership in professional organizations, program committees, conference organizing, grant reviewing, etc.
- Chairing faculty or staff search committees
- Participation as member of a department, college, or university committee with significant workload or high impact
- Introducing or administering new programs in the department, the college, or the university - ex. study abroad/away programming,
- Taking the lead in curriculum initiatives in the department, the college, and the university
- Board membership in governmental or non-governmental bodies
- Leading and coordinating high-impact community events.
- Advising organized student groups and organizations
- Taking lead roles in partnerships and or collaborations internal or external to the university

Procedure

The Committee consists of all tenured members of the Department, except for the Department Chair and candidates for tenure and/or promotion. Members of the Department who are tenured but have full-time administrative positions will be ex officio non-voting members. In accordance with university nepotism policies, any member or members of the committee with ties of marriage, consanguinity, or similar personal ties with a member being evaluated will recuse themselves from both discussions and voting of promotion decisions. A quorum, as determined by *Roberts Rules of Order*, is required for all votes.