

Augustana College Geography Department's Statement on Tenure

The geography department believes in excellent teaching, substantive research, professional and community outreach as pillars for the attainment of tenure and for promotion. The varied activities outlined below are consistent with the experience and practice of members of this department as well as with those adopted by the Association of American Geographers in a document entitled "Reconsidering Faculty Roles and Rewards in Geography" published in 1994 by the AAG Special Committee on Faculty Roles and Rewards of which our colleague Norm Moline was a member. The goals and recommendations of that document are much more detailed than we would care to include, but in general are consonant with those outlined in The Augustana Handbook. We will include key points from that document where we think emphasis is needed. Prior to the scheduled tenure hearing the senior faculty of the department will prepare the department's recommendation to the Faculty Welfare Committee. The department's assessment will cover the areas listed above but whose order would be ranked as: teaching, research, and service –both on campus and off. Service outside the campus could be given equal weight given the department's long history of providing our students with professionally relevant experiences through the building and maintenance of our Community Academic Associates network.

Teaching

The Faculty Handbook outlines four teaching domains which should be considered:

"Instructional delivery" includes articulate communication, organized and well-planned use of class time, effective interaction with students, enthusiasm, and fair evaluation of student work along with meaningful feedback. Where labs are involved as major components of the class, sufficient field experiences to provide students with local testing of theories discussed in class lectures

"Instructional design" includes such activities as producing accurate and relevant syllabi with clearly stated objectives and expectations, providing helpful supplemental materials, challenging students to learn and perform at a level of rigor consistent with departmental expectations, intentionally connecting course material with past and future learning, and incorporating appropriate visual aids and technology in the classroom.

"Expertise in course material" assumes that the candidate's background and education is sufficient to relate course material to past knowledge and perspectives in the particular academic area addressed in the course, to give appropriate up-to-date examples, and to challenge the students to a higher level of thinking and problem solving.

"Course administration" includes making appropriate assignments, offering help to struggling students, being available to students for help and consultation outside the classroom, and timely grading.

In order to evaluate a candidate's teaching performance in these domains, the departmental committee will consider the following sources of information:

a. Student evaluation data

SRI data accumulated during the probationary years will be analyzed. In addition, during spring term prior to the tenure year, a detailed questionnaire will be distributed to former students in the candidate's courses. Students will be selected from each course that the candidate has taught. This may include alumni. The questionnaire allows respondents to assess, based on personal experience, the candidate's role as teacher, mentor, and scholar in both the geography department and in the college as a whole. Alumni respondents may be asked to choose one of the following responses to the following responses to the question of whether the candidate should be granted tenure: "absolutely," "probably so," "uncertain," or "absolutely not."

The geography department committee may also conduct oral interviews with current and former students.

b. Class visits

Throughout the probationary period, and in particular, during the two terms immediately preceding that of the tenure hearing, the department Chair and other tenured members of the department will, on separate occasions, visit each of the candidates classes or, as in the case of the geography department, assess the interaction, and results of team-taught courses.

c. Evaluation of syllabi, exams and supplementary materials

The senior geography faculty will expect a candidate's expectations of students to be consistent with the standards of the geography department and the College. The committee will evaluate the quality of the candidate's syllabi, exams, homework, in-class and research paper assignments, and supplementary materials such as field-oriented exercises.

SCHOLARSHIP

A geography faculty member at Augustana College should be engaged in significant scholarly pursuits that are publically expressed. "Significance" will be judged by the extent to which professional expression contributes to the advancement of disciplinary knowledge, improves the reputation of the College, makes the College more attractive to prospective top faculty candidates, and contributes to the Senior Inquiry program.

The following activities will be considered as evidence of scholarship when the departmental tenure recommendation is written with a,b,and c considered as essential to the needs of the department and the candidate's success and d,e, f, and g considered highly desirable.

a. Dissertation

Completion of a Ph.D. is a requirement for tenure in the department of geography.

- b. Publication
At least one article accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal describing research in any field of geography or closely-related subfield after arriving at Augustana College is required. The publication(s) may be in collaboration with other researchers, but a substantial portion of the research described must have been conceived, proposed, and directed by the Augustana faculty member.
- c. Mentoring of geography major' research
Serving as faculty advisor for a significant number (proportionally sharing the department load) of Senior Inquiry projects that culminate in student presentations at the college research fair or professional meeting.
- d. Participation in research projects conducted by the candidate which includes Augustana students as research assistants is especially desirable.
- e. Application for research funding
Submission of at least one grant proposal to an internal (Augustana College) or peer-reviewed external funding agency that seeks financial support for the faculty member's research at Augustana College.
- f. Professional research presentations
Presentations of research at national conferences and regional meetings, invited seminars at other institutions, and leadership/organization of profession-related field trips demonstrate professional activity.
- g. Campus seminars
A departmental presentation or seminar should be given during the first term of the tenure-decision year describing research performed with student(s). The seminar must be advertised campus-wide at least a week prior to the seminar date.

SERVICE

A candidate for tenure should have demonstrated a commitment to the liberal arts and to enhance the programs of the geography department, the larger College community, and the wider public community of which Augustana is a part of.

- a. Departmental service
A geography department faculty member is expected to support, develop, and promote the department's mission, curriculum and academic program and participate in governance activities within the department, and support the activities of the department (e.g. participation in all of the following: mentoring, advising majors and minors, outreach to alumni and prospective students, participation on local and distant fieldtrips such as the Summer Field Experience, willingness to cooperate with and or assist colleagues with geography-related questions.

b. Campus service

Campus service might include service on College committees and task forces, serving on Faculty Senate, advising first-year students, participation in the general education courses, working on college-wide curriculum development initiatives, and serving in other administrative roles at the request of the Dean or President.

c. Public /community service

Public service includes involvement in community activities related to the faculty member's professional role or in any civic activity that represents the College to members of the community in a positive way. For the geography department tenure candidate this involves a deeper commitment to engage the broader public than most other departments' candidates for tenure. The ethic of the geography department is one which sees active engagement with local and regional government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local educational organizations as central to our role in the College. These activities are consistent with the exceptional, perhaps, mission of geography departments in North America as described in the following quote from Association of American Geographers document on expectations of geography faculty:

“Geography’s strong empirical and exploratory traditions and its rootedness in real places and regions often lead geographers to devote considerable energy and time to outreach. The ability and propensity of geographers to grapple with real problems is a disciplinary strength and an institutional asset. Geography programs should ensure that their departmental and institutional reward systems weight such contributions appropriately.” Reconsidering Faculty Roles and Rewards in Geography, 1994, Association of American Geographers, pp. 5-6

Examples of these types of activities could include: willingness to speak to community groups, developing and nourishing our Community Academic Associates network, developing and maintaining departmental internships within the region, serving on local boards and task forces, participating in local conferences, and willingness to offer the services and expertise of the department to local organizations.

The department recognizes that the nature of service contributions will differ widely from person to person and will be difficult to measure quantitatively. Though the category of service can be apportioned in various ways the department would also argue vigorously that the ‘public/community’ service component perhaps is especially important to the life of the department.

PROMOTION FROM ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR TO FULL PROFESSOR

For promotion to full professor, the candidate is counseled to continue the efforts outlined above though no quantitative number of articles, monographs, books or other academic productions will be specified. It is assumed that the candidate will find his/her particular niche and balance in the life of the department and the College in the years following the rewarding of tenure. As teaching is still the central component in the priorities of the College, tenured colleagues, we would hope, would continue to demonstrate and model excellent student learning outcomes through the development of new courses and pedagogical approaches.