

**To: Academic Council and Professor Donald Taylor, Chair**

**From: Co-Chairs, Tenure Standards Committee**

**Professor Anne Allison**, Department of Cultural Anthropology and Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Theory

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**Subj: Our Committee and Its Work**

**Date: 2/07/2018**

**Charge and Mandate from Provost Kornbluth**

As part of Duke's 2017 strategic plan, *Together Duke*, the Provost constituted the Tenure Standards Committee (see Appendix 1 for membership) to assess, and reconsider, the standards of and for scholarship in the changing times of the academy today. To ensure Duke's commitment to diverse and innovative scholarship, while maintaining our commitment to excellence, the committee has been mandated to study the parameters within which promotion and tenure are awarded today, and consider if and what changes are called for. The committee is charged with:

- Identifying and defining what types of knowledge creation and dissemination should form the scholarly basis for tenure and promotion at a twenty-first century research university like Duke;
- Creating rubrics for evaluating and assessing excellence in identifiable categories of knowledge creation and dissemination, including measures of engagement and impact;
- Considering how to provide appropriate guidance for annual reviews of tenure track faculty, as well as more significant pre-tenure reviews (e.g., in third year or fourth year depending on the school);
- Considering development of guidelines for the tenure and promotion process (around formation of tenure and promotion committees, selection of evaluators, and provision of guidance to letter writers);
- Establishing appropriate mechanisms of outreach and engagement with schools/Duke faculty to ensure broad input in its deliberations.

Given a multitude of factors in our 21<sup>st</sup> century world, this is an important moment to assess tenure standards in ways that value tried-and-true practices and policies while also being open to innovation as optimal. In so doing we hope to contribute to Duke's broader effort to foster, sustain and advance excellence in our faculty as well as to the university's crucial role in society locally, nationally and globally.

## Our Work Plan

**Organizing and activating the committee:** The full committee membership is listed in Appendix 1. The committee has been meeting monthly since last September. We began with a general discussion of the issues and responsibilities facing the committee. For the second meeting, members were tasked with surveying their departments/schools about existing standards and practices, and seeking initial input on concerns and ideas for change. We reviewed and discussed these reports and, based on these preliminary findings as well as further discussion with Provost Kornbluth and Vice Provosts Francis and Benmamoun, created five task forces within the committee, which have been working between full committee meetings:

- Duke's Existing Policies and Practices
- Public and Policy Engagement
- Digital domain and other relevant new technologies
- Arts and non-textual scholarly work
- Diversity

**Faculty input and outreach:** Keeping faculty and the university community informed of the work of the committee, as well as seeking input across a range of perspectives and positions, are of paramount importance. To this end, committee members are doing some of the liaising with their respective schools and departments. As co-chairs we have met with the Deans' Cabinet, the Academic Programs Committee, the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee and now the Academic Council.\* We also are meeting with faculty who have relevant experience and expertise, as well as any who express particular interest. We maintain regular communication with Provost Kornbluth and Vice Provosts Francis and Benmamoun.

**External outreach:** We are reaching out to Provosts, other relevant academic administrators, and faculty at other universities to learn about their own practices and procedures regarding faculty promotion, and to also study review processes that have been conducted elsewhere along with changes and reforms that have been recently implemented. When appropriate, we plan to conduct a series of phone interviews with those involved with what we consider to be useful models. We welcome any relevant contacts and suggestions you may have.

**Research:** We are pursuing three lines of research: debates, discussion, and scholarship on tenure standards in the higher education literature and individual disciplines and professional associations; other universities' policies; and metrics for measuring and evaluating productive output. We have hired two graduate student RAs to assist with the research.

**Final report:** We are planning to have a final report to the Provost by the end of the academic year. Our understanding is that, pending review by the Provost, the report will be considered by the Academic Programs Committee, and then, pending the Provost's recommendation, by Academic Council.

*We welcome your input on any aspects of our work.*

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\* Our original November meeting date was postponed because of other Academic Council business, our January date by the snow.

## Appendix 1

### Tenure Standards Committee Membership

#### Committee Members

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>E-mail address</b>
Anne Allison, Co-Chair	Arts & Sciences—Cultural Anthropology	anne.allison@duke.edu
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