MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 14, 2011

TO: University Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Campus APT Committee and
Juan Uriagereka, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs

SUBJECT: 2010-2011 APT Committee Annual Report

2010-2011 Committee Members:

Robert Chambers, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics
James Drake, Department of Physics
Julie Greene, Department of History
Marie Howland, School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
Seppo Iso-Ahola, Department of Kinesiology
Amna Khawaja, Robert H. Smith School of Business
Carl Lejuez, Department of Psychology
Steven Marcus, Committee Chair, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Kathryn Wentzel, Department of Human Development

Cases Handled by Campus APT Committee 2010-2011
Categorized by President's Decision

TOTAL Cases that entered the APT Process (as of 6/1/11)					
	YES	**NO**	**WITHDRAWN**	**PENDING**	**TOTAL**
Promotion to Associate Professor/Senior Agent	46	3	9	0	58
Promotion to Professor/Principal Agent	16	4	10	0	30
New Associate Professor/Senior Agent	6	0	0	5	11
New Professor/Principal Agent	15	0	4	2	21
Total	**83**	**7**	**23**	**7**	**120**

Comments on the APT results

The data above can be informally compared with numbers for the last decade in the archives of the Office of Faculty Affairs. Denials in 2010-2011 at the level of promotion to Associate Professor/Senior-Agent are at 6%, as has been the case since 2000. However, in the past it has been rare to get denials at the Professor/Principal-Agent level (recorded data: 3% of the cases that went through the process), whereas in 2010-2011 20% of such denials took place. It is harder to analyze cases reported to the Office of Faculty Affairs that withdraw from the process (16% of the cases originally expected), since this is a type of information that hasn't been systematically archived. The Appendix has a brief discussion of demographic data associated to these matters.

Issues that need attention

Some of the following issues have been noted in previous reports – when a different Associate Provost was running the Office of Faculty Affairs. Therefore, these seem like conditions that require structural assessment in the immediate future.

1. <u>The use of criteria to guide APT analysis</u>

APT committees rely on units' criteria to frame their evaluations of each dossier, as should external referees. The APT Policy states that:

> Each college, school, and department shall develop brief, general, written Criteria for Tenure and/or Promotion. The criteria to be considered in appointments and promotions fall into three general categories: (1) performance in teaching, advising, and mentoring of students; (2) performance in research, scholarship, and creative activity; (3) performance of professional service to the university, the profession, or the community. The relative importance of these criteria may vary among different academic units, but each of the categories shall be considered in every decision.

So ideally the discussion of each case should be organized around evaluations of the extent to which candidates meet the criteria. However:

- Some of the criteria submitted by units are vague; often, generic campus criteria were explicitly or implicitly used to contextualize a dossier.
- Occasionally units ignored their own criteria and were inconsistent in the application of these standards.
- Some of the criteria provided were outdated.
- Administrators (deans and chairs) are ultimately responsible of ensuring that criteria are taken seriously.

The Office of Faculty Affairs needs to work with units and colleges, to communicate the importance of APT criteria and also to consider to what extent these criteria: (i) Are consistent with those of our aspirational peers, (ii) are used by referees in each field and faculty from distinguished institutions, and (iii) are reflective of the kind of institution that our policies and strategic plans expect.

2. <u>The assessment of teaching and mentoring</u>

Teaching, broadly construed as classroom performance and mentoring, is a central aspect of academic life – particularly as a candidate goes for full professor. The policy quoted above in fact lists “performance in teaching, advising, and mentoring of students” as its very first criterion for Tenure and/or Promotion. However:

- Some of the units appeared to have disregarded teaching, either in the classroom or through advising, concentrating only on research.
- Because teaching is often discipline-specific, committees need explanations of performance: from contextualizing undergraduate classes to describing how graduate education is integrated into the life of a department.

- Evaluation is facilitated when summary tables track teaching performance over time; raw course evaluations (particularly the last five years) are helpful to the committee, and ought to be included in a teaching dossier or in the link for supplemental materials that the new APT guidelines recommend.
- It is helpful to provide specifics of whether the candidate is directing theses or dissertations, acting as an advisor or general mentor, how students or postdocs were placed, the candidate's role in co-authoring with mentees, or whether a department allows advising by junior faculty.
- Peer evaluations are only truly meaningful if they start taking place at the very beginning of a new faculty member's career, as opposed to during the semester when this person is undergoing an APT review.
- One of the best ways for a faculty member to contextualize their teaching is through a Teaching Dossier, including customary indicators (evaluations), but also syllabi, exams, student reactions, self-reflections as courses end, etc.; such materials can be provided online for an APT review.

3. <u>Evaluation Letters</u>

One of the central parts of an APT dossier stems from the evaluation letters. It is required to provide evaluation criteria as discussed above to external referees, and important to select these referees very carefully, keeping in mind that these are the experts that much of the decision rests on. Therefore:

- Conflicts of interest (e.g. former advisors or co-authors) should be strictly avoided, and letter writers should in general be full professors and come from at least a peer institution; candidates often need advice on how to suggest reviewers under such parameters.
- Once an assessment is received it should be treated seriously, honestly and realistically presenting the facts in the letter. Non-committal letters, particularly if several in number, may also be raising issues and should be honestly discussed in the report.
- All correspondence with referees should be in writing (typically e-mail), and part of the dossier; verbal consultation on these matters is strongly discouraged as it can be construed as prejudicial. [Note: to ensure that this rule is satisfied by units and candidates, a letter log will detail the various steps in the correspondence, so that strange discrepancies (e.g. in dates of request) would need to be explained to higher committees.]
- Evaluation letters are obviously confidential; chairs and deans must refrain from referring to their content in correspondence with candidates, especially in letters informing them of the outcome of a step in the process.

4. <u>Negative Evidence</u>

Negative evidence in a dossier, whether critical letters, negative votes or even absence of information from what is to be expected in normal judgment, is as central to a dossier as positive information is. Because of this, it is important to:

- Explain negative (or abstention) votes to the extent that this is possible.
- Understand that a letter's assessment should not be second-guessed, and its contents should be addressed if critical; the greater the number of such comments in a dossier, the more problematic they become.
- Non-responses by letter-writers can only be dismissed if they are absolute (i.e. a solicited letter has not received any response whatsoever, not even an acknowledgement).
- Any communication with reviewers to the effect that they will not write a letter can be seen as evaluative, particularly if the number of non-responses is as large as, or approximates, the number of standard evaluative responses.

5. <u>The changing face of scholarship</u>

Interdisciplinarity and associated large teams are central to present-day academic practices and expectations. Evaluating the intellectual contribution of a single investigator has become challenging. Units and colleges should clarify the matter as best as possible, emphasizing to what extent there is a clear indication of independent thought in a candidate, including the appropriate intellectual distance from his or her mentor. The discussion should be extended to other constituencies on campus, paying close attention to how it is resolved outside our university.

Concluding Remarks

The previous Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, in her last report to the SEC, encouraged us to take "a fresh look at the APT policy and procedures." Following this advice – and in fact in close collaboration with her – the new Associate Provost has put together a committee to streamline and revise the APT Manual detailing procedures and best practices. A policy revision is obviously a major undertaking, although it should be attempted in the future if the underlying issues that this report highlights are to be seriously addressed. The SEC is encouraged to study the desirability of this move and communicate about it with the Faculty Affairs Committee. The Office of Faculty Affairs is ready to offer all its collaboration in this regard.

JU:ew

cc: Ann Wylie
Diane Krejsa
Campus APT Committee

Appendix: Demographic data

In the demographics below, a distinction is made between "promotions" (from within the ranks at UMD) and "appointments" (for individuals hired into UMD). The latter category will not be discussed in this report, since all appointments that came through the APT process were approved by the campus APT committee. Data below include cases of individuals who were listed for the APT process, but who later on decided to withdraw.

Cases that went through the Promotion Process (as of 6/1/11)							
	Total	**% Female vs. male**		**% Asian**	**% Black**	**% Hispanic**	**% White**
Assistant to Associate	58	31%	69%	31%	9%	2%	58%
Associate to Full	30	37%	63%	30%	0%	0%	70%
TOTAL	**88**	**33%**	**67%**	**31%**	**6%**	**1%**	**62%**

Negative data are so small (see below) that they should not be over-interpreted. However, concentrating on those denied tenure, the proportion of women is equivalent to their proportion in the process at large (roughly one third). At the promotion to professor level, in contrast, all of those who did not go through were men. Probably no other generalization below is of any statistical significance.

Cases that were denied during the Promotion Process (as of 6/1/11)							
	Total	**% Female vs. male**		**% Asian**	**% Black**	**% Hispanic**	**% White**
Assistant to Associate	3	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Associate to Full	4	0%	100%	25%	0%	0%	75%
TOTAL	**7**	**14%**	**86%**	**14%**	**0%**	**0%**	**86%**

Cases that withdrew from the Promotion Process (as of 6/1/11)							
	Total	**% Female vs. male**		**% Asian**	**% Black**	**% Hispanic**	**% White**
Assistant to Associate	10	20%	80%	10%	20%	0%	70%
Associate to Full	11	45%	55%	36%	0%	0%	64%
TOTAL	**21**	**30%**	**70%**	**24%**	**10%**	**0%**	**64%**

Cases that were DENIED or WITHDREW from the Promotion Process (as of 6/1/11)							
	Total	**% Female**	**% Male**	**% White**	**% Asian**	**% Black**	**% Hispanic**
Assistant to Associate	12	33%	67%	66%	17%	17%	0%
Associate to Full	14	36%	64%	64%	36%	0%	0%
TOTAL	**26**	**35%**	**65%**	**65%**	**27%**	**8%**	**0%**