Administering the APT Process

John Bertot
Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs
Agenda

1. General Considerations
2. Expectations of APT Committees
3. What the University committee looks for in a APT package
4. Discussion
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Tenure is...

- ...a privilege with the purpose of protecting academic freedom
- ...granted to those who demonstrate a capacity for a lifetime of scholarship, teaching, and service by an academic institution...
  - (a state, in cases of public education)
- ...that is willing to continuously support them for the next few decades
Tenure is not...

- ...just about the candidate
  - Department, College, University, USM, and State of Maryland
- ...protection against demonstrated incompetence, moral turpitude, professional or scholarly misconduct, willful neglect of duty
Playing by Uniform APT Rules

- ... doesn’t have to mean being uniform in all counts
- You (i.e., your department) are the experts in your area
- You should establish the criteria for excellence in that area
In a Nutshell

- The main expectation of the APT committees is that every unit takes the APT process seriously
- One size does not fit all
- We should all abide by rules that seek excellence in the pursuit of truth for the common good
- Otherwise tenure would simply not be justified
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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.”

ALL THREE, and especially the TOP TWO, are taken very seriously.
“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).

Administrators are ultimately responsible for implementing this policy.

Hiring and tenure practices are critical to such efforts.
The APT Committee

- Seeks 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
  - Told by 3 different committees and 3 different university officers
- The goal and hope is that the conglomerate does justice to the case
The APT Process

Candidate

Dept. -> College -> Campus

Chair -> Dean -> Provost
Committees

- While emphasis on surface aspects often comes at the expense of substance,
- And cases in higher committees do not really depend so much on neatness...
- (as they do on a professional evaluation of quality and impact indicators)
- Administrators should ensure a clear, precise and concise presentation in the dossier
Common Sense

- For example, familiarizing oneself with the standard dossier is a good idea.
- Asking questions from Faculty Affairs when doubts arise.
- Producing searchable documents is a must.
- Even if this means having to go the extra mile to prepare them.
Things To Think About

- Double check the dossier for **accuracy**
- Use your best **academic instincts** in advising the candidate and the unit
- Don’t procrastinate. The best way to get an early answer is to **process the dossier early**
- Be proactive: **ask questions** when in doubt
- **Gather data** if available (and when in doubt about their relevance, ask!)
Things To Avoid

- **Avoid cutting corners** (if it feels like cutting a corner to you, higher committees will agree)
- Take seriously the **negative reactions** from evaluators or faculty at your level
- (Peer judgment is arguably the most important indicator to the President)
  - Don’t dismiss the evaluators you have chosen
  - Don’t dismiss the faculty at your level who disagree with promoting your candidate
- Take the matter with **academic rigor, arguing points as needed**
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Indicators

- Every field is generally 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 counts as “metrics of impact” in your field? Are these taken seriously in peer institutions?
  - (What will external reviewers use to assess the candidate’s record)?
- How does your field define “regional”, “national” or even “international”?
- How do you delineate the differences between research/creativity, teaching/mentoring and service?
- What is considered entrepreneurial and innovative in your field?
The University is Changing

- An emergent 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
- If the candidate’s creativity falls into these dimensions...
  - At this point in time you need to make a special effort to spell-out what this means in the case
  - (So that your colleagues understand and appreciate the approach)
APT Policy Changes

- [http://faculty.umd.edu/policies/changes.html](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
  - Mandatory teaching portfolio: begin now
  - Mandatory peer reviews of teaching: ask for
  - Faculty may request modified criteria for tenure or promotion (e.g., if engaged in scholarship in multiple fields or that crosses boundaries of traditional disciplines)
  - Assignment of a mentor for Associate Professors
In A Nutshell

- Help prepare an informative dossier
- 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
- Keep the process as clean and transparent as policies allow
- Participate in the process of updating the APT mechanisms
In A Nutshell

- Ensure you are following the new tenure policy
  - Initial e-mails to potential letter writers
  - Updated letter seeking external review
    - No longer asking about tenure at their institution
    - 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 A Nutshell

- Communicate with...
  - Faculty Affairs
  - Unit staff preparing dossiers for transmission
  - Others as necessary
- ...to ensure that all runs smoothly
- When in doubt, ask
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## SOME NUMBERS

### Total Number of Cases - 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Tenure Cases</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Mandatory Tenure Cases</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Cases</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
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## SOME NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Withdrawals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Tenure Cases</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Mandatory Tenure Cases</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Cases</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Withdrawals</strong></td>
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## SOME NUMBERS

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Tenure Cases @ President’s Level</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Tenure Cases @ Department Level</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Mandatory Tenure Cases</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion to Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL DENIALS</strong></td>
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### SOME NUMBERS

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<tr>
<th>Total Pending</th>
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<td>Mandatory Tenure Cases</td>
<td>0 [0%]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Mandatory Tenure Cases</td>
<td>1 [7%]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion to Professor</td>
<td>8 [23%]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>9 [13%]</td>
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## SOME NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Cases Passed Without Discussion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Tenure Cases</td>
<td>6 [26%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Mandatory Tenure Cases</td>
<td>5 [35%]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tenure Cases Combined</td>
<td>11 [30%]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion Cases</td>
<td>19 [54%]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>30 [42%]</strong></td>
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Percentages based on total cases in category (tenure or promotion)
Some Recent Stats

2015-2016 Tenure & Promotion Cases

- 29% Awarded with Discussion
- 42% Awarded without Discussion
- 13% Pending
- 1% Denied
- 15% Withdrawn / Resigned