# CLAS Personnel Committee Annual Report 2011-2012

5 March 2012

### Activity this year

The CPC’s main task is to evaluate faculty members’ applications for contract renewal, tenure, and promotion, and recommend to the Dean an appropriate action for each.

During 2011-2012 the CPC evaluated 36 contract renewal, 32 tenure/promotion, and 13 full professor applications for a total of 81.

The Faculty Handbook says “the Committee will normally be expected to accept the recommendation of the unit.” Over the past five years the “agreement rate” has been above 90%; this year there were three disagreements, but two of them occurred when units voted for tenure but not promotion and the CPC recommended both tenure and promotion.

### Changes this year

Most units have revised their personnel criteria in response to the new CLAS standards. This year candidates could choose whether they wanted to be evaluated according to the old standards or the new ones. Most contract renewal candidates chose the new standards, while tenure and full professor applications were about evenly split.

The CPC and Dean’s office requested that units submit the “basic” review material (candidate’s CV and integrative statement, and unit recommendation and vote report) as single PDF files to ease their handling at the college level. After an initial learning period this change appears not to have affected the unit workload much.

At the request of several departments, the CPC operated a pilot program in the winter to permit candidates to submit personnel dossiers entirely in electronic form, without paper binders at all. Candidates from Art and Design, English, Math, and Psychology elected to use this approach. It worked well. We expect to continue to offer this option to candidates while providing better guidance about appropriate formats and reducing the administrative burden as much as possible.

### Desiderata

The CPC regards itself as an evaluation group, and does not want to set policy. However, in cases where policies are nonexistent or unclear, the CPC effectively sets policy with its recommendations whether it wants to or not. We have identified several conditions where there is no clear university or college policy, and where we would appreciate guidance from either clear descriptions in unit criteria or formal recommendations from university governance.

1. The faculty handbook gives suggested timetables for applications for tenure and promotion with the phrase “ordinarily, at least six years…”. However, early applications are relatively frequent and there is often no clear indication of how they should be handled. Individual faculty opinions about treatment of early cases vary widely. For the past four years the CPC has been operating with the following policy: first, if the unit criteria describe treatment of early applications, we use the approach prescribed there; second, if the unit criteria do not treat early applications but the unit has a consistent approach to them that is spelled out in the unit report, we use that; finally, in the absence of those forms of guidance, we apply the normal unit criteria equally to “ordinary” and early applications.
2. The number of tenure-track faculty with reduced load appointments is slowly increasing at GVSU, and we do not yet have policies in place for clearly defined and fair evaluation of those faculty. We need such policies.
3. It is not always clear to what extent work done before a candidate arrives at GVSU may be used to satisfy requirements for scholarship and professional service. This problem is especially important for candidates who arrive with credit on the tenure clock for previous academic work; for example, should a candidate who was granted two years credit toward tenure be permitted to use papers published in the two years prior to arrival to argue for professional recognition for scholarship? The question also arises when a candidate completes most of the work for a project as part of a dissertation or postdoctoral work, but makes some changes after arriving at GVSU before the work is published. In this second case, common practice varies among disciplines, so the question might best be addressed in unit criteria rather than with a broad university policy. Sometimes this question is resolved with clear statements in the initial offer letter. In other cases, the CPC sees a need for clearer guidance for both candidates and evaluators.

### Recommendations to units

Service on the CPC requires intensive work over about half a semester. Most committee members spend between 12 and 18 hours per week on CPC work from week 6 through week 11 of the winter semester, and for two weeks of fall semester. It is appropriate for units to offer committee members “unbalanced” teaching assignments, with slightly heavier teaching loads in the fall and slightly lighter ones in winter, to help balance members’ overall workload. It is also appropriate to recognize CPC members’ efforts as part or all of their “significant focus beyond baseline expectations” for winter semester.

We continue to encourage units that have not had recent representation on the CPC to nominate candidates. Our current CLAS election will not fill the roster for 2012/2013, so a special election will be held in fall 2012 for interim members.

### Acknowledgements

The committee members this year are

* Donovan Anderson (MLL)
* Christina Beaudoin (MOV)
* Judith Corr (ANT, winter alternate)
* Avis Hewitt (ENG)
* George McBane (CHM, chair)
* Melissa Morison (CLA)
* Michael Ott (SOC)
* Richard Rediske (AWRI)
* Neal Rogness (STA)
* Francis Sylvester (BMS, assistant chair)
* Akalu Tefera (MTH)
* Mark Williams (MUS, winter alternate)

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