

## Department of Political Science

### **PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS**

(Revised January 29, 2007)

#### **GENERAL PHILOSOPHY**

In making its annual evaluation of faculty performance, the PAC is to weigh two factors: effort and accomplishment. The balance between these two varies in each scoring category with accomplishment becoming the more important consideration as the score increases.

Faculty members are expected to provide justification in their self evaluation and annual faculty performance survey to support the awarding of a satisfactory or higher ranking. This is especially the case where a faculty member believes that they deserve a high rating.

A score in the 1 range (1-1,1+) indicates that a faculty member a) has not put in an effort consistent with the department's minimum expectations in that category and/or b) has not performed at a level consistent with the department's minimum expectations.

A score in the 2 range (2-,2,2+) indicates that a faculty member a) has at least met minimum department performance expectations and/or b) has met the minimum departmental expectations with regard to effort. The higher the score in this category the more pronounced are the individual's accomplishments. Effort alone cannot place a faculty member in the upper range of this score.

A score in the 3 range (3-,3,3+) indicates that a faculty member has exceeded departmental expectations regarding performance in a category during the year. Level of effort may be a consideration in placing a faculty member within the 3 range but it is not a sufficient consideration to merit a ranking in this range. In their self evaluation the faculty member must justify why that score is merited.

The scores referred to here are for one year periods. Tenure requirements are not identical to merely summing up or averaging yearly evaluations. For example, consistent 2- scores in research might be achieved largely on the basis of having research in progress. Obtaining a satisfactory rating in research for tenure would require published works.

After evaluating the annual performance for all departmental faculty, the PAC will assign percentages (within the ranges permissible in each category) that maximize each faculty member's overall merit score. First-year faculty will assign 80 percent of their effort to teaching.

The benchmarks used here are for faculty having a normal teaching load. Any adjustment in that load or devotion of extra time to an activity (such as is periodically allowed for teaching) will result in the PAC using higher standards in their evaluation.

Faculty on leave will be evaluated on a qualitative scale developed by the PAC to take into account the specifics of their situation. They will not divide their time into the three categories as full time faculty do nor will the same benchmarks be used. Faculty should consult with the department head and PAC chair prior to beginning their leave so as to arrive at an agreed upon standard for evaluation. The faculty member, department head, and PAC chair may agree to amend this agreement once the leave is underway if the situation warrants.

Nothing in this document precludes the addition of new items nor is meant to exclude credit for items not listed. Until such time as the department can formally amend the listing of items, it will be left to the PAC's discretion how to handle cases of omission.

## **TEACHING**

### **Minimum Requirements for a 2 Range Score:**

All of the following:

- a. satisfactory or better student evaluations with due consideration given to grade distributions and the nature of the course
- b. course syllabi which clearly state the goals and objectives of the course, standards for grading, and course requirements
- c. course assignments appropriate to the level and subject matter of the course
- d. meeting classes as scheduled
- e. meeting at least 5 office hours per week
- f. effective student advising
- g. routine updating of substantive course material and/or teaching methodologies (There is no expectation that this would occur in every course. There is an expectation that faculty are continually revising and adjusting their courses as new material and teaching technologies become available.)

Any of the following as appropriate:

- a. writing letters of recommendation
- b. participation in honors and other special studies projects when the opportunity to do so exists

### **1 Range Score**

Performance that does not warrant a satisfactory (2+, 2, 2-) ranking on the basis of the items listed above.

### **3 Range Score**

The following make a faculty member eligible for consideration for a 3 range score but do not guarantee such a score. In his or her self evaluation the faculty member must justify why that score is merited. The PAC may conclude that the quality of the performance does not warrant such a score and assign a 2 or 2+ score

- a. teaching evaluations which are at least above average with due consideration given to grade distribution and the nature of the course.
- b. development of new courses or programs
- c. substantial revision in course content and/or teaching methodology
- d. structuring of courses in such a way that goals and objectives are met in an innovative fashion or one that requires a great deal of out-of-class contact with students or prep time. (The key here should be the benefit to the student and not simply the time involved. Course syllabi and assignments would be possible supporting evidence.)
- e. heavy teaching load or rotation
- f. engaging in student advising activities that go beyond those associated with helping one's own advisees
- g. engaging in student advising/mentoring that is central to special achievements by students
- h. writing an especially large number of letters of recommendation

### **SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **Minimum Requirements For a 2 Range Score:**

Two of the following are required if 1 is a convention paper or poster presentation; more than 2 if there is no convention paper --or an equivalent; only 1 is required if it is a refereed/juried convention paper that appears in proceedings. In years in which there is no money available for travel to conferences, the MPAC will take this factor into account in assigning satisfactory scores for Scholarly Achievement and Professional Qualifications.

- a. serve as a discussant on a panel or participate in a roundtable
- b. deliver a completed convention paper
- c. prepare and exhibit a poster presentation
- d. conduct ongoing research that is moving toward an identifiable product (this could involve extensive data collection, or a substantial rewrite of previous work)
- e. prepare a quality grant proposal that reflects new effort and ideas
- f. publish a book review essay, research note, or other piece of research of similar length
- g. publish a nonrefereed or invited article (in something other than a "prestige" source)
- h. publish a commissioned piece of research or carry out normal consulting activity that results in a published product

- i. write a study guide or produce test question data base
- j. review submissions for journals or books for publishers
- k. receive an "in-house" grant
- l. deliver an invited paper or make an invited oral presentation at an academic or professional meeting other than a conference
- m. organize and chair a panel
- n. professional development centering on the learning/updating of statistical and software skills

While some weight will be given to the presentation of more than one convention paper, presenting multiple convention papers alone can not result in a 3 range score. The purpose of convention papers is twofold. First, allowing/encouraging faculty to stay abreast of developments in their field. Second, provide an avenue for development of new ideas that might ultimately result in a published piece. With regard to the first point (and given limited travel funds), one convention paper would seem to be a reasonable expectation. Giving significant added rewards for additional presentations comes very close to "buying" merit money. As to the second purpose, what ought to be rewarded in terms of accomplishment is the movement from a convention paper to an article (for which there would be no discount applied to multiple publications). There is also a danger that excessive attendance at conferences ultimately hurts students by canceling classes or the overuse of films, etc.

### **1 Range Score**

Performance that does not warrant a satisfactory (2+, 2, 2-) ranking on the basis of the items listed above.

### **3 Range Score**

The following make a faculty member eligible for consideration for a 3 range score but do not guarantee such a score. The PAC may conclude that the quality of the performance does not warrant such a score and assign a 2 or 2+ score.

- a. sign a contract for a book
- b. have an article of original research accepted through a refereed process
- c. publish an invited article of original research or commentary in a prestigious national level publication
- d. receive a major external grant

The PAC will award credit for a book (1) in the academic year that the contract is signed and (2) in the academic year in which galley proofs are produced and submitted. As a general rule the PAC will treat the contract signing as equivalent to a refereed journal article, and the completed book will be given greater weight than a refereed journal article. The PAC may

adjust this weighting if it desires but must provide a justification for doing so. Each volume in a multi-volume series shall be counted separately with the exact weight awarded to be decided by the PAC.

Should material be published electronically, the same standards will apply that are used to judge printed material, e.g., the selectivity of the source, prestige, of the source, nature of the audience, quality of the product

Realizing that exceptions are always possible, the unifying feature to 1) signing a book contract, 2) receiving an major external grant, and 3) signing a major external consulting contract is that they would all seem to require at least a year of intensive effort on the part of the faculty member and bring national recognition to the university. Work on commissioned articles and lesser consulting (which are equated in the 2 range score) are similar in that less than one year seems to be a reasonable time frame for their completion; the resulting product will not be as lengthy or involved as that in a 3 range product; and they were not selected/awarded on the basis of something approaching a national competition.

In comparing coauthored and single authored efforts, the PAC may, at its discretion, decide to elevate the ranking of an individual who has accomplished a particularly noteworthy individually-authored research product in a year when coauthored pieces were the norm.

## **SERVICE**

Faculty participation in essential departmental, college and university business is central to effective departmental governance and to the instruction of our students. To that end, the department expects its faculty to perform the following activities to avoid an unsatisfactory (1 range) evaluation in service:

- a. regularly attend faculty meetings – unless one faces conflicting job responsibilities (academic leave, conference attendance, etc.) or unusual personal circumstances excused by the department chair – as required under the Faculty Handbook (III.H.9).
- b. attend at least one of the following annual events, as required under the Faculty Handbook (III.H.9):
  1. December commencement and recognition of graduates
  2. May commencement and recognition of graduates
  3. Madison Day
  4. Washington semester reception (not required under the handbook, but an acceptable substitute under these benchmarks)
- c. regularly participate in routine department discussions regarding curriculum and instruction, hiring, departmental policy changes, etc.
- d. respond to formal requests for faculty input on matters of departmental governance, and the timely submission of any requested documents or information.

- e. agree to serve on the following departmental committees in accord with department procedures: the Merit PAC, the Tenure PAC, the Promotion PAC, and search committees in one's area of expertise. Refusal to serve on said committees – unless one faces conflicting job responsibilities (academic leave, conference attendance, etc.) or unusual personal circumstances excused by the department chair – is an example of unsatisfactory service. Conversely, effective performance on such committees can be used as potential evidence of satisfactory or excellent service in accord with the benchmarks detailed subsequently in this document.
- f. attempt to allocate annual library funds. Such an attempt requires at a minimum that a faculty member provide student assistants with a list of books for potential purchase.
- g. attend job talks or meet with job candidates in one-on-one office meetings or at meals. The PAC recognizes that job talks often conflict with faculty teaching schedules and that, as a result, faculty may not be able to attend. However, the department expects faculty to try to attend talks and at the very least to meet personally with candidates in their field of expertise. Members of the faculty are strongly encouraged to attend talks or to meet with candidates whose expertise differs from theirs. This requirement does not apply in years in which no job candidates are brought to campus or in years in which searches occur during the summer. The PAC retains the right to recognize faculty who show a consistently strong commitment to meeting with job candidates and attending their job talks.

Faculty members who fail to meet these baseline responsibilities to the department in a given academic year are not eligible for a 2 range score.

## **2 Range Score**

### **Minimum Requirements For A 2 Range Score:**

For a 2 range score, faculty—in addition to meeting the expectations raised above—must serve effectively on departmental, college, and university committees; departmental, college, and university positions; or, engage in professional service positions external to the University (e.g. service on an external professional organization, on a government organization, or as a consultant who uses professional skills in a manner that does not produce a publishable piece of scholarship).

Faculty must demonstrate participation in two such positions or committees. Other service activities, such as speaking to lay audiences, or other departmental, college or University assignments, will be considered in assigning an individual's score in the 2 range. The claim for credit for a service activity will be strengthened by a description of the demands of the service activity.

### **3 Range Score**

#### **Minimum Requirements For A 3 Range Score:**

For a 3 range score, faculty must engage in exceptional service in two or more of the roles required for a 2 range score. A faculty member seeking a 3 range score must document what makes his or her service exceptional. The PAC will determine whether one's service merits an exceptional score based on various factors, including (but not limited to) the complexity of the tasks performed by the faculty member, the number of roles filled, the substance of the work completed, the time commitment involved in the service, etc.

## **MERIT PAC APPEALS PROCESS**

Faculty are entitled to an appeal of their PAC score. In order for faculty to appeal their score, they must notify the Department Head in writing that they are requesting an appeal no later than one week after receiving their PAC score.

The appeal will be heard by the appeals committee, which will consist of the three PAC members who have most recently rotated off of the PAC (that is, the three faculty members who were replaced by three new members who helped assign the score under appeal).

The Department Head will notify the PAC chair no later than two working days after receiving the official appeals request. The appeals committee will meet no later than one week after receiving notification from the head, and will render a decision on the appeal at that meeting.

The finding of the appeals committee is advisory. It can recommend, but cannot mandate, a change in the PAC score under scrutiny. For the appeals committee to advise a change in the score, the appealing faculty member must show clear, substantial and convincing evidence to justify the score adjustment.

When taking up the appeal, the committee will limit itself to determining whether the PAC might reasonably have assigned the score(s) in question. The committee will not conduct a de novo review of the appellant's FPS.

The committee will make its decision by vote, the vote of two committee members being necessary and sufficient to render a decision.