

FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Report to Faculty Senate
November 7, 1990

The University Committee on Tenure and Promotions

1. Background

In 1974 President William H. Patterson named a special ad hoc committee to study the existing tenure and promotion system (administered by a council of deans) and to propose possible improvements to the Faculty.

The ad hoc committee formulated the "Proposal for New Tenure and Promotions Procedures" in two options (Plan A and Plan B) to be presented to a called Faculty meeting.

Following study by four committees (Ad Hoc, Academic Forward Planning, Faculty Welfare, and Faculty Advisory) and with President Patterson's encouragement, the proposal was presented to the Faculty at a general meeting on November 26, 1974. Plan A, which the Faculty approved, remains virtually unchanged to this date. In adopting Plan A, the Faculty rejected an alternative (Plan B) for a UCTP to function only as an appeal committee. A copy of the Proposal (Plan A) is attached.

The UCTP was established to ensure fair peer review, to set up procedures for due process, and to protect individual faculty members and academic units from capricious treatment by administrators and colleagues. The initiative and moving force behind specific criteria and procedures was to come from academic units themselves.

It was expected that the UCTP would establish procedures for the conduct of its business, some for its internal regulation and others for the guidance of the academic units. (See, e.g., "Revised Internal Rules of Procedure for the University Committee on Tenure and Promotion," January 26, 1977.) It was not expected that the UCTP would become an adversarial gatekeeper or a superstandards authority. The authority of the UCTP to "approve" unit criteria and procedures was to be understood in the context of the UCTP's authority to publish general guidelines for criteria and procedures, subject to the approval by the University Faculty and the Board of Trustees, and the responsibility of academic units to formulate specific criteria and procedures. ("[E]ach department has the right to draw up its own tenure and promotion regulations which it then submits to the 24-man committee. All the 24-man committee does is to see that they are within the very broadest lines in keeping with the established policies.") [Ad Hoc Committee Chairman Milledge Seigler in response to questions; Minutes, p.4] Given these understandings, no further statement was adopted regarding the "powers" of the UCTP.

2. Approval of Unit Criteria and Procedures.

The authority of the UCTP to approve unit criteria and procedures for tenure and promotion consists of receiving unit criteria and procedures and comparing them with the provisions of the Faculty Manual to assure that the criteria and procedures are consistent with established policies. Of necessity, UCTP may require that units express themselves coherently, consistently and in terms that permit UCTP fairly to examine individual files.

Authority has not been delegated by the Faculty to the UCTP to force units to change their specific criteria or procedures (for better or worse) except to require that they conform to the Faculty Manual. However, UCTP may advise units regarding the propriety of their criteria and procedures and may make suggestions for changes which the unit is free to adopt or refuse.

3. Recommendations in Individual Cases.

To be distinguished from the "approval" function is the authority of the UCTP to make recommendations to the President in individual cases for tenure and promotion. UCTP recommendations are based on a review of unit faculty and subsequent administrative recommendations. Although its recommendations are subsequent, they are not for that reason superior. The UCTP does not operate as an appellate court in the sense that it affirms or reverses the decision of an inferior tribunal. The "recommending" function is intended to provide a broad based faculty expression whether unit criteria have been fairly and persuasively applied in given cases. This function is neither a slavish adherence to the unit recommendation nor an independent rejection of the unit recommendation unmindful of the specialized expertise of the unit and the justifications given for its decision whether to recommend for tenure or promotion.

4. Reports to the Faculty.

In addition to the "approval" and "recommending" functions the UCTP should exercise the usual parliamentary function of reporting to its constituency. The UCTP should report to the Faculty at least twice a year on tenure and promotion decisions in the University in sufficient detail to inform the faculty without unnecessarily exposing individuals. The UCTP should also report to the Faculty on the "State of Tenure and Promotion in the University," including such general observations as it may deem necessary or useful to the development of criteria and procedures.