

A Brief Policy Analysis of HOP 06-504

Goals

HOP 06-504 articulates principles, practices, and processes that should (1) help tenured faculty build promotion-worthy careers and (2) help evaluators make the best promotion decisions possible in a timely manner.

Central Problems

The Office of the Provost identified these two problems with the current implementation of 06-504:

- Problem One: Too few promotion recommendations use the standards and principles in 06-504 to exhibit the evaluative, advisory, and qualitative judgement necessary to help promote the best tenured faculty at the university.
- Problem Two: Too few annual reviews (and promotion recommendations) are completed in a timely manner and the process leads to an unnecessary increase in collective faculty service hours dedicated to annual review.

Why the Status Quo is Unacceptable

If these problems are allowed to persist, then too many tenured faculty will lack the necessary guidance to build promotion-worthy careers and earn promotion at UTRGV.

Problem One: Causes and Solutions

While the Provost's Office has worked to substantially lessen the degree of the first problem by designing and delivering training sessions about how to improve promotion dossiers and the evaluative judgements of those dossiers, the underlying cause of this problem lies in the current configuration of HOP 06-504.

- First Cause – HOP Standards Are Vital but Too Vague: Too few reviews use the HOP-designated standards of leadership, quality, significance, impact, and trajectory because 06-504 does not explicitly link those standards to the functioning of the university and does not explain how to incorporate those principles into an evaluation. We expect that by implementing the solutions below 06-504 will be more informative, of greater use, and make the goals of the policy more achievable.
 - Solution: We propose a newly drafted Section "C. Policy" that emphasizes the importance of UTRGV to the region and the importance of faculty performance to UTRGV. This new draft clearly links the promotion standards to a high-functioning university and demonstrates an understanding of how faculty performance is the primary driver of UTRGV's success. An important aspect of faculty performance and a high-functioning university is the protection of academic freedom, which our proposal now makes explicit.
 - Solution: We propose a new Section "D.2 Categories of Performance" and "D.5.a" and "D.5.f" of the Section "D.5 Promotion to Professor" that combine the existing Appendix B with a more detailed elaboration of the existing standards. This new section provides more information about how to incorporate the standards of leadership, quality, significance, impact, and trajectory into reviews and judgements. To be of even more

help, we reference the template “Promotion to Full Professor Guidelines for Associate Professors” in Section D.5.e. This template provides detailed guidance to both tenured faculty and their tenured evaluators about how to implement Section D.2 and D.5.a.

- Solution: Regarding the potential cases of early promotion, we propose Section “D.5.b Promotion to Professor” indicating how extraordinary it will be to achieve the HOP-designated standards early.
- Solution: To stress the importance of achieving the HOP-designated standards for tenure (as opposed to using department/college guidelines without reading or referencing HOP), we propose adding sections in “D.3.e Guidelines.”
- Solution: We propose a new Section “D.5.g Promotion to Full Evaluation and Advisory Committee (PFEAC)” that replaces the old tenure and promotion committees at the department level. PFEAC is designed specifically to achieve the goals of 06-504. PFEAC becomes a vehicle by which tenured faculty receive guidance, and PFEAC’s structure should help foster better judgements and more in-depth promotion recommendations.
- Solution: Diverse tenured faculty workloads, especially for administrative positions, are now acknowledged in the Annual Review, Comprehensive Periodic Evaluation, and Promotion sections of 06-504 (Sections D.3.f.i, D.4.h.i, D.5.e.iii.1)

Problem Two: Causes and Solutions

Annual and Comprehensive Periodic Evaluations of tenured faculty, and promotion recommendations, take too long and require too many collective service hours from tenured faculty.

- First Cause – Time to Auto-Advance is Too Long
 - Solution: For Annual Review, the materials auto-advance after just 5 days for Chair reviews and 10 days for Dean reviews (Section D.3.h).
 - Solution: For Comprehensive Periodic Evaluation, the materials auto-advance after just 2 days from the time the peer review committee submits its review. The materials auto-advance after just 5 days for the Chair reviews and 10 days for the Dean reviews (Section D.4.l).
 - Solution: For promotion, the dossier auto-advances after just 2 days from the time PFEAC submits its review. The dossier auto-advances after just 5 days for the Chair recommendations and 10 days for the Provost recommendations.
- Second Cause – Request for Reconsideration at Every Level
 - Solution: For Annual Review, the faculty review committee no longer exists and the faculty under review may only request reconsideration from the Chair and Dean.
 - Solution: For Comprehensive Periodic Evaluation, faculty may only request reconsideration from the Chair and Dean.

- Solution: For promotion, faculty may only request reconsideration of the Chair and Provost recommendations.
- Third Cause – Time Frame during the Request for Reconsideration is Too Long
 - Solution: For Annual Review and Comprehensive Periodic Evaluation, the time frame is reduced to 5 business days for the tenured faculty member and 5 business days for the Chairs to reconsider their original recommendation. For the Dean, the time frame is 10 business days (Sections D.3.h. and D.4.l)
 - Solution: For promotion, the time frame is reduced to 5 business days for the tenured faculty member and 5 business days for Chairs to reconsider their original recommendation. For the Provost, the time frame is 10 business days (Section D.5.k)
- Fourth Cause – Too Many Collective Faculty Service Hours and Too Many Levels of Review
 - Solution: Eliminate faculty annual review committees. This solution also complies with Regents’ Rules requiring the Chair and Dean to review but not requiring the existence of faculty review committees for annual review.
 - Solution: Suggest that Annual and Comprehensive Periodic Review guidelines do not require more material from the faculty than what the Regents’ Rule requires and suggest that these guidelines allow for quantitative (e.g., point based) metrics (Sections D.3.f, D.3.g, D.4.h, D.4.i)
 - Solution: Require that Annual Review guidelines and Performance Ratings cover work completed during the previous academic year only and not be cumulative (Section D.3.f and Section D.3.h)
 - Solution: Eliminating the College Tenure and Promotion Committee for promotion recommendations.

Other Changes and Positive By-Products of These Proposed Changes

- Definitions of Annual Review and Comprehensive Periodic Evaluation Performance Ratings are now included in the text of 06-504 (Section D.3.e)
- Procedures for the development of “Remediation Plans” and the review of faculty under “Remediation Plans” are proposed and made to be clearer (Sections D.3.j and D.4.h). The Peer Review Committees for assessing progress while under “Remediation Plans” are required by Regents’ Rules.
- The appendices are no longer necessary and will be deleted.