Standards and Practices for Tenure and Promotion  
English Department  
Hamilton College  

The guidelines below regarding tenure and promotion are intended to supplement (not replace) those provided in the Faculty Handbook. A separate document details departmental expectations for reappointment.  

Standards for tenure  

Teaching  

In considering faculty for tenure, Hamilton places its highest premium on excellence in the classroom. Thus the successful candidate will have established a record of good teaching. It is not possible to win tenure at Hamilton with a mediocre (let alone poor) teaching record.  

Like most colleges and universities in the U.S., Hamilton makes use of student evaluations in the assessment of teaching. We urge newly-hired faculty to look them over carefully to get a sense of how students are asked to judge the success or failure of a course, and we expect junior faculty to consult regularly with the chair about how to interpret their course evaluations. However, because student evaluations are an imperfect measure of teaching success, the department supplements them with its own system of peer classroom observation. Procedures for these observation are described in detail in the guidelines for reappointment.  

Successful candidates for tenure will have established a record consisting of favorable departmental observation reports and student evaluations that lie well within college-wide norms. In cases where department reports are positive but student evaluations consistently weak, the department will consult with the candidate and, with the aid of the Dean of Faculty, solicit more information from students.  

The successful tenure candidate will have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to good teaching since reappointment. Since the overall trajectory of a candidate's teaching record is a consideration in the decision to award tenure (a trajectory that includes not only good performance in the classroom and attention to student writing, but also the development of new courses or the revision of existing ones), it is not inconceivable that a candidate who presented an acceptable record at reappointment might present an unacceptable one at tenure.
Scholarly/Creative Work

The English department offers concentrations in the study of literature and the art of creative writing, and we have full-time faculty in both fields. The department is aware of the differences in scholarly and creative venues and procedures for publication, and our standards for publication in scholarly and creative work take those structural differences into account.

While the English department does not demand "the tenure book," candidates in literature and creative writing will not be reappointed without a record of publication and strong evidence that continued publication is likely.

For tenure in literary study, such a record could be demonstrated in this manner:

1) publication of 4 or more scholarly essays in peer-reviewed journals (print or online), or in edited collections published by university or commercial scholarly presses that employ peer review. A publication record consisting only of essays published in collections may be acceptable if the quality of the essays and the collections (taken as a whole) is judged sufficiently high by the department and external reviewers; or:

2) a book published by, or under contract with, a university or commercial scholarly press that employs peer review; or:

3) a record consisting of fewer than 4 published essays combined with a book manuscript at an advanced stage of production.

Whatever the candidate's profile of publication, in all cases the quality of the work must be judged sufficiently high by the external reviewers.

For tenure in creative writing, we would expect a record of publication resembling this:

1) publication of 4 or more stories or 8 or more poems of substantial length (i.e., over 2,000 words in fiction, 10 lines in poetry) in nationally distributed journals or in edited collections published by university, commercial, or respected small presses. A publication record consisting only of stories/poems published in collections may be acceptable if the quality of the creative work and the collections (taken as a whole) is judged sufficiently high by the department and external reviewers; or:

2) a book (short story or poetry collection, or novel) published by, or under contract with, a university, commercial, or respected small press; or:

3) a record consisting of fewer than 4 published stories or 8 poems combined with a book manuscript (short story or poetry collection, or novel) at an advanced stage of production.
Whatever the candidate's profile of publication, in all cases the quality of the work must be judged sufficiently high by the external reviewers.

Since it is not difficult to imagine acceptable records of publication different from the ones outlined above, we urge candidates for tenure who have questions or concerns to consult with the chair.

**Service**

The *Faculty Handbook* makes clear that college service, while a necessary aspect of any successful tenure case, is distinctly less important than good teaching and a solid record of publication. Thus the department protects its untenured faculty from unduly heavy service both inside and outside the department. We expect, though, that candidates will have established a record of academic good citizenship. This is accomplished by good attendance at, and participation in, department meetings and activities and events (which would include readings and presentations by students as well as visiting scholars, poets, or novelists), and by good attendance at the college's monthly faculty meetings. We also expect that, if asked to participate on a job search committee, the candidate will give thoughtful, reliable service. Finally, the successful tenure candidate will have accepted his or her fair share of "extra" instructional work within the department, such as advising honors theses and overseeing independent studies.

**Standards for promotion to full professor**

The quality we most value as a standard for promotion to the rank of Professor is leadership, manifested in teaching, in scholarship, and in service to the community.

In teaching, leadership means engaging students in the intellectual enterprise. It means innovation, developing new courses or ways of teaching older courses—a continual reconsideration of what we do. It implies holding one's students and one's self to high standards. And it implies mentoring: exchanging ideas with colleagues to improve the quality of teaching in the department and the college.

In scholarship, leadership implies engagement, achievement, and recognition. A scholar or creative writer worthy of promotion to the rank of Professor shows evidence of continuing engagement with scholarly or creative work over a considerable time. Current and past work is part of something larger: a body of work devoted to the discipline or genre in which the scholar or writer is engaged, developed over a sustained period of time. The quality of the scholarship...
and writing is important. The department's evaluation of the work has weight, but we also look for evidence of a scholarly or creative reputation beyond Hamilton: recognition by one's peers at other institutions, acceptance of one's work in refereed or nationally distributed journals, and publication by well-regarded presses. In evaluating scholarship, we believe that journal articles can be as significant as a monograph. In evaluating creative writing, we believe that individually published stories and poems can be as significant as a novel or a collection. Similarly, we accept the MLA's stipulation that work that is complete and in press be considered equal to work already published and that completed work under review by a publisher be taken into consideration by the department.

In the community, leadership means not merely service on committees but taking an active and prominent role in guiding the department and the institution in defining its goals and achieving them. It also implies mentorship of colleagues.

To enumerate the specific ways in which these qualities can manifest themselves—for example, by specifying a number of publications or committee memberships—would be a mistake: it would reduce the flexibility to recognize merit when it appears in unexpected or innovative forms. We recognize that no member of the faculty has all these qualities in equal measure. Some excel in one category and some in another, and at different times in one's life and different stages in one's career one may emphasize one area of leadership over another. But in all cases, demonstrated leadership is the fundamental and irreducible requirement for promotion to the rank of Professor.