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TO: Linda Essig, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
FROM: Arthur Downing, Vice President for Information Services & Dean of the Library
RE: Library Department's Tenure and Promotion Guidelines
DATE: May 31, 2023

At your direction, and as part of a college-wide review of departmental guidelines for tenure and promotion, the Executive Committee of the Library reviewed the department's guidelines (attached), which were last revised in May 2013. At that time, the guidelines were vetted by the Independent Units P&B Committee and the College P&B Committee. The Executive Committee compared the guidelines to those of two peer institutions: California State University, Northridge and Lehman College. Northridge and Baruch identify each other as peers in IPEDS. The librarians at Northridge have faculty status and participate in an active instruction program, although the library does not offer credit courses. The Leonard Lief Library of Lehman College, a comparable CUNY senior college, recently reviewed its guidelines. The points of comparison are organized below by the categories of Librarianship (including teaching), Scholarship, and Service.

As a result of the review, the Executive Committee has reaffirmed the department's guidelines, which have successfully guided seven candidates to tenure and promotion, including three faculty who were hired after the guidelines were revised. In terms of scholarship, three of the seven candidates had six peer-reviewed articles/book chapters at the time of tenure/promotion, two had four, one had eight, and another had three. The level of service to the institution and profession has also been strong, with candidates serving leadership positions in national and international organizations, chairing conference programs, and leading significant committees.

LIBRARIANSHIP

The Newman Library's guidelines require candidates for tenure and promotion to demonstrate "sustained superior performance in their principal job responsibilities." Given the variety of work responsibilities across the library faculty, the guidelines direct candidates to their official position description and guidance from the Chief Librarian, who provides an assessment at least annually as part of a formal evaluation conference. The Northridge guidelines similarly require

that candidates, “Demonstrate a pattern of increasing levels of expertise and breadth of knowledge of librarianship.” The guidelines note that their library faculty must understand/support the educational mission of the University and the Library’s contribution to that mission. The Executive Committee appreciated their acknowledgment of the library’s role in advancing the institutional mission and will discuss how to forefront this role as part of the library’s involvement in the implementation of the College’s new strategic plan.

Lehman also associates the Core Library Function of a faculty member with the institutional mission. Their candidates should demonstrate broad, current knowledge of their primary areas of librarianship, and apply that knowledge to support the mission of the College. Their guidelines give primacy to peer assessment of job performance, but does provide an opportunity for input from library users: “In general, excellence in librarianship is demonstrated by formal assessment by library experts - both internal and external to the College – as well as by faculty and other users...”

The Newman Library considers teaching to be part of the responsibilities of librarianship, including instruction in the evaluation and use of information via the reference process and the creation of instructional materials. In practice, we use classroom peer observations and student evaluations as part of the measures of “teaching effectiveness” required in the guidelines. At Northridge, the library also uses peer observations and student evaluations, but applies them to individual instruction sessions. Years ago, our department used peer observation of single sessions when library faculty were not teaching a credit course, but a university agreement with PSC-CUNY now prohibits peer observation of library faculty outside of credit courses ([Teaching Observations \(Article 18\)](#)). Lehman advises its faculty to “document significant lesson plans and include any commendation notes received.”

SCHOLARSHIP

The Newman Library’s guidelines require candidates to demonstrate their contribution to knowledge in librarianship, information science or a field of subject expertise. Candidates are offered a variety of types of scholarship that will qualify, but the guidelines specify that candidates for tenure and promotion to associate professor must have at least three scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles, including one with sole authorship, since their appointment at the College. As noted above, in practice, our candidates have usually exceeded that number.

Northridge does not specify the number of publications that are required for tenure and promotion. Their library follows the institutional reliance on peer-review as the “means of verifying the significance of the candidate's professional achievements.” However, library faculty at Northridge can secure peer review of items (articles, digital exhibitions, resource guides, etc.) outside of publication through a process that involves special peer review by at least two outside reviewers selected collaboratively by the candidate, chair, and Personnel Committee. The Lehman guidelines recommend a range of 4-5 peer-reviewed articles with at least two publications having sole authorship.

SERVICE

The department's guidelines require candidates to contribute to the common good, as evidenced through service to the college, university, profession, and other forms of public service. As with the other categories, the candidate's record of service should demonstrate a progression of increased engagement and responsibility. The Northridge and Lehman guidelines similarly require library faculty to demonstrate a progression of responsibility and engagement in their institutional and professional service. Northridge expresses it as a move from "effective participation in faculty and student affairs" to "significant contributions in effective participation. For service outside the university, Northridge treats it as part of a faculty member's contribution to the field of study and expects assistant professors to participate in professional organizations. Associate Professors are expected to participate in a program and carry out "significant responsibilities" in an organization. Lehman directs its faculty to "aim for increasing levels of responsibility" and engage in at least one service activity per year inside and outside the university.