COMMITTEE ON FACULTY MENTORING AND WORK LIFE ISSUES

CAREER ENHANCEMENT OF TENURED ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS AT LEHIGH: RECOMMENDED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

February 4, 2010

Committee Members
John Coulter, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science; Professor, Mechanical Engineering and Mechanics
James Dearden, Professor and Chairperson, Economics
Henry Korth, Wieseman Professor, Computer Science and Engineering
Patricia Manz, Associate Professor, Education and Human Services
Roger Nagel, Harvey Wagner Professor, Computer Science and Engineering
Gregory Reihman, Director, Faculty Development; Co-Director, Lehigh Lab
Jeffrey Sands, Associate Dean for Faculty and Staff, College of Arts and Sciences; Professor, Biological Sciences
K. Sivakumar, Arthur Tauck Chair; Professor and Chairperson, Marketing (Co-Chair)
Jean Soderlund, Deputy Provost for Faculty Affairs; Professor, History (Co-Chair)
Arnold Spokane, Professor, Education and Human Services

Objective
The purpose of this report is to recommend policies and procedures to facilitate the careers of tenured associate professors at Lehigh University.

Committee Background
The Faculty Mentoring Committee has organized programs and events to support career management of Lehigh faculty since 2004. Similarly, the Lehigh Sloan Program Advisory Committee developed programs and drafted policies on faculty work-life issues with funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Award for Faculty Career Flexibility. Because of the synergies between the committees, we formed the comprehensive Committee on Faculty Mentoring and Work Life Issues in Fall 2009 (hereafter, the Committee).

Issue Background
Associate professors represent a vital part of Lehigh’s professoriate. The issues related to their career development are diverse and complex. While models for mentoring and facilitating the careers of pre-tenure faculty are available, few best practices exist for addressing the issues related to tenured associate professors. This scenario presents us with a challenge and an opportunity – addressing the issue comprehensively will need much time, thought, and effort but if we are able to arrive at thoughtful and effective recommendations that can be implemented, Lehigh will be among the pioneers on this issue.

Process of Information Collection
The topic of career management issues of tenured associate professors is complex and multidimensional, with a great potential for diverse and sometimes contradictory perspectives in defining the problems and approaches toward solutions. The Committee has been as inclusive as possible in assessing the perspectives of different Lehigh consistencies to inform our thinking and recommendations.

In November 2007, the Faculty Mentoring Committee met with a group of recently tenured associate professors to “find out issues related to faculty development and mentoring that are relevant to recently promoted associate professors and to get an idea of their needs and suggestions.” Even in that meeting, the extent and complexity involved in the career management of associate professors were clear. In February 2009, the issue was discussed at length at the Academic Department Chairs Breakfast Meeting. Given the dearth of existing frameworks and models, it was decided to take an in-depth, thoughtful, and inclusive approach to address the important issue of career management for associate professors.

In September 2009, Dr. Susan Carlson, Associate Provost at Iowa State University, presented workshops to department chairs and associate professors on career development of mid-career faculty. As a prelude to her visit, she conducted a survey of Lehigh associate professors that informed her presentation and provided important data to the Committee. To follow-up these workshops, the Committee planned two meetings, one for Lehigh tenured associate professors and the other for Lehigh professors. We prepared a one-page summary of issues related to the career management of associate professors to start the discussion. These meetings, some 90 minutes long, witnessed energetic exchange of ideas and highlighted several issues and potential solutions that informed as well as shaped the thinking of the Committee.

In sum, the Committee feels confident that we have heard a wide variety of perspectives and provided ample opportunities for the generation of ideas. The Committee has spent considerable time discussing the issues, survey and meeting responses, and data provided by the provost’s office. While no report can capture the full essence of the complex issue, our goal is to highlight some key challenges and strategies as a starting point for implementation.

Major Findings and Recommendations

A. Time in Rank, Success in Promotion, and Retention of Tenured Associate Professors

Major Findings:

1. Time in Rank: Of 111 tenured associate professors at Lehigh in Fall 2009, 62 (56 percent) have been in rank for nine years or less and 49 (44 percent) have been in rank for more than nine years (Table 1). Table 2 shows that among full professors at Lehigh in Fall 2009, 82 percent achieved promotion to professor within nine years at the rank of associate professor. Similar to the results of studies conducted at other institutions, the time to promotion for Lehigh professors was longer for women than for men. Whereas 86 percent of male professors were promoted from associate professor to professor within nine years, only 65 percent of women professors achieved promotion within that time. National studies attribute such gender differences to work life issues and the heavy service/advising responsibilities that women faculty often assume. The Survey of Lehigh Tenured Associate Professors (Summer 2009) indicated that 40 percent of male associate professors and 66 percent of female associate professors are dissatisfied with the amount of time available for scholarly
work. Women make up 14 percent of all Lehigh full professors, including those hired at all ranks.

2. **Success in Promotion:** Table 3 demonstrates variation across time in the percentage of associate professors who achieve promotion. Of the tenured Lehigh faculty in Fall 2009, 88 percent of those who were tenured during the period 1963-1984 have been promoted to professor compared to the 72 percent of faculty tenured during the period 1985-1994. The percentage dropped further for faculty tenured in the mid-1990s then rose for those tenured in the years 1997-1999.

   Table 4 presents the success in promotion to professor among those who were reviewed during the last five academic years. Of 34 associate professors reviewed, 5 (15 percent) were not promoted. Two of the five unsuccessful candidates went up for promotion 4-6 years after tenure while 3 had been in rank for more than twelve years (Table 5).

3. **Retention of Associate Professors:** During the years 2005 to 2009, 7 tenured associate professors were among the 40 tenure-track faculty who resigned from their positions at Lehigh (the others included 26 assistant professors, 2 untenured associate professors, and 5 professors). One of the tenured associate professors had recently been denied promotion to professor, one left for dual career reasons, and one was hired at the rank of professor at the new institution.

**Recommendations:**

1. Pursue efforts to improve mentoring and faculty career development programs for tenured associate professors and ensure that promotion criteria are clear and equitable. The good retention rate among tenured associate professors and the significant number of recently tenured faculty highlight the importance of assisting faculty to contribute fully in the areas of teaching, research and scholarship, and service throughout their careers.

2. In drafting strategies for mid-career faculty career development, keep in mind the differences in career profile and perspectives of tenured associate professors who have held the rank ten or more years and those who were tenured more recently.

3. Conduct an additional study that examines closely the gender differences in time-to-promotion and percentage of women among Lehigh professors. While we expect some of the recommendations that follow to benefit both female and male associate professors it is possible that additional steps will be needed to address these gender differences.

B. **Creating flexibility in the criteria for promotion to professor**

**Major Findings:**

1. **Differences among the college guidelines on the criteria for promotion to professor.** The College of Education (COE) and the College of Business and Economics (CBE) lack separate guidelines on the criteria for promotion from associate professor to professor. The guidelines of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science (RCEAS) differ in some respects, for example on the requirement for leadership as a key criterion. CAS requires demonstration of leadership in scholarship and/or teaching while RCEAS requires evidence of scholarly and professional leadership.

2. **Concern about a “single mold.”** A common response to the Survey of Lehigh Tenured Associate Professors (Summer 2009) and in meetings in Fall 2009 with associate professors
and professors was that the criteria for promotion to full professor at Lehigh are currently too rigid. One survey comment reflected the assessment of many participants: “The published and established criteria for promotion to full professor at Lehigh seem to require everyone to fit a single mold. If you don’t fit the mold, you don’t get promoted, regardless of your value to the institution.” The survey responses also indicated that many associate professors believe that teaching and service are undervalued in the promotion process. Of 71 respondents, 54 percent believe that teaching is undervalued and 44 percent think that service is undervalued.

3. Service. During the committee’s meetings with associate professors and professors, the topic of service contributions by associate professors came up repeatedly. These concerns were centered on the following themes: (1) too much service is expected and/or performed; (2) inadequate recognition is given for extraordinary service; (3) service contributions are not communicated adequately to the promotion committees to enable a comprehensive evaluation of the candidates; and (4) evaluation for promotion should recognize that some service activities are linked closely to research and/or teaching, and therefore should be counted as contributions in the appropriate categories.

4. Interdisciplinary fields and “risk-taking.” Faculty raised a variety of concerns about evaluation of associate professors who conduct research and/or teach in interdisciplinary areas outside the traditional fields in their discipline or explore innovative methods in teaching. Some faculty members who do not have formal joint appointments voiced concern that no one from outside their home department serves as a faculty evaluator or provides input into their annual and triennial evaluations. Others raised the issue of lack of adequate recognition of less traditional domains such as the scholarship of teaching.

5. Concerns of associate professors in rank for more than nine years. The survey and meetings demonstrated that faculty members who have held the rank of tenured associate professor for more than nine years are considerably more concerned about the rigidity of promotion criteria than faculty who have held the rank for a shorter time span. Nearly 80 percent of associate professors with more than 15 years at Lehigh believe that teaching is undervalued and 50 percent believe that service is undervalued in the promotion process. In survey comments and meeting discussions, associate professors with long tenure in rank suggested that because of evolving research standards, they see little hope for promotion to professor, yet they derive immense satisfaction from their teaching, advising, research, and service and expect to continue their contributions to Lehigh. They also expressed concern for associate professor colleagues who have spent comparatively fewer years in rank, hoping that the Committee’s review would improve policies and culture at Lehigh for associate professors more generally.

6. Concerns of associate professors in rank less than nine years. Associate professors who have been tenured and promoted to associate professor more recently (i.e., in the last 5-6 years) focused primarily on the increased expectations for service that accompany tenure. Some expressed significant anxiety that they will be unable to sustain their research programs while fulfilling service responsibilities. One suggestion was that assistant professors be alerted to the increased expectations after tenure to avoid an element of surprise.

Recommendations:
1. RCEAS and CAS, and their departments, should review their current criteria for promotion to professor to determine whether they are sufficiently flexible to accommodate appropriate paths to promotion. The colleges and departments (as appropriate) should also evaluate their
criteria for clarity and consistency with criteria in the other colleges. The interpretation of current criteria by department faculty, college promotion committee, and the dean should be evaluated as part of this process.

2. The CBE and COE should draft and adopt written criteria for promotion from associate professor to professor that are separate from the criteria for tenure and promotion to associate professor. The criteria should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate appropriate paths to promotion to professor. Each college should also ensure that the written criteria are clear and consistent with criteria in the other colleges. The interpretation of current criteria by department faculty, college promotion committee, and the dean should be evaluated as part of this process.

3. The college/department promotion criteria should acknowledge that some service activities contribute significantly to the university’s mission in research/scholarship and/or teaching. For example, by providing quality service on a major committee or task force, as a center director, department chair, or program director, or developing a new curriculum, a faculty member contributes to the university’s functions in research/scholarship and/or teaching. These activities should therefore be counted along with the faculty member’s individual achievements such as publications, creative activities, funding, and instruction.

4. The provost, deans, and appropriate faculty committee(s) should provide oversight of this review and drafting of promotion criteria to ensure consistency (while giving due consideration to variations by discipline) across the university.

5. New R&P language should be drafted to ensure that the promotion dossiers of faculty who are involved in interdisciplinary research and teaching (but do not have formal joint appointments) include evaluation letters by Lehigh faculty and external experts in their interdisciplinary fields. [This concern is a broader one that encompasses promotion to associate professors as well.]

6. Upon tenure and promotion to associate professor (or upon hire as a tenured associate professor) the faculty member will meet with his/her department chair to discuss the criteria for promotion to professor. The tenured associate professor will discuss with the chair her/his plans for fulfilling the criteria in research and scholarship, teaching, and service for promotion, normally within 6-9 years or earlier based on disciplinary norms and individual faculty performance.

7. Associate professors who are not promoted by the end of their ninth year in rank will meet promptly with their department chair to discuss plans for achieving promotion.

8. When an associate professor is asked (and agrees) to take on a significant responsibility such as chairing a department or major committee, or developing/directing a program or center, the associate professor, department chair, and dean will draw up a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to explain the workload entailed and how this responsibility will contribute to the associate professor’s progress toward promotion to professor.

9. When the associate professor is reviewed for promotion, any MOUs and all triennial review letters and responses will be included in the promotion portfolio. The associate professor and department will provide sufficient documentation of teaching, research and scholarship, and service to permit full evaluation of the candidate’s contributions in all three areas.

10. All current tenured associate professors will meet with their department chair as necessary to fulfill the requirements in #6-8, above.
C. Triennial and Ninth-Year Reviews

Major Findings:

1. The tenured associate professors who attended meetings indicated that they support the current requirement for triennial and mandatory ninth-year review. They believe that departments should be required to fulfill these requirements, which are meant to ensure that faculty are evaluated for promotion and that no department can delay the promotion of a qualified associate professor.

2. The tenured associate professors also recommended flexibility in the ninth-year review to enable the faculty member to defer the review for one or several years if necessary.

3. The current language of R&P 2.2.4.2 and 2.2.8.2 is incomplete and vague.

4. Several faculty members have requested and received permission from their dean to opt out of the triennial review because they are near retirement and have no expectation for promotion to professor.

5. Currently the provost does not receive a copy of the triennial review letters for review and filing in the faculty member’s personnel file.

Recommendations: The committee’s recommendations for changes to R&P 2.2.4.2 and 2.2.8.2 are detailed in Appendix A.

D. Mentoring associate professors

Major Findings:

1. The Survey of Lehigh Tenured Associate Professors (Summer 2009) indicated room for improvement in mentoring associate professors. Fewer than half (48 percent) believe that the criteria for promotion are clearly communicated. When asked about the mentoring they receive from their chair and senior faculty, 56 percent said they are very or somewhat satisfied with mentoring by their department chair while only 45 percent are satisfied with mentoring by senior colleagues. In meetings, associate professors confirmed the need for knowledgeable and trusted advisors.

2. Some associate professors called for mechanisms to address situations in which a department/college does not fulfill the associate professors’ desire to conduct triennial and ninth-year reviews.

Recommendations:

1. Primary responsibility for mentoring associate professors resides with the department chair and senior department colleagues. For faculty with formal joint appointments, see R&P 2.2.3.1. Associate professors without formal joint appointments may also find it useful to develop mentoring relationships with professors in other departments, centers/institutes, and interdisciplinary programs.

2. Associate professors who believe that their department is not fulfilling its responsibilities regarding triennial reviews, ninth-year review, etc. may consult with the ombudspersons, deputy provost for faculty affairs, associate dean for faculty and staff (in CAS), or the college dean.
3. Colleges should enlist recent former members of their promotion committees to serve as resource persons to provide advice to associate professors in establishing a compelling case for promotion to professor.

4. The recommendation that copies of triennial reviews be sent to the provost’s office (see Appendix A, R&P 2.2.4.2, last paragraph) will permit the provost’s office to provide additional oversight of the triennial review process across the university.

Post Script – The Next Steps
The Committee will share this draft with the Provost and Faculty Personnel Committee. We are confident that the report will be a catalyst for changes in the outlook and processes related to the careers of associate professors at Lehigh. Given the complexity of the issues, continued broad discussion among faculty will be essential to create thoughtful approaches to enhance the career management of tenured associate professors so to optimize their contributions toward the mission of Lehigh and help facilitate implementation of Lehigh’s strategic plan.

Appendix A

DRAFT for Discussion

Additions are in bold; deletions are crossed through.

2.2.4.2 Triennial reviews of tenured associate professors

The procedures described above are followed for all tenured associate professors every three years or upon request, as regards their eligibility for promotion. Reviews of tenured associate professors shall include consideration of relevant accomplishments in teaching, research and scholarship, and service. Accomplishments may include ones not at Lehigh, whether they occurred before or after the faculty member joined the Lehigh faculty. Reviewers shall pay particular attention to the faculty member’s accomplishments since the awarding of tenure at Lehigh.

All tenured associate professors are reviewed every three years or upon their request to evaluate their progress toward promotion to full professor. Associate professors will continue to receive triennial reviews until promoted to full professor, except in uncommon cases with written approval of the college dean. Only tenured full professors who are voting members participate in this process. In small departments follow the procedures for including faculty personnel from other departments as described in section 2.2.2.3 are followed. See 2.2.3.1 for joint appointments.

The department chairperson meets with the tenured associate professor in the fall semester of the academic year in which he/she is scheduled for a triennial review. The associate professor is invited to supply information and documents to be used in this review as part of the triennial review file. The chairperson may also supply material and shares this information with the associate professor. The associate professor is advised of his/her right to include written comments regarding such materials in the triennial review file.
The department chairperson shares the triennial review file with the faculty involved in the review process and meets with them to discuss the associate professor’s progress toward promotion to full professor. Following the department meeting, the chairperson summarizes in writing the faculty’s evaluation in a letter addressed to the associate professor. The chairperson then meets individually with the associate professor, discusses the faculty’s review of his/her performance, and gives him/her the written summary evaluation letter. The associate professor is notified that he/she has the right to respond in writing to the full professors’ evaluation. Copies of the departmental evaluation and any written response by the associate professor are placed in the associate professor’s file in the department. Copies of these documents and the triennial review file are sent to the dean.

The dean reviews the substance and process of the evaluation for consistency with the criteria stated in section 2.2.1.5, and sends copies of the departmental evaluation and any response of the associate professor to the provost for review and filing in the associate professor’s personnel file.

See section 2.2.8.2 regarding the frequency of the promotion review process for tenured associate professors.

2.2.8.2 Ninth-year promotion review for tenured associate professors

An associate professor will be considered for promotion no later than his/her ninth year in rank. A tenured associate professor may request a promotion review in any year. He or she will be reviewed formally for promotion to full professor (see 2.2.9) no later than his/her ninth year in rank. Thereafter, the individual will be considered for promotion in any year in which he/she requests a review, but not less often than every nine years. A tenured associate professor may postpone the required promotion review for one to three years by mutual agreement with his/her department chairperson and by submitting a written request to the dean. The provost will promptly give written reasons to an associate professor that is not promoted as the result of such a review.

This rule for required promotion review does not apply to associate professors nine or more years in rank who are appointed to administrative positions that remove them from the normal functions of teaching and research. Such persons must remain in rank until they return to normal faculty functions within their departments and can be appropriately evaluated in their faculty duties.

Current text:

2.2.4.2 Tenured associate professors

The procedures described above are followed for all tenured associate professors every three years or upon request, as regards their eligibility for promotion. Reviews of tenured associate professors shall include consideration of relevant accomplishments in teaching, research and scholarship, and service. Accomplishments may include ones not at Lehigh, whether they occurred before or after the faculty
member joined the Lehigh faculty. Reviewers shall pay particular attention to the faculty member’s accomplishments since the awarding of tenure at Lehigh. Only tenured full professors who are voting members participate in this process. In small departments, the procedures for including personnel from other departments, described in section 2.2.2.2.3, are followed. See 2.2.3.1 for joint appointments. (See section 2.2.8.2 regarding the frequency of the promotion review process for tenured associate professors.)

2.2.8.2 Nine years of service as an associate professor

An associate professor will be considered for promotion no later than his/her ninth year in rank. Thereafter, the individual will be considered for promotion in any year in which he/she requests a review, but not less often than every nine years. The provost will promptly give written reasons to an associate professor that is not promoted as the result of such a review. This rule does not apply to associate professors nine or more years in rank who are appointed to administrative positions that remove them from the normal functions of teaching and research. Such persons must remain in rank until they return to normal faculty functions within their departments and can be appropriately evaluated in their faculty duties.