

From: **Catherine Epstein**

Date: Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:18 AM

Subject: Request: Departmental Anti-Racism Reports and Departmental Expectations for Tenure

To:

Dear Chairs,

I hope this email finds you well and enjoying the waning weeks of summer—at the same time we all look ahead to fall. I write now to let chairs know about two important projects that I am requesting that you complete with your departmental colleagues.

Project One: Complete A Report on Your Department's Anti-Racism Efforts

Due to ME by December 1, 2021

You will recall that last year the Faculty Leadership Committee on the Anti-Racism Plan asked all departments to send in a description of their anti-racism efforts. While those descriptions were informative, in many cases they were rather informal and not appropriate for posting on departmental websites or sharing with other members of the college community.

I ask that, by December 1, 2021, you submit a report to me in which you articulate your department's anti-racist goals and the means you will use to achieve them. Completed reports will be posted online this fall, so that departments can learn from one another and so that the steps being taken are visible to students.

As you consider what anti-racism means for your department or program, I ask that you keep the four following goals in mind, as well as any additional departmental goals you might have:

1. That students further their understanding of issues surrounding race and racism.
2. That the demographics of your department's majors better reflect those of the student body.
3. That the demographics of your department's senior thesis writers better reflect those of the student body.
4. That your department work to create an inclusive and welcoming culture for all students and work to build community among majors.

As you work to achieve these goals, I ask that you report on the following matters:

1. How is your department or program addressing or planning to inform students about issues of racial inequality in the content of your major(s)? Did you or will you revise or create the department's curriculum and/or particular courses? Did you or will you initiate or expand lecture series or other department programming to address issues of racial inequality? Is exposure to discussions about racial inequity required or voluntary for majors?
2. What anti-racist pedagogical strategies have the department and/or individual faculty members utilized to create inclusive classrooms, labs, and other learning spaces?
3. What steps has your department taken to address equity and access for students who want to take courses or major in your department or program? This could include the

creation of student groups, changes to the system of advising majors, changes to curricular requirements, and/or supporting students who wish to pursue honors theses.

Please let my office know what support your department needs as you work toward your goals. This could be in the form of access to expertise, access to data, and/or other resources. I encourage you to reach out to Pawan Dhingra or me if you have questions.

Project Two: Develop Departmental Expectations for Tenure

Please begin thinking about this project this term.

I ask that you begin thinking about departmental expectations for tenure. This project will also be the subject of conversation by the Committee of Six and the faculty in the months to come. As you may recall, last year's Committee of Six agreed that it would be helpful to move to a system that combines the articulation of a broad set of college-wide criteria for tenure—with that language continuing to take precedence in the tenure process and being included in the *Faculty Handbook*—and complementary departmental expectations for tenure, the articulation of which could provide helpful context for the president, the provost and dean of the faculty, the Committee of Six, the department, outside reviewers, tenure-track faculty, and prospective hires. I will be sharing more information about this initiative this fall, but it is not too soon to begin to consider this important matter. It is my hope that, after consulting further with the Committee of Six and the faculty, we will have these documents completed by May 2022.

Thank you in advance for your continued efforts surrounding anti-racism and for working on the report that I have requested. Thanks, as well, for beginning to think about departmental expectations for tenure.

All best,

Catherine

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty
Winkley Professor of History
Amherst College

Dear Chairs,

As you know, this year's Committees of Six, building on work done in previous years, has developed a proposal to clarify the criteria for tenure at the college. The focus of this effort has been to better align the language of the *Faculty Handbook* with practice, with the goal of providing greater transparency. In addition, this year's committee, as well as last year's, has supported a proposal to combine this broad set of college-wide criteria for tenure—with these criteria continuing to take precedence in the tenure process and being included in the *Faculty Handbook*—with complementary departmental expectations for tenure. The committee has reviewed helpful examples of this practice at some other institutions (see [Hamilton College](#), [Lafayette College](#), and Swarthmore College [here](#) and [here](#)). The members have agreed that such an articulation of departmental expectations could provide helpful context for the president, the provost and dean of the faculty, the Committee of Six, the department, outside reviewers, tenure-track faculty, and prospective hires.

To guide departments as they undertake the work of articulating their tenure expectations, drawing on the standards of excellence in their disciplines, the committee has created a template. As departments discuss their tenure expectations, it will be important that they share what they value and what is given the greatest weight in their disciplines, while not being so specific that flexibility cannot be preserved. At the chairs' meeting on November 12, we will discuss the template and how departmental conversations might unfold. Thereafter, I encourage you to begin a discussion about departmental expectations for tenure. It is my hope that you will prepare, by the end of this academic year, a departmental document outlining tenure expectations.

I expect that the Committee of Six's proposal for revised *Faculty Handbook* language for the college-wide criteria for tenure will be brought forward to the faculty for a vote at one of the spring faculty meetings.

Thank you for working to clarify tenure expectations for our pre-tenure colleagues.

See you on November 12!

All best,

Catherine

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty
Winkley Professor of History
Amherst College

Tenure Expectations: Department of NAME
Amherst College

The college values faculty whose commitment to the life of the mind is demonstrated through excellence in teaching, scholarship, and/or the creation of works of art, and contributions to professional service. Amherst tenures faculty who demonstrate growth, achievement, and continuing promise in both scholarship and teaching, evinced by a notable record of scholarly and/or artistic accomplishment and a demonstrated ability to teach undergraduates effectively. These two aspects of a candidate's record are of primary consideration in the tenure decision. Strength in one will not compensate for shortcoming in the other. A record of scholarly excellence must include evidence of original, peer-reviewed research and/or its equivalent in the creative arts. A record of teaching excellence must include evidence of the ability to convey knowledge and engage students in rigorous and stimulating ways, and a commitment to their intellectual and personal growth and academic accomplishment. In addition, faculty members are expected to contribute to their home departments and programs, to the life and work of the college, and to their professional fields.

Examples of Some Expectations That Departments May Wish to Include, Depending on the Discipline

Departments may wish to revise some of the language in the considerations listed below; indicate more precisely the value and/or weight given to any or all of them; exclude some entirely; or add others consistent with the criteria articulated above.

For examples of departmental expectations for tenure at some other institutions, see [Hamilton College](#), [Lafayette College](#), and Swarthmore College [here](#) and [here](#).

Scholarship and Creative Work

The department expects that candidates will have established an original and active scholarly and/or artistic program that extends beyond the dissertation and/or the equivalent in the creative arts, and that represents independence from graduate and postgraduate advisors, by the time of the tenure review (normally in the fall of the faculty member's seventh year at the college).

The department requires evidence of expertise within a field (or more than one field if applicable), and the potential for future growth and development as an active scholar and/or artist.

The department's assessment of the candidates' scholarly work and/or artistic work is informed by letters from external reviewers who are experts in candidates' fields and/or subfields.

The department evaluates quality, productivity, and progress by examining both published work and work in progress.

Publications in peer-reviewed high-quality journals in the field and/or subfield of the candidate, and or the equivalent in the creative arts, are a required part of the scholarly portfolio.

A single-authored manuscript that has been published by a high-quality academic press, or which is under final contract with such a press, is a required part of the candidate's scholarly portfolio.

The department values collaborative research and co-authored publications and evaluates the candidate's contributions to collaborative efforts. At the same time, normally, the department requires that at least some of a candidate's work be single-authored.

The department values collaborative research and co-authorship with Amherst students.

The department values the receipt of grant awards to support candidates' research, viewing this funding as a form of peer review.

The department values community engaged scholarship, if applicable to candidates' research.

Teaching

The department expects that candidates' record of teaching excellence will include evidence of the ability to convey knowledge and engage students in rigorous and stimulating ways, and a commitment to their intellectual and personal growth and academic accomplishment.

The department's evaluation of teaching effectiveness is based on student in-class evaluations and retrospective letters, classroom observations by the tenured members of the department, and candidates' statements about their teaching. All courses taught by the candidate, including honors and special topics courses, are evaluated as part of the tenure review. In addition, the department evaluates evidence of curricular and/or pedagogical innovation, intellectual depth, analytical rigor, and accessibility of subject matter.

The department values candidates' responsiveness to feedback about their teaching and a positive trajectory and record of improvement over time.

The department expects that candidates will have taught classes at all levels of its curriculum, as departmental teaching assignments allow.

The department expects that candidates will have taught at least [number] different courses in advance of standing for tenure.

The department values the ability to facilitate classroom discussions effectively, including the ability to encourage student participation.

The department values skill and effectiveness as a lecturer.

The department values the ability to answer students' questions knowledgeably and effectively.

The department values co-teaching.

The department values teaching in the first-year seminar program.

Service

The department values service to the department that includes a range of contributions, including pedagogical and curricular contributions that may include new course offerings, teaching innovations, and contributions to the department's curricular design.

The department values college-wide service on committees and through other forms of participation.

The department values service within the Five Colleges.

The department values participation in professional conferences as speaker or discussant.

The department values evidence of professional leadership in organizations beyond Amherst.

The department values discipline-related advisory and consulting work.

The department values contributions to public discourse such as op-eds, blogs, and interviews, particularly if they are subject to peer review.

The department assesses candidates' service based on letters from members of the college and, when relevant, from colleagues in the Five-College community. The department also draws on commentary about service to the profession that may be provided by external reviewers.

College-Wide Tenure Criteria

Amherst's tenure system combines the articulation of a broad set of college-wide criteria for tenure—with that language continuing to take precedence in the tenure process and being included in the *Faculty Handbook*—and complementary departmental expectations for tenure, the articulation of which could provide helpful context for the president, the provost and dean of the faculty, the Committee of Six, the department, outside reviewers, tenure-track faculty, and prospective hires.

July 28, 2022

Dear Chairs,

The Committee of Six, the associate provosts, and I completed an initial review of most departments' proposed tenure criteria documents. The small number of remaining tenure criteria documents will be reviewed as they are submitted. In some cases, I will be sharing feedback about these documents with individual departments by the end of August. In addition, this review revealed that it would be helpful to establish some guidelines beyond the Committee of Six's suggested template for these documents. Please see the attached PDF for these guidelines. I have included the content below in that document as well.

All departments are asked to review their tenure criteria document to make sure that the criteria are consistent with the guidelines (see the PDF). If revisions are needed, either as a result of the feedback that I have shared with the chair and/or after reviewing these guidelines, the tenure criteria documents should be resubmitted to me. I will share the revised document with the Tenure and Promotion Committee and the associate provosts. If a department that did not receive feedback considers its document to be final after reviewing the guidelines, please resubmit the document, labeling it "final." Please complete your final documents any time after September 1, 2022, and share them with me no later than November 1, 2022.

Once a department's tenure criteria document has been approved, I will let the chair know. The chair is then asked to meet with the department's tenure-track faculty to share the document. The document should be provided to external reviewers beginning with fall 2023 tenure cases (it should also be included in the dossiers that departments assemble) and with job candidates beginning with searches that will be ongoing during this academic year. The final documents will also be shared with the Tenure and Promotion Committee.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

All best,

Catherine

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty
Henry Steele Commager Professor of History
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**DEPARTMENTAL TENURE CRITERIA DOCUMENTS:
CLARIFICATION AND FEEDBACK FROM THE PROVOST'S OFFICE
SUMMER 2022**

INTRODUCTION

The Committee of Six, the associate provosts, and I completed an initial review of most departments' proposed tenure criteria documents. The small number of remaining tenure criteria documents will be reviewed as they are submitted.

Please note that the primary audience for these documents is tenure candidates within each department. In addition, departmental tenure criteria should be shared with job candidates, external reviewers, and the Tenure and Promotion Committee (see details below). These documents should focus on the department's actual tenure criteria. They are not meant to be mentoring documents, and should not, for example, include commentary from the department that is intended to explain differences between the tenure expectations at a liberal arts college versus a research university. Departments should also not explicitly advise tenure candidates about participation—that is, whether to participate or not to—in certain activities, specifically around service.

FEEDBACK

In some cases, I will be sharing feedback about these documents with individual departments by the end of August. In addition, this review revealed that it would be helpful to establish some guidelines beyond the Committee of Six's suggested template for these documents. All departments are asked to review their tenure criteria document to make sure that the criteria are consistent with the guidelines outlined below. If revisions are needed, either as a result of the feedback that I have shared with the chair and/or after reviewing these guidelines, the tenure criteria documents should be resubmitted to me. I will share the revised document with the Tenure and Promotion Committee and the associate provosts. If a department that did not receive feedback considers its document to be final after reviewing the guidelines, please resubmit the document, labeling it "final." **Please complete your final documents any time after September 1, 2022, and share them with me no later than November 1, 2022.**

APPROVAL

Once a department's tenure criteria document has been approved, I will let the chair know. The chair is then asked to meet with the department's tenure-track faculty to share the document. The document should be provided to external reviewers beginning with fall 2023 tenure cases (it should also be included in the dossiers that departments assemble) and with job candidates beginning with searches that will be ongoing during this academic year. The final documents will also be shared with the Tenure and Promotion Committee.

SCHOLARSHIP

- For departments in which there is an expectation that tenure candidates will have a published book, the following language (or something very similar) should be used: "The book should be published or in production, which means that candidates should have submitted a final revised book manuscript to the acquiring editor that is ready for copyediting." A final book contract without evidence that the work is in press is insufficient.

- Departments should be explicit about what constitutes evidence of a second project or continued scholarly growth following the completion of candidates' first major project (e.g., a book/monograph, set of articles, or creative work). Here are some examples of what may or may not be considered evidence in different disciplines:
 - Peer-reviewed articles in a scholarly journal, presuming that the article is not a chapter of the candidate's book;
 - Contributions to edited volumes (peer reviewed and not peer reviewed);
 - Conference presentations, invited talks, and lectures;
 - Book proposals;
 - Chapter drafts of a second book;
 - Public-facing work such as amicus briefs, white papers, blogs, opinion pieces, creative works, and digital humanities projects.
- Departments should be explicit about the role of single-authored versus collaborative work. Here are some examples of appropriate language:
 - "The candidate's first book should be single authored. Other publications can be co-authored."
 - "The department values collaborative research and co-authored publications, but also requires that at least some of a candidate's work be single-authored."
 - "The department values all publications, including both single-authored publications and co-authored publications. The department values collaborative research and evaluates the candidate's contributions to collaborative efforts, as well as the work overall."
- Departments should make clear the status of tenure candidates' work completed prior to their appointment at Amherst College. This is largely an issue in science departments, where it is unusual for an individual to pursue an independent research agenda prior to starting a tenure-track position. Departments might consider the following language:
 - "Publications appearing from work conducted as a graduate student or as a postdoctoral fellow, while speaking to the candidate's overall career trajectory, typically will not support the case for tenure, as in the discipline of xxx such publications are usually not considered to be reflective of the candidate's accomplishments as an independent investigator." Candidates should be given the option of submitting whatever work they wish for inclusion in their tenure dossiers, however.
- Departments should be explicit about the role of grants in a tenure portfolio. Here are examples of appropriate language:
 - "Grant awards, in particular from recognized agencies with highly competitive programs that include peer review, are seen as an indicator of the quality of a candidate's research program,

often at a national level, and are regarded as a form of peer review.

- “Grants are not required or expected, as long as research can be conducted without such support (although grants do provide evidence of productivity and recognition in the field).”
- Some candidates for tenure might write in a language other than English. Departments should be explicit about how they view and value work not written in English, based on the norms in their field. Examples include:
 - “Tenure candidates in the xxx department may publish their scholarship either in English or in xxx.”
 - Tenure candidates’ most significant work should be published in English, but work published in the individual’s area of research that is not written in English is acknowledged as a contribution.
- Departments should clarify the role of chapters in edited volumes relative to peer-reviewed articles, as normative in the tenure candidate’s discipline or field. Examples include:
 - “Chapters in edited and/or invited volumes can support an individual’s candidacy for tenure, but they are not a substitute for articles published in peer-reviewed journals.”
 - “Chapters in edited and/or invited volumes are considered on par with peer-reviewed journals if those volumes are peer reviewed.”
- In departments that require the publication of a book, the tenure criteria should NOT explicitly state a required number of peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, or other evidence of scholarly or artistic productivity beyond the requirement of the publication of a book.

TEACHING

- Many departmental tenure criteria documents are not explicit about expecting candidates to create inclusive classrooms. Departments may wish to include a phrase along the following lines:
 - “The department values tenure candidates’ ability to create an inclusive and welcoming classroom environment.”
- Departments should be explicit about the number and/or range of classes that they expect to have been taught by the time of tenure:
 - “The department expects that candidates will have taught at least six distinct courses in advance of standing for tenure, and at least one class at each level of its curriculum.”
 - “The department expects that candidates will have taught at least four distinct courses and two of the courses required for the major...”
 - “By the time of the tenure review, the department expects that candidates will have successfully taught classes at several levels of the curriculum, as departmental teaching assignments allow.”

SERVICE

- Departments should be explicit about what they value in terms of departmental and college-wide service.
 - At the very least, departments should note that college-wide service, in the form of service on faculty committees, is expected, but that candidates will not be at a disadvantage if they have not been offered the opportunity to serve by the time of the tenure review.
 - Departments should be explicit about what they value in regard to other kinds of service, particularly within the Five-College community and in professional organizations beyond Amherst College.