

*COMMITTEE ON PROMOTIONS  
HANDBOOK*



Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

2/23/15

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## **A Message to MCLA Faculty**

This is the second edition of the COP (Committee on Promotion) Handbook. A concerted effort was made to develop a comprehensive guide but some sections may need to be improved in future editions. I hope you will find this handbook helpful.

The COP handbook is both a guide and a summary of the applicable provisions found in the collective bargaining agreement. The agreement is posted on the MSCA website at [www.mscaunion.org](http://www.mscaunion.org). This document was prepared by Michele Ethier, Professor of Social Work, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work at MCLA. While I believe that the statements in this handbook are accurate, I welcome questions, comments, and clarifications for future editions.

Relevant documents can be found in the appendices.

All sections and page references contained in this handbook refer to the 2014-2017 Agreement.

## **Portfolio Security**

Portfolios are secured in or near the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) office. Documents within the portfolio may not be removed or photocopied by the COP. Portfolio materials are confidential documents. Arrangements to review materials are made with the VP or her/his Administrative Assistant. Efforts should be made by the Administration to provide a quiet location for reviewing documents.

Deliberations regarding portfolios are confidential proceedings.

## Eligibility for Service on the Committee on Promotions

### **General Rules**

- Elections to the COP are held during the spring semester under the auspices of the Faculty Association.
- 5 members are elected (2 one year and 3 the next)
- Members must be tenured
- Members must be at the rank of
  - a. Professor or Associate Professor
  - b. Senior Librarian, Librarian, Associate Librarian
- Members serve for two years

### **Rules of Disqualification**

- Department chairs cannot serve
- Candidates for promotion cannot serve
- Members of the Committee on Tenure cannot serve
- Only 1 member from a department or the Library can serve
- A person undergoing post-tenure review cannot serve when his or her Department Chair is a candidate for promotion
- Members cannot serve if they are on sabbatical during the work of the committee

### **Role of the COP**

The Vice President (VPAA) confirms eligibility of candidates for consideration or promotion in rank and transmits this information to the COP. The Vice President (VPAA) and the Faculty Association President meet briefly with the COP to convene the work of the committee. The COP elects a chair or co-chairs. The Committee on Promotions reviews and considers the candidate's portfolio, all related materials, and the evaluations by the candidate's Department Chair and the Peer Evaluation Committee (PEC). **The COP may request that the Vice President make available any evaluations of the candidate completed during the applicable review period.** The COP deliberates and makes a written recommendation either supporting or declining to support the promotion.

### **Role of the COP and VP**

COP no longer consults with the VP regarding recommendation. COP makes a single recommendation to VP and process moves forward.

## **Eligibility for Promotion and Review Period**

### **Faculty**

#### **Changes Beginning with 2015/2016 Academic Year**

Change for Tenure/Promotion: Assistant Professors, Assistant Librarians, Associate Librarians who are candidates for Tenure and have satisfied time in rank for promotion to a higher rank, will be considered for tenure with promotion. Candidates must satisfy requirements for Article IX (tenure) and demonstrate meritorious performance Article XX (promotion.) If an Assistant Professor/Assistant Librarian/Associate Librarian meet the minimum requirements (time in rank, years of service, etc.) when they apply for tenure will need to have a PEC (which will do a tenure evaluation). If granted tenure they will receive a promotion as well. Candidate selects third member of PEC. If candidate does not meet minimum requirements for a higher rank – must apply for promotion separately or under the exceptional clause. Three years in rank at Assistant Professor and 6 years of teaching are required.

- a. If there has been no prior promotion, the review period includes the time since the faculty member's initial appointment to a tenure track position.
  - b. If there has been a prior promotion, the review period includes the entire time since the last promotion, including the year prior to when the promotion became effective.
- Faculty members who, when hired, possess a terminal degree effective on or before the date of appointment, must be appointed above the rank of Instructor.
  - Associate Professor – 6 years of full time teaching and 3 years of full time employment at the rank of Assistant Professor at an accredited four year college or university and meritorious performance as demonstrated by the candidate's evaluations (see Article VIII of the Agreement).
  - Professor – 8 years of full time experience in teaching (5 of which must have been at an accredited two year or four year college or university), at least 4 years of full time employment at the rank of Associate Professor at an accredited four year college or university, and meritorious performance as demonstrated by the candidate's evaluations (see Article VIII of the Agreement).
  - Promotion of Certain Instructors – Faculty who hold an appointment at the rank of Instructor and who earn a terminal degree, notify the College and are automatically promoted to Assistant Professor without required evaluation, effective September 1 after notification.
  - Article XX Promotion Count – Unpaid leave less than a semester is not deducted from count.

## Librarians

- M.L.S. and M.L.S.I.S. with a total of 60 graduate credits is a terminal degree.
- All Librarians must meet the following:
  - Fulfillment of the minimum requirements set forth by rank.
  - Meritorious performance as demonstrated by the candidates evaluations (see Article VIII of the Agreement).
- Time requirements have changed. They have decreased in the 2014-2017 agreement.

Assistant Librarian – M.L.S. or M.L.S.I.S., 3 years of full time experience in an academic or research library.

Associate Librarian – M.L.S. or M.L.S.I.S., 4 years experience as a librarian, 2 years at an academic or research library, for promotion 2 years at the rank of Assistant Librarian

Librarian – M.L.S. or M.L.S.I.S. and a second subject Master’s Degree. (6 years, 3 years, 3 years respectively)

Senior Librarian – D.L.S. or D.L.S.I.S. or appropriate doctorate and the M.L.S. or M.L.S.I.S., or M.L.S. or M.L.S.I.S. and a second subject Master’s degree, 8 years of full-time experience as a librarian (at least 5 at an academic or research library), 5 years at the rank of Librarian.

**No librarian is hired at the rank of Library Associate as of July 1, 2014.**

M.L.S. = Master of Library Science

M.L.S.I.S. = Master of Library Science and Information Science

D.L.S. = Doctorate of Library Science

D.L.S.I.S. = Doctorate of Library Science and Information Science

In all cases degrees must be granted from institutions accredited by the American Library Association.

**Article XX Promotion Count:** Unpaid leave less than a semester is not deducted from count.

### **Exceptional Clause:**

#### **Faculty**

If the candidate does not meet the stated criteria for promotion (degree, experience, years in rank), the Board of Trustees (BOT) or the President may promote an individual of “exceptional talent or accomplishment” who demonstrates:

- a. Evidence to render a unique academic contribution to the College.

- b. Evidence of extraordinary competence in the area of his/her discipline or specialty **or**
- c. Evidence that the discipline or specialty does not customarily demand fulfillment of those academic degree requirements set forth by the Board as minimum criteria for appointment or promotion to each rank.

### **Librarians**

“For sound academic reasons” exceptions to the requirements for promotions may be made “in certain specialized areas and under rare and extraordinary circumstances by the Board of Trustees”.

“Sound academic reasons” is not defined in the Agreement. “Certain specialized areas” and “rare and extraordinary circumstances” is not defined in the Agreement.

### **The Committee’s Evaluation**

Each committee member should read and review the entire dossier of each candidate. Comments are required in each of the following areas of responsibility:

- Teaching effectiveness (for faculty).
- Academic advising (for faculty). If a faculty member has more than 30 advisees, she/he can elect to have those considered under category II of Continuing Scholarship.
- Effectiveness in performing assigned responsibilities (for librarians).
- Please note: Direct observation of librarians performance : Form needs to be developed. Librarians are responsible for developing the form.
- Effectiveness in rendering assistance to students, faculty, and the academic community (for librarians).
- Continuing scholarship.
- Professional activities.
- Alternative Assignments (if any).

For Professional Activities and Responsibilities the COP conducts its evaluation according to the criteria selected by the candidate on Appendix A-1 or A-2. These are as follows:

#### *Continuing Scholarship*

*Candidates are required to select one criterion for continuing scholarship but may choose to select more. **The evaluation of the candidate’s scholarship must be***



***confined to the criterion/a selected and must not critique the candidate's choice of criterion/a.***

- Contribution to the content of the discipline (for faculty); contribution to the content and pedagogy of the discipline through the development of library programs or library services (for librarians).
- Participation in or contribution to professional organizations and societies.
- Research as demonstrated by published or unpublished work.
- Artistic or other creative activities.
- Work toward the terminal degree or relevant post graduate study.
- Other, as explained by the candidate.

Example: If the faculty member has done credible in-house research for the college that meets a need, it cannot be critiqued for not being published.

#### *Professional Activities*

*Candidates are required to select one criterion for professional activities but may choose to select more. **The evaluation of the candidate's professional activities must be confined to the criterion/a selected and must not critique the candidate's choice of criterion/a.***

- Public Service.
- Contributions to the professional growth and development of the College Community.(For faculty, this may include academic advising of students in excess of 30 as assigned at the beginning of the semester).
- Other, as explained by the candidate.

Example: If the faculty member only selects "public service," s/he cannot be negatively judged if there is no evidence of contributions to the professional growth and development of the college community.

#### *Alternative Assignments*

*This is only considered if the candidate has an alternative assignment and, if so, the individual must be evaluated in the role of:*

- Chair.

- Alternative Professional Responsibilities.
- Professional development program.
- Other, as explained by the candidate.

**Alternative assignments applies to anyone who receives a course reduction for any reason.**

#### Evaluation Standards

The basis of the evaluation is “professional quality demonstrated with reference to each of the applicable criteria.” The current Agreement states, “it being the understanding of the parties that for promotion to each higher rank a higher order of quality may properly be demanded” (Article VIII, A4). **The comments in the COP evaluation memo must be confined to the opinions of the *majority* of the committee,** and they must be based on the official record represented by the classroom visits and/or the materials submitted by the candidate. **Comments reflecting minority opinions and minority reports are not permitted.** The written COP recommendation is signed by the COP Chair, but must represent the collective deliberations of all members of the COP.

When recommending in favor of promotion, the COP has an obligation to provide **clear and convincing** arguments in favor of the action. When recommending against promotion, the COP has an obligation to provide **full and complete** reasons for its recommendation.

In its report, the COP should include

- The recommendation.
- The names of the committee members.
- The numerical vote, but not the vote associated with each member.
- A statement that the evaluation was conducted in compliance with the Agreement
- Completed Evaluations are transmitted to the VP (VPAA).
- **Evaluators must vote. Members cannot abstain.**

**Candidate’s right to respond to a negative evaluation by COP: 7 days to respond.**

The COP is formed no later than 9/30.

### **Candidate's Right to Respond**

The faculty member has the right to respond to **any** written evaluation conducted by **any** evaluative body.

- The PEC's evaluation: 10 calendar days to respond
- Chair's evaluation: 10 calendar days to respond
- Vice President's evaluation: 7 calendar days to respond

For promotion and tenure, COP and COT evaluations are transmitted to the faculty member through the Vice President: 7 calendar days to respond.

"Days" begin with the date the candidate receives the evaluation (the candidate signs it, indicating it has been received and read.)

**The Faculty Association recommends that the candidate respond to a negative evaluation.**

Definition of Day: Deadlines following Saturday, Sunday or holiday are moved to the next day. This applies to both evaluation deadlines and the candidate's right to respond.

## **Considerations of Fairness**

Both candidates and evaluators have a responsibility to be fair to each other. It is important that both share an understanding of the Agreement, the criteria of evaluation, and the evaluation process. A culture of shared expectations at MCLA will enhance the probability that personnel actions will be productive, respectful, and collegial.

### A. Scholarship

Evaluation by the COP requires the exercise of academic judgment. Scholarship or pedagogy can vary across departments or even within a single department, so effort is needed to understand disciplines that are different from one's own. In Article VIII the Agreement states that:

"In evaluating each member of the faculty, it shall be the responsibility of those charged with doing so to assess the quality, significance and relevance of that faculty member's continuing scholarship".

Please note that quantity is not an evaluative measure. What constitutes scholarship is open to interpretation and may involve both traditional, nontraditional and unconventional "products."

### B. Contractual Criteria Only

Be objective and open-minded. Although it may seem obvious, remember to address only the contractual criteria and not extraneous matters such as personal interactions or department issues. Use only documentation provided in the portfolio. Evidence obtained or provided from other sources **cannot** be used in the evaluation, unless the candidate agrees to have such documentation included in her/his file. **Evaluations should not include incidental observations.**

### C. Organization

A candidate's file should be clearly organized and include one or more of the following: a table of contents, tabs, sections, dividers, numbered pages. The Agreement does not address how to organize a portfolio. There is no one right way.

### D. Missing Documents

A candidate should provide a full and complete portfolio. It is understood that evaluators may request missing documents (via the Vice President of Academic Affairs) in order to make a clear and convincing, or full and complete,

recommendation. Evaluators may not arbitrarily decide to request one or two missing documents from one candidate but not from another candidate. There is no limit on the number of appropriate documents that can be requested. **The COP may request that the Vice President make available any evaluations of the candidate completed during the applicable review period.**

E. Categories

It shall be the responsibility of any member of the bargaining unit who is a candidate for promotion to verify and demonstrate that he/she has fulfilled the criteria that pertain to the personnel action for which he/she is a candidate. In applying these criteria, it should be understood that the Massachusetts State Universities are primarily teaching institutions.

F. Definitions and Standards

In Article VIII, A4, of the Agreement, it states, "it being the understanding of the parties that for promotion to each higher rank, a higher order of quality may properly be demanded."

What is the higher standard? What is the standard? What is the lower standard? These are questions that the contract does not answer.

G. Professional Quality (Article VIII, A4): Professional quality is **not** defined in the contract.

H. Meritorious Performance (Article VIII, Article xx): is **not** defined in the contract.

Additional Considerations:

1. The narrative is an optional document (but highly recommended).
2. Candidates cannot be compared to the other candidates.
3. Quotas are not allowed. Quotas by rank are not allowed.
4. No Faculty member should serve on an evaluation committee or participate in the conduct of an evaluation if to do so would constitute a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.
5. All evaluators are bound to **keep confidential** all aspects of an evaluation.

6. The absence of student evaluations from the record of the following semesters shall not be considered either positively or negatively when evaluating a faculty member's teaching effectiveness Fall 1999, Spring 2000, Fall 2000, Fall 2003, Spring 2004, Fall 2004, Spring 2005, Fall 2005.
7. **For Positive Recommendation – Clear and convincing reasons (Article VIII)**
8. **For Negative Recommendation – Full and complete reasons (Article VIII)**
9. Paid Work: Service cannot be discounted or ignored on the basis that candidate was compensated for the work. This applies to both faculty and librarians.
10. Evaluators must vote: Members of PEC, COP and COT must vote. **Members cannot abstain.**
11. Role of COP and VP: COP does not consult with VP. COP makes a single recommendation to VP and process moves forward.
12. **Who in the administration will evaluate the candidate?** VP can delegate to Academic Dean. Levels of evaluation cannot be split.
13. **Who cannot evaluate the candidate:** Dean of Graduate Education or Graduate Studies, Dean of Continuing Education, Dean of Graduate and Continuing Ed, Dean of Students, Dean of Enrollment Management, Dean of Admissions, Dean of Multicultural Affairs, and Dean of Faculty Development cannot evaluate candidates for reappointment, tenure, promotion, tenure with promotion, or post-tenure review.
14. **Notification Date of Administrator who will conduct evaluation:** 2015/2016 and thereafter by April 8<sup>th</sup>.

### Some Cautionary Notes About SIR II's

(See MSCA Perspective)

- ETS will no longer process SIR II forms where 6 or fewer students are enrolled. The scores are not valid with an N of 6 or less. The Administration will not distribute evaluations to courses with 6 or fewer students. Evaluators must hold harmless if this applies to the candidate.
- Evaluators should be cautious when drawing conclusion about SIR II Evaluation data.
- The MSCA is pursuing 3 consolidated grievances alleging procedural violations in the misuse and inconsistent use of SIR II student evaluation forms.
- SIR II's cannot be used as the sole or only determinant of teaching effectiveness. Course materials, classroom observations by the chair and peers and the self evaluation are **equally important** components.
- The SIR II student evaluations are **NOT** more important than other types of evaluation.

### Comparison Group of 4 Year Institutions

- Compared to 19 other institutions not identified
- There are 2,474 four year institutions of higher education in the United States. The sample size of 19 is only .77%
- The MSCA maintains that the SIR II comparison group should not be described as “peers”, “national peers”, “peer institutions”, “comparable institutions”, “similar institutions”, etc.
- The 19 institutions (unnamed and unidentified) may be substantially different from the state universities in Massachusetts.
- Comparative does not mean comparable!
- **SIR II's do not indicate teaching effectiveness as excellent, very good, good, average, moderate, or low. These terms were rejected by the designers of SIR II and should not be used in your evaluative statements regarding SIR II's.**

**\*Beware the Micrometer Fallacy:** Don't make decisions or draw conclusions based on small differences.

**This data was fully discussed in the MSCA Perspective's special issue for State University Faculty and Librarians undergoing Personnel Action.** (Quoted here with permission of the MSCA.)

This document was prepared by Michele Ethier.

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