

**GUIDELINES FOR DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM CHAIRS:  
Providing Leadership and Guidance in the Professional Development of All Faculty Members  
(May 3, 2011)**

**Overview:**

One of department and program chairs' most important charges is to "provide leadership and guidance in the professional development" of faculty colleagues "as teachers, scholars, advisors, and members of the campus community" (APM VI). The Faculty Status and Performance Committee (FS&P) has included in this document information it believes will help chairs guide their faculty members as they move through their tenure-track years, make progress toward full professor, and continue to lead successful professional lives in all four areas of development.

In the document titled "Review Process for Tenure-Track Faculty" drafted by FS&P in 2008-09 and circulated to and discussed with all faculty members in 2009-10, FS&P articulates what it understands to be the expectations for a faculty member deserving tenure and promotion. These expectations include excellence in teaching, a sustained pattern of scholarly/artistic productivity, a demonstrated commitment to contribute to the life of the College beyond one's department/program, and a commitment to serving our students as an effective, knowledgeable, and understanding advisor. These guidelines for chairs incorporate text from and build off the Review Process for Tenure-Track Faculty.

Regular guidance and mentoring of all department/program colleagues has the potential to serve our students well, strengthen the academic programs of the College, and build for faculty members the foundation for fulfilling and successful careers as teacher-scholars. FS&P strongly encourages chairs to engage its senior members in determining how best to provide this guidance and mentoring. Departments/programs are required to establish a regular process that facilitates a full and fair evaluation of faculty members subject to review. Such reviews usually consist of a close reading of course evaluations each semester, followed by a conversation with the faculty member; regular class visitations; and discussions among the tenured members of the department/program (or the program's steering/oversight committee). Faculty members who are mentored early and regularly have the opportunity to respond to feedback in productive and creative ways **before** they come up for reappointment and promotion.

**A. Teaching**

Because excellence in teaching is expected of all Beloit College faculty members, FS&P considers a candidate's record of teaching to be the most important factor in determining its recommendation for tenure and promotion. It is a chair's responsibility to mentor pre-tenure faculty members, help create a supportive environment, and provide feedback on in-class visits and student course evaluations.

In mentoring their faculty members, chairs should keep in mind the criteria for successful teaching:

Successful teaching engages the intelligence, imagination and curiosity of students, and results in the development of a passion for learning within and beyond the classroom, depth and breadth of knowledge, and a core of essential skills for productive, meaningful engagement with the world. A successful teacher challenges students and encourages them to produce work of high quality and to

think critically and independently. A successful teacher is also well prepared, skillful and respectful, conveys expectations clearly, and provides valuable and timely feedback.<sup>1</sup>

FS&P recommends both formal and informal conversations to encourage an environment of support within a department/program. Formal conversations might include those that follow class visits (discussed below) or ones scheduled for departmental/program meetings. Conversations, however, should not be limited to these examples. Accordingly, chairs are encouraged to periodically “check in” with their colleagues, primarily pre-tenure and non-tenure track faculty members.

### **1. Class visits: Pre-tenure faculty and Non-tenure track faculty**

In the departmental/program letters, FS&P looks for evidence of class visits required by the senior members of the department/program (or oversight committee)<sup>2</sup>. FS&P recommends that chairs determine early in the academic year which senior members will visit pre-tenure faculty classes and by when. Chairs should share the schedule with all faculty members in the department/program. Upon visiting classes taught both within and outside of their respective departments/programs (e.g., FYI, IDST, International Education), senior members then record their observations in the form of a letter or memo, discuss their observations with the candidate soon after the class visit, and make any adjustments to the letter or memo before giving a final copy to both the candidate and the department/program chair. Since class visits are intended to be both developmental and evaluative, senior members should discuss both successes and challenges observed during class visits and offer constructive feedback to the pre-tenure faculty member. These conversations may also be a convenient time to offer advice on course syllabi, classroom practices, and pedagogy.

Because “[t]he teaching of continuing full and part-time [non-tenure track] faculty shall be evaluated at least every three years in writing by the chair of the appropriate department or program,” FS&P recommends that adjuncts’ classes be visited on a regular schedule and that such visits be treated similarly to those of tenure-track faculty described above. Note that “[a]long with long-term priorities of the college, th[e] evaluation [of an adjunct] will inform the dean’s decision about reappointment” (APM VI).

### **2. Student course evaluations**

Upon the completion of every semester, chairs read the student course evaluations for courses taught both in and outside the program/department and provide a summary of them to their faculty members in which they discuss how well the faculty member met the criteria for successful teaching. Chairs should then have a face-to-face discussion with the faculty member to articulate strategies and plans for addressing any and all concerns.

Since the review process is meant to be developmental, it is important that pre-tenure faculty members, in particular, receive feedback on student course evaluations as soon as possible. In the case of regularly repeated courses, it is especially helpful to share observations and other feedback *before* the faculty member under review teaches the course again. Faculty members need timely opportunities to address concerns and make adjustments.

In addition to meeting with their chairs at the end of the semester, pre-tenure faculty members struggling with aspects of their teaching should be advised to take advantage of resources around

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<sup>1</sup> See “Review Process for Tenure-Track Faculty”

<sup>2</sup> APM VI reads: “All departments shall institute a regular procedure of class visitation of tenure-track candidates by all tenured departmental members. Written summaries of class visits shall be shared with the candidate and the chair.”

them, such as consulting with other mentors, attending Talk about Teaching sessions, discussing pedagogical issues with colleagues both within and outside of their departments, visiting classes taught by senior members of the department, and/or gathering feedback from students through informal course evaluations half way through the semester.

When discussing a candidate's teaching in their review letters, departments/programs should provide a general picture of both the numbers and comments contained in the student course evaluations. If review letters are going to highlight certain numbers and comments, a narrative should accompany them. Departments/Programs should also give careful attention to summarizing the senior members' observations during class visits and their conversations with the candidate about his/her pedagogy and course outcome goals. In writing about weaknesses, department/program letters should discuss what steps the department/program and candidate outlined to address areas of concern. Note that according to APM VI, "If a significant criticism or question arises in a tenure or reappointment case as a result of unsolicited information, the candidate shall be given the opportunity to respond to that criticism in writing and/or in person; when warranted, the Faculty Status and Performance Committee will make every attempt to protect the confidentiality of the people involved."

## **B. Professional development**

Scholarly/creative engagement sustains the professional and intellectual vitality of a faculty member and informs his or her teaching; therefore a sustained pattern of scholarly/creative productivity is considered the second most important factor in the evaluation of a faculty member's performance. In evaluating faculty members in the area of professional development, department/program chairs should keep in mind the following criteria for successful professional development:

The ultimate goal of a faculty member's plan of professional development ought to be the placement of results before an audience of peers for review, comment, and criticism. Without such placement, work is not complete, regardless of how carefully it is done, how novel it might be, or how much potential it might have. Thus, at the point of the tenure and promotion decisions, the members of FS&P look for evidence of a sustained pattern of scholarly/creative engagement that generates outcomes (e.g., scholarly articles, creative works) that are subject to peer review. Publication of traditional scholarship in a peer-reviewed journal, creative work that is peer-reviewed, publication of a well-received textbook, publication of a scholarly monograph or book with a well-respected press, and scholarship describing and/or assessing pedagogical practice are examples of clear signals that a faculty member is engaged in and contributing to his or her discipline. But it is ultimately the *pattern* of productive scholarly/creative activity that generates the peer-reviewed output that we are hoping to see at the point of the tenure and promotion decisions.<sup>3</sup>

Departmental/program chairs should encourage faculty members not only to consider how their scholarly/creative engagement informs their teaching but also to devise a multiple-year plan that will produce a sustained pattern of productive scholarly/creative activity that leads to peer review. In their plans, faculty members should be encouraged by their departments/programs to identify outcomes such as peer-reviewed publications, conference papers, workshops, exhibits, grant proposals, and so on,

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<sup>3</sup> See "Review Process for Tenure-Track Faculty"

which they plan to pursue. Candidates should also factor in any active participation in regional, national, and/or international professional associations. Strategies for setting a scholarly agenda as well as strategies for seeking and obtaining outside grants to support the research agenda can be among the issues chairs and untenured faculty members discuss as part of their routine conversations.

Regarding outcomes, faculty members may not be sure how to proceed when work has been rejected by one set of peer reviewers. Chairs should advise such faculty members to revise and resubmit or to submit the work to another set of peer reviewers. If department/program members cannot offer their colleagues suggestions as to where to submit work, they should encourage them to speak to others in their respective fields, e.g., their dissertation committee, experts at other institutions, among others. Chairs should also encourage faculty members to articulate their professional development activities in their individual annual reports, and to share noteworthy accomplishments with the Dean's Office for recognition in the Major and Noteworthy Accomplishments booklet.

In their departmental/program letters to FS&P, senior colleagues should address the extent to which the candidate has established a *pattern* of productive scholarly/creative activity, comment on the caliber of the journal, press, or venue to which the work has been exposed, acknowledge any awards, grants, performances, or special shows the candidate has received, discuss attendance and/or participation in professional association activities, and discuss any matters that are unique to professional development in the candidate's field.

### **1. External Funding**

Before a faculty member may seek external funding for professional development purposes, s/he must seek the approval of the department/program chair, who must certify that s/he is aware of the project's implications for his or her department/program and must support the proposal to the degree, if any, stated in the proposal (Grants & Fellowships Handbook).

### **2. Sabbaticals**

All faculty members are expected to make appropriate use of sabbatical leaves in order "to sustain [their] intellectual vitality . . . and . . . to engage in projects that will enhance their effectiveness as teacher-scholars" (APM VI). All applications for sabbatical leaves are due no later than November 1 of the year preceding the proposed leave.

Note that beginning with faculty members entering in fall 2011, "tenure-track faculty who have completed three years of full-time teaching as members of the Beloit College faculty are eligible for a semester-long sabbatical leave, ordinarily in their fourth year, if they have demonstrated significant progress toward tenure" (APM VI). Tenure-track faculty members, however, are under no obligation to take an early sabbatical. Early sabbaticals are an option. Tenure-track faculty members may instead wait to take their first sabbatical following their sixth year of teaching at the College. The early sabbatical option should be seriously considered in consultation with senior department/program colleagues, FS&P, and the Dean of the College to best strengthen the over-all development and tenure potential of pre-tenured tenure-track faculty members.

FS&P expects faculty considering sabbaticals to discuss funding possibilities with the Office of Foundation and Corporate Support. Chairs are expected to review potential staffing changes with their senior colleagues or with their program's oversight committee. In their departmental/program letter, chairs and senior members must attest to the value of the proposed sabbatical project and

discuss how it relates to the candidate's professional development and teaching (APM VI). Addressing the outcomes of the candidate's preceding sabbatical, if applicable, is also advisable.

### **3. Absences from Class**

Both tenure-track and tenured faculty members are encouraged to be actively involved in their professional organizations. If a faculty member is away from campus and unable to meet a scheduled class, he or she shall inform the department/program chair. “[D]uring a teaching term such absences should not total more than one week of classes per semester. Exceptions must be approved by the department chair. Absences by department[/program] chairs in excess of one week of classes must be approved by the Dean of the College” (APM VI).

## **C. College Service and Citizenship**

All faculty members are expected to contribute to the life of the College beyond their respective programs and departments. Chairs should relate to their colleagues that effective participation in governance and other forms of service to the College facilitates knowledge of and demonstrates commitment to the institution and its mission, and enables faculty members to forge professional relationships outside of their program, department, and division. In mentoring candidates about college service, chairs should communicate to their colleagues that contributions may include service on committees, service within departments that benefits the College as a whole, program and curricular development, contributions to all-college events and programs, on-campus public presentations/performances, and service to the Offices of Admissions, External Affairs, Alumni Affairs, International Education, and the Liberal Arts in Practice Center.<sup>4</sup>

Chairs should also note that faculty members may also want to contribute to the life of the College through advising efforts, such as serving as an advisor to campus organizations, fraternities and sororities, study abroad and/or off-campus domestic programs, or as faculty mentors to athletic teams. In short, faculty members should be advised to get involved in areas that contribute to the College as a whole, in areas in which they have a genuine interest, and in those areas that play off their strengths and/or where they can demonstrate leadership.

### **1. Mid-level governance**

Chairs should remind their colleagues that attendance at deliberation groups and faculty development groups is expected of every faculty member in residence. Meeting on Wednesday afternoons, deliberation groups discuss campus and curricular initiatives as well as proposed policy changes before they come to Academic Senate. Faculty development groups discuss topics that encourage their development. Any faculty member may propose a pertinent topic for discussion.

### **2. Academic Senate**

Chairs should clarify for their colleagues that it is essential that all faculty members participate in Academic Senate, because Academic Senate “carr[ies] major and direct responsibility for the educational program of the college” and “maintain[s] a close relationship to the admissions, business, public relations, and development functions of the [C]ollege” (APM VIII).

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<sup>4</sup> See “Review Process for Tenure-Track Faculty”

## D. Advising

Academic advising is an essential and important component of a Beloit College education, connecting students with the College's mission and curriculum. FS&P believes that strong advising and mentoring relationships between faculty members and students contribute significantly to the quality and value of the liberal arts experience at Beloit College. FS&P also believes that successful advisors are intentional, responsible, consultative, and responsive in helping students explore, set, and realize their educational and professional goals.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, we encourage chairs (and their senior colleagues) to provide resources and guidance for faculty members to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and establish records of successful advising.

It's important that chairs keep their department/program colleagues apprised of curricular changes and learning opportunities within and beyond their departments/programs. These include opportunities to engage in the Initiatives Program as well as in experiential, international, and/or interdisciplinary study. We encourage department/program chairs to ensure that their websites include up-to-date advising information for majors/minors.

Chairs will want to discuss institutional/department/program norms and expectations, such as the expected number of posted weekly office hours<sup>6</sup>, days per week on campus,<sup>7</sup> how advisees are assigned to advisors, what record keeping of meetings with advisees might look like, how to handle correspondence from the Dean of Students Office and Student Support Services, when to use alert slips, and how best to prepare for the pre-registration period. Chairs should encourage their department/program colleagues to consult with them about any advising difficulties they encounter, so that chairs may provide appropriate assistance and/or referral.

To ensure that all department/program colleagues share in the responsibilities of and rewards that come from advising and mentoring students, chairs should monitor that department/program colleagues have a reasonable and equitable assignment of advisees. Our practice has been to refrain, whenever possible, from assigning advisees to first-year tenure-track faculty members. Moreover, “[a]djunct faculty are not normally expected to have advising or service duties; however, assignment to such duties may be made after consultation among the faculty member, department chair, and the [D]ean of the [C]ollege” (APM VI).

Chairs and senior members may also want to share with newer faculty members information on prizes, awards, scholarships, internships, research programs, study abroad opportunities, employment, and/or graduate schools available to their students. Since most of these opportunities will require students to obtain letters of recommendation, chairs may wish to offer new faculty members examples or a template of such letters.

Chairs should ensure that all advisors are familiar with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) posted on the Registrar's website.

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<sup>5</sup> See “Review Process for Tenure-Track Faculty”

<sup>6</sup> According to APM VI, “Every faculty member is expected to be reasonably available to students for out-of-class conferences and advising. Regular office hours should be posted.”

<sup>7</sup> The expectation outlined in the call for 5+1 applications is that faculty members will be on campus four days per week.

## **E. Other matters**

### **1. Annual Reports**

Chairs are to receive copies from their department/program colleagues the annual report of faculty activities for the previous year and which “tak[es] into account the four evaluation criteria and . . . other information as the faculty member wishes to include. This may, for example, include an analysis of his or her teaching and general contribution to the college community, or a description of the ways by which he or she plans to increase overall professional competence” (APM VI). Upon receiving the annual reports, chairs may want to reflect with their colleagues, particularly tenure-track colleagues, on accomplishments and challenges and how to prepare for the upcoming year.

### **2. Chairs’ meetings with the Dean of the College**

According to APM VIII, “The Dean of the College shall establish and chair a conference of department and program chairs, to meet at least twice per semester, with authority to advise the Dean of the College and to propose policy.” Department/program chairs are responsible for attending these meetings, advising the Dean of the College, and reporting back to their respective departments/programs on the discussions had during these meetings.

## **Conclusion**

These guidelines are designed to help all Beloit College faculty members contribute to a powerful learning experience for our students and those who teach, advise, and mentor them. Like you, we, the members of FS&P, are faculty who want to attract, retain, and develop the most impressive, concerned, and compassionate faculty members possible. We acknowledge that issues germane to your department or program may require you to add to or revise some of these guidelines. In such cases, we encourage you to consult with FS&P about your particular situation.