

**BROOKLYN COLLEGE MEMORANDUM ON  
EXPECTATIONS FOR PROMOTION AND TENURE**

**Council on Administrative Policy**

**Adopted by CAP on April 8, 2021, Slightly Revised and Readopted April 29, 2021**

This memo is designed to enhance transparency and clarity about the expectations for tenure and promotion at Brooklyn College, based on established City University of New York and Brooklyn College criteria. It articulates the broad policy regarding expectations for tenure and promotion, and should not be interpreted as an exhaustive list of factors for consideration.<sup>1</sup>

First, this memo describes the general principles attending to the three areas of academic performance: a) published research, scholarship, or creative activity, b) teaching, and c) service. Second, the memo addresses the specific criteria for tenure and promotion. Third, the memo discusses expectations for a faculty member's professional conduct.

**I. General Principles**

Because Brooklyn College is a leading senior college in a "major research university,"<sup>2</sup> published research, scholarship, or creative activity holds primacy in the tenure and promotion process. Like other research institutions, a fundamental rationale for the existence of Brooklyn College is to create the conditions in which faculty can generate new knowledge and insight in a range of academic disciplines, which they impart to students. To obtain tenure and promotion, a candidate must demonstrate the specific contributions they have made to their area(s) of academic expertise.

In addition to published research, scholarship, or creative activity, effective teaching and committed service are also required for tenure and promotion. The CUNY Board of Trustees supports "a judicious balance among excellence in teaching, scholarship, and other criteria."<sup>3</sup> In practice, the weight of service in a candidate's record may evolve over the course of the tenure and promotion process. For example, pre-tenure, although service is important, a candidate should place heavier emphasis on published research, scholarship, or creative activity and teaching.<sup>4</sup> It is understandable that "not all junior members of the faculty will have an opportunity to serve on important committees;" however, the College will credit "their informal contribution" to the institution.<sup>5</sup> As a candidate achieves excellence in published research, scholarship, or creative activity and teaching and progresses in rank, service obligations should increase concomitantly.

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<sup>1</sup> The College reserves the right to consider additional factors in promotion and tenure, as the law and applicable University and College policy allow.

<sup>2</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.14, § 1, Preamble.

<sup>3</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.01, § 5.4.

<sup>4</sup> Senior members of the faculty should protect their junior colleagues' time to achieve excellence in published research, scholarship, or creative activity and teaching. Likewise, junior members of the faculty may need to defer some service responsibilities that better rest on the shoulders of their senior colleagues.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at § 5.2(c).

## A. General Principles on Published Research, Scholarship, or Creative Activity

Under CUNY policy, published research, scholarship, or creative activity is required for both promotion and tenure. As the CUNY Board of Trustees has put it, “A full-time faculty member is expected to create new knowledge in his/her discipline through scholarly research, writing, and creative works.”<sup>6</sup>

The Board of Trustees underscores that candidates must generate “peer-reviewed scholarship and creative products” appropriate to their discipline, published in professionally respected outlets.<sup>7</sup> It notes, “Rigorous external peer review of academic scholarship is the best tool available to us for judging the quality of a body of work.”<sup>8</sup> The number and type of publications, and the appropriate modes of publication, may vary by personnel action or academic discipline, but all disciplines require published work in professional outlets. Work published in “substandard, non-peer reviewed” or non-professional outlets does not contribute to a candidate’s scholarly record and will not be considered for promotion and tenure.<sup>9</sup> Although works-in-progress may be assessed for tenure,<sup>10</sup> they are unpublished and so will carry less weight. Moreover, acceptance for publication is just one step in the process of publication. Ultimately, authors may fail to produce or publishers may fail to publish. Therefore, research, scholarship, or creative activity will ordinarily be published, in page proofs, or under contract with a completed and revised manuscript to be considered fully part of a candidate’s scholarly record.<sup>11</sup>

Engagement with the larger world may contribute to a candidate’s published research, scholarship, or creative work. Some faculty members may decide to become public intellectuals in their area of expertise. Public advocacy may supplement a candidate’s scholarly record when it is founded on the candidate’s area of scholarly expertise. As the CUNY Board of Trustees indicates, a faculty member “constantly makes all efforts to improve his/her professional standing through study and thought, and also through activities such as research, publication, attendance at professional conferences, and the giving of papers and lectures.”<sup>12</sup> Candidates

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.* Per CUNY policy, “When work is a product of joint effort, it is the responsibility of the department chairman [sic] to establish as clearly as possible the role of the candidate in the joint effort.” *Id.* at § 6(b).

<sup>7</sup> CUNY Board of Trustees, Resolution to Require CUNY Colleges to Use External Peer Review in Considering Promotion and Tenure Cases, Dec. 2018.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.01, § 6(b).

<sup>11</sup> Because research, scholarship, or creative activity must be published in professionally respected outlets, the production of reports for accreditation or program review, clinical practice, or community-based work will not themselves ordinarily contribute to a candidate’s scholarly record for promotion and tenure. However, reports for accreditation or program review, clinical practice, and community-based work may each provide a basis for published research, scholarship, or creative activity. Moreover, reports for accreditation or program review may count toward teaching, and clinical practice and community-based work may count toward service.

<sup>12</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.14, § 1, Preamble.

for tenure and promotion should therefore catalog conference presentations, lectures, and wider public advocacy in their area of expertise on their *curriculum vitae*.

Brooklyn College encourages faculty members to engage in creative, innovative, and interdisciplinary work. However, the College discourages a faculty member from “engaging in research, scholarship, and creative activity beyond or not associated with her/his acknowledged area of expertise.”<sup>13</sup> With diligent study, a faculty member’s area of expertise may expand, and faculty may gain interdisciplinary insights and opportunities to pursue a wider range of research, scholarship, or creative activity. Under Brooklyn College policy, “non-traditional research and creative activity,” such as performance, curation, the development of digital archives, etc., will be “judged with the same rigor applied to candidates whose work is more traditional.”<sup>14</sup>

Finally, a candidate’s work to produce published research, scholarship, and creative activity throughout the promotion and tenure process must adhere to applicable codes of ethics and policies that govern scientific research and academic integrity.<sup>15</sup>

## **B. General Principles on Teaching**

Candidates for promotion and tenure must demonstrate effective teaching.<sup>16</sup> At CUNY, teaching effectiveness is determined by “teaching observations and peer judgments, assessment of the instructor’s effort and success in developing new methods and materials suited to the needs of his or her students, assessment of student evaluations, and non-classroom efforts such as academic advisement.”<sup>17</sup> Effective teaching requires the distribution of syllabi for each course a candidate teaches, which the candidate should annually review and revise based on student evaluations, peer feedback, and relevant advances in the field.

Effective teaching requires thorough preparation for each class session of each course, prompt attendance to each class session of each course, organized and thoughtful engagement with students in class, responsiveness to student inquiries about the material both in and outside of the classroom, prompt verification of student enrollment, prompt submission of grades for

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<sup>13</sup> Brooklyn College Council on Administrative Policy, Guidelines, Policies and Procedures for Promotion and Tenure of Faculty, X, Feb 1, 2018, at 8 (hereinafter CAP Policy on P & T).

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at 9. Moreover, “[t]he burden of proof for justifying the research and the chosen evaluation path” for non-traditional work “clearly rests with the candidate, who must explain the disciplinary and scholarly distinctions that result from the praxis documented in the portfolio.” *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> CUNY Policy 1.24 Research Misconduct, June 25, 2007, *as amended*.

<sup>16</sup> Librarians are “non-teaching members of the Instructional Staff.” PSC-CUNY Contract § 18.3 (b). Instead of being evaluated for effective teaching, they are evaluated on their “total performance and professional progress.” *Id.* That assessment includes “relevant elements” of their total performance and “the effectiveness of the staff member.” CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.01. § 5.1. Librarians must effectively select, acquire, organize, preserve, and provide access to information and knowledge for the scholarly community. That work must support of the mission of the College, the curriculum, and the research of its faculty and students.

<sup>17</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.01, § 5.3(a).

each course, and strong peer evaluations of classroom performance, whether the course is in person or online.

When a course is online in an asynchronous format, effective teaching requires organized and thoughtful engagement with students outside of class, and especially prompt and thorough responsiveness to student inquiries. Students taking online asynchronous classes have an acute need for access to their faculty members to have their questions answered; therefore, faculty members teaching in this modality must be even more available and responsive to their students' inquiries.

Per CUNY policy, "the faculty member's obligation to the students goes beyond normal class hours"<sup>18</sup> and includes posted and attended office hours. As a result, "full-time faculty are asked to set aside two or three regular office hours on campus each week during the semester."<sup>19</sup> As the CUNY Board of Trustees puts it, a faculty member has "the important and essential obligation to be regularly accessible for conferences with his/her students."<sup>20</sup>

Mentoring and advising students deserves a special note, as it is an important part of teaching. Mentoring goes beyond a dialog between professor and student about the assigned material in a class. Mentoring includes, but is not limited to, modeling and advising students at all levels (undergraduates to Ph.D. students) on professional behavior, conferring with students about how to balance academic demands with other life demands, developing research opportunities for students, conferring with students about how to get the most out of college, writing reference letters, helping students with their resumes, providing students with useful connections, sharing knowledge and the formal and informal rules of a discipline, advising students on future academic paths, such as graduate school, serving on dissertation committees, and advising students on internship and career opportunities. All of these types of mentoring and advising undergraduate and graduate students, and others, contribute to a candidate's teaching effectiveness.

Effective teaching may also include a candidate's work to develop reports for accreditation and program review, as well as curriculum and program development. Likewise, teaching effectiveness is demonstrated by developing student learning goals and outcomes for each course, supporting student research opportunities, and piloting new pedagogies or curricula to enhance student learning.<sup>21</sup> This work, critical to our continuous improvement as an academic

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<sup>18</sup> *Id.* at § 5.2(a).

<sup>19</sup> Brooklyn College Faculty Handbook, Chapter 5, at 44.

<sup>20</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.14, § 1, Preamble.

<sup>21</sup> The Middle States Commission on Higher Education ("MSCHE"), for example, requires colleges to have evidence of well-developed articulations of student learning outcomes. For example, MSCHE Standard V requires: "Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education." It specifically requires institutions to show evidence of: "meaningful curricular goals with defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals." Standard V (2)(a).

institution, enhances our educational offerings and is therefore vital to our teaching efforts. Additionally, effective teaching at the CUNY Graduate Center, when formally approved by the College, may also enhance one's effective teaching.

Student evaluations of a faculty member's classroom performance are a "factor in assessing the teaching effectiveness."<sup>22</sup> Finally, effective teaching requires respect for students as learners and scholars and consistent adherence to privacy and non-discrimination policies related to students.

### **C. General Principles on Service**

Service to the Brooklyn College community is important for both tenure and promotion, and it may take many forms. Service may occur at different levels, including service to the Department, service to the School, service to the College, service to the profession, and service to the wider community.

Traditionally, higher educational institutions have identified the central role of committee work as service, but increasingly, they understand that some of the most critical service for the success of a college and its students, staff, and faculty may happen outside committees.

Most written policies on service still focus on committee work. Per CUNY Policy, "Since all full-time faculty members share broad responsibilities to the institution, work in departmental and college committees should be considered in overall evaluations."<sup>23</sup> The CUNY Board of Trustees describes service as encompassing the obligation "to serve on various college and university committees and as a member of college and university councils and other assemblies."<sup>24</sup>

At Brooklyn College, service obviously includes participating in one or more of the many Faculty Council, Policy Council, Departmental, College, and University committees. Service includes much more, however, such as recruiting and retaining students, supporting campus activities, advising student groups, and serving as the Chair of a Department or Director of a Program (or Executive Officer at the CUNY Graduate Center, when formally approved by the College).

Service also includes clinical practice and engagement with the larger community outside the academy. A candidate's collaboration with or work for community-based organizations or non-profits may enhance the College's relationship to the neighborhood, borough, and City. It may also deliver essential resources to communities in need.

Mentoring junior or contingent faculty members and supporting one's faculty colleagues are crucial forms of service to the College. One "chief responsibility of senior faculty is to orient

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<sup>22</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.01, § 5.2(a). Under Brooklyn College policy, student evaluations of teaching are also "important." CAP Policy on P & T, IX, at 7.

<sup>23</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.01, § 5.2(c).

<sup>24</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.14, § 1, Preamble.

their junior and newly appointed colleagues.”<sup>25</sup> This work may include modeling and advising junior or contingent faculty members on professional behavior, conferring with them about how to balance work demands with other life demands, sharing information about how to proceed effectively towards promotion and tenure or a tenure-track position, reading and critiquing a colleague’s scholarly work, and evaluating a colleague’s teaching effectiveness. All of these types of mentoring and support for one’s colleagues, and others, constitute critical service work.

Service to the profession associated with the candidate’s area of expertise—including serving as a peer reviewer or editor of a professional journal, refereeing manuscripts, abstracts, or proposals, adjudicating performances or exhibits, organizing conferences, serving in professional organizations, engaging as an external evaluator, or related work—also contributes to the intellectual culture of the College and counts as service.

The College encourages faculty candidates for tenure and promotion to document their service work to their files in any appropriate manner, including narrative statements, emails, memos, logged hours, and other methods.

## **II. Specific Personnel Actions**

In order to clarify the record for assessment, the College encourages candidates for tenure or promotion to summarize their relevant work in a short cover memo for their personnel files.

### **A. Tenure**

Per CUNY policy, tenure “shall not normally be granted” before the seventh annual reappointment.<sup>26</sup> “Only in exceptional cases may tenure be granted before that time.”<sup>27</sup> CUNY policy indicates, “The decision to grant tenure shall take into account institutional factors such as the capacity of the department or the college to renew itself, the development of new fields of study, and projections of student enrollment.”<sup>28</sup>

For tenure, the candidate must meet rigorous and high standards in published research, scholarship, or creative activity. Per CUNY policy, “tenure should be recommended not on the basis of ability to meet minimum qualifications, but on a high standard of excellence and

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<sup>25</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.01, § 1(1.1).

<sup>26</sup> *Id.* at § 6; CUNY Board of Trustees Bylaws, § 6.2(2)(a). The annual evaluations of the tenure candidate by the Chair and the Dean’s third-year review will inform the candidate about areas they should improve in published research, scholarship, or creative activity, teaching, or service. *See, e.g., Pre-Tenure Third-Year Review Policy at Brooklyn College*, adopted by CUNY Board of Trustees, Oct. 23, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.01, § 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

increasing usefulness as a... scholar.”<sup>29</sup> The CUNY Board of Trustees highlights that an assessment of tenure “should place special emphasis on peer-reviewed scholarship and creative products in the evaluation of candidates.”<sup>30</sup>

Per Brooklyn College policy, a tenure candidate must garner excellent, arms-length, external peer evaluations of the scholarly record.<sup>31</sup> Ordinarily, the College will send the candidate’s whole scholarly record out for peer evaluation in preparation for a tenure assessment.<sup>32</sup> Although it may include other work as well, the scholarly record for external assessment must include all peer-reviewed, published research, scholarship, or creative activity.

For tenure, a candidate must also meet rigorous and high standards in teaching. Per CUNY policy, tenure “should be recommended not on the basis of ability to meet minimum qualifications” in teaching, “but on a high standard of excellence and increasing usefulness as a teacher.”<sup>33</sup> There must be “clear evidence of the individual’s ability and diligence as a teacher.”<sup>34</sup>

Per CUNY policy, service to the institution and service to the public are considered “supplementary considerations in decisions on tenure.”<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, “The faculty plays an important role in the formulation and implementation of University policy, and in the administration of the University. Faculty members should therefore be judged on the degree and quality of their participation” in service efforts, as described above.<sup>36</sup> The candidate will also be recognized for “pertinent and significant” public service to the community, state, and nation.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

<sup>30</sup> CUNY Board of Trustees, Resolution to Require CUNY Colleges to Use External Peer Review in Considering Promotion and Tenure Cases, Dec. 2018. Under the heading, “Scholarship and Professional Growth,” the CUNY Manual of General Policy states, “Evidence of new and creative work shall be sought in the candidate’s published research or in his or her instructional materials and techniques when he or she incorporates new ideas or scholarly research.” CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.01, § 6. A later CUNY Board of Trustees resolution states, “faculty must present peer-reviewed scholarship and creative work in their case for tenure and promotion.” CUNY Board of Trustees, Resolution to Require CUNY Colleges to Use External Peer Review in Considering Promotion and Tenure Cases, Dec. 2018.

<sup>31</sup> An arms-length evaluator is someone with whom the candidate does not have a familial, personal, or close professional relationship. CAP Policy on P & T, II.B, Feb 1. 2018, at 2. For example, co-authors, co-investigators on grants, and former faculty/students or mentors/mentees have relationships that are ordinarily too close to be arms-length. *Id.* Moreover, “To promote honest and critical evaluations, the identities of the external evaluators selected are never to be disclosed to the candidate.” *Id.*

<sup>32</sup> The scholarly record for tenure would therefore ordinarily include work done at other institutions, both in rank and at another rank.

<sup>33</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.01, § 6(c).

<sup>34</sup> *Id.* at § 6(a).

<sup>35</sup> *Id.* at § 6.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.* at § 6(a).

<sup>37</sup> *Id.* at § 6(b).

## B. Promotion

In general, “The judgment on promotion shall consider primarily evidence of achievement in teaching and scholarship following the most recent promotion.”<sup>38</sup> Therefore, a candidate’s record for promotion is the work the candidate has completed in their current rank.<sup>39</sup>

Per CUNY policy, the candidate for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor must demonstrate “evidence of scholarly achievement” and “evidence of continued effectiveness in teaching.”<sup>40</sup> The candidate must also “meet the qualifications required for tenure.”<sup>41</sup> The Chair’s annual evaluations of a candidate for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor should inform the candidate about areas they should improve in published research, scholarship, or creative activity, teaching, or service.

Per CUNY policy, the candidate for promotion from Associate to Full Professor must have evidence of “an established reputation for excellence” in “scholarship in his or her discipline.”<sup>42</sup> A candidate for promotion to Full Professor must therefore have developed a sustained scholarly record, which includes published research, scholarship, or creative activity that produces excellent knowledge in or contributions to the candidate’s area of expertise. A reputation for excellence means that a candidate’s scholarly record must be widely deemed excellent by experts in the field nationally or internationally. As the CUNY Board of Trustees highlights, an assessment of promotion “should place special emphasis on peer-reviewed scholarship and creative products in the evaluation of candidates.”<sup>43</sup> If appropriate to the discipline, external funding of a candidate’s research, scholarship, or creative works will enhance the candidate’s reputation for scholarly excellence. Like tenure, under Brooklyn College policy, to qualify for promotion to Full Professor, the candidate must also garner excellent, arms-length, external peer evaluations of the scholarly record.<sup>44</sup>

Per CUNY policy, the candidate for promotion to Full Professor must also demonstrate “an established reputation for excellence in teaching.”<sup>45</sup> A reputation for excellence means that a

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<sup>38</sup> *Id.* at § 5.4(c). For this reason, it is important that the College strive always to hire a faculty candidate at the appropriate rank.

<sup>39</sup> In unusual circumstances, a candidate’s record for promotion may also include work done at a higher rank at a prior institution.

<sup>40</sup> *Id.* at § 5.4(a).

<sup>41</sup> *Id.* Tenure and promotion are independent personnel actions. *Id.* at § 5.4. Nevertheless, per CUNY Policy, it would be “ill-advised to grant tenure to those whose capacity for promotion to senior rank is judged to be limited.” *Id.*

<sup>42</sup> *Id.* at § 5.4(c). The candidate for promotion from Associate to Full Professor must “meet all qualifications for an Associate Professor.” *Id.*

<sup>43</sup> CUNY Board of Trustees, Resolution to Require CUNY Colleges to Use External Peer Review in Considering Promotion and Tenure Cases, Dec. 2018.

<sup>44</sup> See *supra* note 31.

<sup>45</sup> CUNY Manual of General Policy, Art. V, Pol. 5.01, § 5.4(c).



candidate's teaching must be deemed excellent by peers. Again, the "judgment on promotion shall consider primarily evidence of achievement . . . following the most recent promotion."<sup>46</sup>

Finally, service obligations at Brooklyn College expand as a faculty member progresses in rank, so this area is of increasing importance as a candidate seeks to become a Full Professor. Isolated instances of service to the College community will be inadequate for promotion to Full Professor. The candidate should be able to document sustained engagement in service, which will be judged on its degree and quality.

The Chair's annual evaluations of a candidate for promotion from Associate to Full Professor, as well as the Dean's earlier third-year review, will inform the candidate about areas they should improve in published research, scholarship, or creative activity, teaching, or service. Additionally, per CUNY policy, the Chair "shall" also "hold an annual evaluation conference with every member of the department after observation and prepare a memorandum thereof."<sup>47</sup> The Chairs' annual reviews and the Deans' third-year reviews of faculty members support the College's strategic goal of continuous improvement of our educational programs and teaching excellence.

### **III. Professional Conduct**

As members of our academic community, faculty at Brooklyn College must "have demonstrated satisfactory qualities of personality and character."<sup>48</sup> This phrase means that faculty must conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner in all aspects of their work.<sup>49</sup> Faculty members must also demonstrate respect for their students and colleagues and adhere to all federal, state, local, and University ethics and non-discrimination policies.<sup>50</sup> Inappropriate or unprofessional behavior, when memorialized to a personnel file, will undermine a faculty member's ability to obtain reappointment, tenure, and promotion.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *Id.*

<sup>47</sup> [CUNY Bylaws](#), Article IX, § 9.3(11).

<sup>48</sup> [CUNY Code of Practice](#), at 8-9, §§ II 1.2.1-1.2.4.

<sup>49</sup> *Id. passim.*

<sup>50</sup> See, e.g., [Office of Diversity and Equity Programs](#). See also [Student Complaints About Faculty Conduct in Academic Settings](#).

<sup>51</sup> [CUNY Code of Practice](#), *passim*.