



To: Academic Deans  
From: Sacha Kopp, Provost  
Date: March 18, 2023  
Subj: Updating Guidelines for Reappointment, Promotion, Tenure, and Post-Tenure Review  
cc: Dr. Mia Bertagnolli, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs  
Amanda Rhodes, Director for Academic Personnel and Budget

Dear Deans,

As we have discussed at length, Gonzaga University aspires to update the Faculty Handbook, which was last updated in 2007. We will present to the faculty a draft for their consideration during the Spring 23 semester which we will be voted upon in late Fall 2023 or early Spring 2024.

Legally, the Faculty Handbook serves as a contract between the Gonzaga Board of Trustees and the faculty of Gonzaga University. Academically, the Faculty Handbook is a broad framework for how we conduct the business of the university. Within this framework, there are numerous guidelines specific to disciplines, departments, or schools that must be spelled out elsewhere by the faculty and agreed to by the administration, and thereafter administered by faculty committees.

With the new forthcoming draft, I foresee a number of areas where updates to our campus and school/College guidelines will be required. I therefore am writing to you now to initiate your own faculty- and unit-driven processes to update your guidelines. I ask that you initiate this process now so that we may conclude by the end of the 2023-2024 academic year. As with all such guidelines, these faculty- and unit-driven drafts are subject to your review and approval, as well as review and approval by the Office of the Provost. I ask that your first drafts be submitted to me no later than February 29, 2024. That should allow any necessary review and iteration from my office back with you and your units and approval by the end of Spring 2024. While we will aim to implement the new guidelines and criteria concurrently with the new handbook, there may of course be some that are only approved later, and faculty in those units will necessarily have to follow existing guidelines and criteria until final approvals are completed.

#### Revisions in Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Criteria

According to the draft Faculty Handbook, the four factors to be evaluated in a tenure or promotion decision are teaching, scholarship and creative work, advising, and academic citizenship and professional service. This review requested in this memo is not intended to deviate from the four areas. Nor is it suggested for each College/school to rewrite from scratch their existing guidelines. Rather, this review seeks to align your guidelines with the new Handbook as well as reflect upon, review, and consider revising how our RPT process lives up to the Gonzaga Mission.

The specific requests for your units with respect to the RPT process are as follows:

- Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness: The forthcoming draft of the Faculty Handbook (Section 304.02) articulates mechanisms through which faculty may demonstrate their effectiveness and engagement in the classroom. These range from the implementation of research-based high-impact practices appropriate to the discipline, submission of course materials, peer evaluations, student evaluations of teaching, and more – essentially a ‘portfolio’ approach. Furthermore, a faculty committee consisting of school/College representatives selected by you and under the direction of CTA director Dr. Nichole Barta will be making recommendations based on this portfolio approach as to how disciplines may adopt these practices to their areas. We ask that you ensure your schools/departments have implemented updates based on these ideas.
- Evaluation of Quality in Faculty Scholarship and Creative Work: We have spoken often of the risks of evaluating scholarly and creative work solely by quantitative means (eg: books, journal articles, invited presentations, art exhibitions, performances, citations, *etc.*). You are encouraged to consider evidence of quality and impact of the work, quality of journal, collaborative work as well as independent work, research and creative activities across disciplines, research and creative activities with regional, national and international partners, etc. I ask each school/College to evaluate specifically how external letters of reference can be solicited from a variety of experts outside of Gonzaga University (scholars, practitioners, community members and officials, *etc.*) who can speak to the work in the discipline or within the community. The use of external letters is one of the new allowances (not required) in the draft Faculty Handbook (Section 304.03) and including this in your guidelines for the promotion and tenure (not for reappointment) may give faculty candidates a broader set of evaluation methods for consideration. Too often, we judge quantity because it’s easy, and a holistic look at quality may reveal high impact work in our candidates’ applications.
- Alignment with Gonzaga’s mission: The Gonzaga University [Mission Statement](#) reminds us of Gonzaga’s Jesuit heritage, the cultivation of the whole person, our commitment to social justice, ethical discernment, and more. Additionally, the mission statement asserts a “mature commitment to dignity of the human person, social justice, diversity, intercultural competence, global engagement, solidarity with the poor and vulnerable.” Given these statements, and the Faculty Handbook’s statements that our work is to be animated by the Jesuit mission (Section 300), I invite your units to consider (a) how candidates’ work in teaching, scholarship, advising, and citizenship enhances our mission and (b) how can your school/College’s RPT guidelines assess and encourage inclusive excellence – diversity, equity, access, and inclusion – in candidates’ teaching, research, advising, and/or academic service?

- Advising: Soon the campus community will begin exploring an equitable process to assign advising caseloads. Currently, the number of advisees varies widely by faculty member. Since that process will be devised at the campus level, there is no need for action on your part. However, we must develop understood best practices in faculty advising and criteria to provide feedback to faculty. In February 2023, we hosted the first in a series of Advising Summits on this topic in which all faculty are invited to participate. Advising is, according to the Handbook (Section 304.03), an endeavor intended to support the development of the whole person. Recognizing that there are likely significant disciplinary differences in the advising process, we ask that you and your units develop appropriate guidelines for excellence in faculty advising so that future evaluations will be as clear as any other aspect of the RPT process.
- Grounding in the Faculty Handbook: unit-level guidelines are intended to be discipline-appropriate elaborations of the Faculty Handbook. It will be helpful to cite specific sections in the Handbook as the basis for certain requirements in your unit-level guidelines. Further, it will be helpful for department-level guidelines to provide citation to school/College level guidelines as the basis for their specific requirements (when and where appropriate). Currently, faculty candidates face the daunting prospect of cross-referencing two or three documents in order to understand their prospects for advancement at Gonzaga.

These items constitute the total request for updates to your RPT guidelines. You may request that your units explore any other revisions specific to your department, school, or College.

#### Revisions of Criteria for Post-Tenure Review

It is requested that you develop concrete guidelines for post-tenure review of faculty. The current Faculty Handbook requires review of tenured faculty every three years. The new handbook also has this requirement (Section 306), but inserts a stronger sense of formative assessment, coaching, and due process (Section 306.05). Whereas in the current handbook a faculty member can be brought forward for a termination hearing ‘for cause’ at any time by a chair or dean, the future handbook draft asserts that such a recommendation could only come after two successive negative three-year reviews, so after six or more years (Section 306.06). Further, the draft handbook suggests that coaching and remediation must be pursued prior to any such extreme cases of recommending termination.

The pillars for post-tenure review are, like in the RPT process, teaching, scholarship and creative work, advising, and academic citizenship and professional service. The steps for remediation and coaching might look very different, however.

- In the case of research, faculty may legitimately have changing perspectives about the currency or importance of their scholarship in their professional endeavors, and may wish to engage with their chair and dean in discussions about lowering this expectation in favor of increasing their teaching responsibilities or university

service, for example. Such is consistent with the AAUP's approach to post-tenure review, whereby faculty may be directed supportively through a formative, developmental approach in different career directions or job duties without a sense of punitive treatment.

- In the case of teaching and advising, which are at the very foundation of our service to students (Section 300.05), faculty experiencing difficulties in these areas may be expected to explore professional development with the CTA, through department mentors, or through other resources. In any such cases, specific goals should be established as well as a timeline for these goals to be completed that you and the faculty member should develop in each case. Only after these attempts at assessment, coaching, and remediation, should any further or more serious consequences be imposed.
- In the case of academic citizenship and professional service, it is a uniform expectation for all tenured faculty to develop as university leaders (Sections 300.05, 304.05). Faculty are the foundation of the university and are crucial in our unique form of shared governance. Therefore, any deficiencies in this area should be clearly identified, and rapid plans developed with the faculty member to invite them into leadership roles within their department, school, College, or the university.

The pillars for post-tenure evaluation are spelled out in Section 304 of the draft faculty handbook, though only those responsibilities of Section 300.05 are to be expected of all faculty. Clearly, however, the ways in which these pillars are to be evaluated will evolve: some aspects of a faculty member's contributions may evolve over time, while others are to be expected at all career stages. The overall spirit is that faculty are 100% engaged in their career at Gonzaga and contributing to one or more aspects of the University's mission. As stated previously, the working draft of the faculty handbook emphasizes the importance of developing specific plans for remediation and coaching, when necessary, or redirection of effort where appropriate, as well as accountability for the faculty.