

Resolution on the School of Nursing's Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Criteria

I. Introduction

a. Overview

Subcommittee A of the Academic Programs Committee reviewed the proposal to establish new criteria for the appointment, promotion, and tenure process at the School of Nursing (SON) on February 7, 2018. Marilyn Oermann, Thelma M. Ingles Professor of Nursing and Director, Evaluation and Educational Research (SON APT Committee Chair), and Barbara Turner, Elizabeth P. Hanes Professor of Nursing, were in attendance as representatives for the proposal. The presenters submitted three documents to APC: a letter addressed to the chair of APC that explains the reasoning for the changes; a Memo to the University with the revisions of the criteria; and the final draft with the criteria for SON's APT.

The School of Nursing proposed changes to the criteria for promotion and tenure in response to questions raised by faculty and a request from the faculty governance association for more specific guidelines on numbers and types of publications at each track and rank. The faculty also requested that the APT subcommittee clarify and update some of the exemplars for promotion. The SON APT Committee proposed revisions of the APT criteria and exemplars with the goal of better guiding faculty as they work toward promotion and prepare their materials for review. The proposal makes three main changes. First, the language about the number of publications was added, emphasizing "usually a minimum of"—that is, the usual minimum number of publications that is indicative of success of the faculty in the past. Second, the type of publications considered for tenure/promotion was expanded at the different tracks. And third, the exemplars were expanded in order to include more of an emphasis on team science.

b. Summary of the Discussion

The APC subcommittee's questions and discussion concentrated specifically on the proposed change related to the number of publications. There was a brief discussion on the second issue related to the clarity and distinctions between research-based and data-based publications, but the main concern was the disclosure of a specific number of publications as a response to the faculty's anxieties regarding tenure. Professors Oermann and Turner responded that they were guided by a desire to be transparent, and they also explained that the proposed number of publications was more of a guideline and that candidates for tenure and promotion must demonstrate the impact of their work. The entire portfolio of candidates for promotion and tenure, they added, must meet all exemplars. They also explained that the dossiers of candidates next go to the Dean of the Nursing School, and that there are other guarantors of quality in the process. Other peer institutions differed in the criteria they use for tenure. Professors Oermann and Turner spoke about the successful rate of tenure at the SON throughout the years and their elaborate and appreciated system of mentoring.

The APC was concerned about the use of a specific number of publications for several reasons. Most importantly, the APC subcommittee was concerned that having a specific number of

publications could have an impact on the research being conducted because people might strive to meet the stated number rather than be led by the quality and impact of their work. Other concerns were expressed around possible legal liability if a candidate is denied tenure.

II. Resolution

APC approves of the proposal moving forward and offers the following recommendations:

The APC recommends that the language regarding the number of publications be moved to the exemplar section, not be listed first in that section, and be worded in a manner consistent with the other exemplars. Alternatively or additionally, the language regarding the number of publications might be included in a list of frequently asked questions that could be linked to the revised criteria section of the SON faculty handbook. Despite its reservations regarding the inclusion of a specific number of publications, the APC does not believe that it should dictate how the School of Nursing operates with respect to its promotion and tenure criteria, as APC does not dictate how Departments should operate in Arts & Sciences regarding their own criteria on the matters of promotion and tenure. Moreover, the School of Nursing has earned deference on this issue given its outstanding success, its stellar reputation, and its many contributions to the health care system, the University, and society.

III. Vote – 12 approved, one did not vote, one abstained