

Augustana College Geography Department's Statement on Tenure

2023

The Department of Geography believes in excellent teaching, substantive research, and professional and community engagement as pillars for the attainment of tenure and for promotion. The varied activities outlined below are consistent with the experience and practice of members of this department as well as with those adopted by the Association of American Geographers (AAG) in a document entitled "Reconsidering Faculty Roles and Rewards in Geography" published in 1994 by the AAG Special Committee on Faculty Roles and Rewards. The goals and recommendations of that document are much more detailed than we would care to include, but in general are consonant with those outlined in the Augustana Faculty Handbook. We will include key points from that document where we think emphasis is needed. Prior to the scheduled tenure hearing the senior faculty of the department will prepare the department's recommendation to the Faculty Review Committee. The department's assessment will cover the areas listed above but whose order would be ranked as: teaching, research, and service. Service outside the campus could be given equal weight given the department's long history of providing our students with professionally relevant experiences by developing and maintaining relationships with community and agency partners and internship opportunities. Candidates are also expected to play an important role in advising Geography students and to demonstrate a commitment to increasing equity, inclusion, and diversity through teaching, advising, scholarship, and/or service.

TEACHING

The Faculty Handbook outlines four teaching domains which should be considered:

"Instructional delivery" includes articulate communication, organized and well-planned use of class time, effective interaction with students, enthusiasm, and fair evaluation of student work along with meaningful feedback. Where labs are involved as major components of the class, sufficient field experiences should be initiated to provide students with local testing of theories discussed in class lectures.

"Instructional design" includes such activities as producing accurate and relevant syllabi with clearly stated objectives and expectations, providing helpful supplemental materials, challenging students to learn and perform at a level of rigor consistent with departmental expectations, intentionally connecting course material with past and future learning, and incorporating appropriate visual aids and technology in the classroom.

"Expertise in course material" assumes that the candidate's background and education is sufficient to relate course material to past knowledge and perspectives in the particular academic area addressed in the course, to give appropriate up-to-date examples, and to challenge the students to a higher level of thinking and problem solving.

"Course administration" includes making appropriate assignments, offering help to struggling students, being available to students for help and consultation outside the classroom, and timely grading.

In order to evaluate a candidate's teaching performance in these domains, the departmental committee will consider the following sources of information:

- a. Student evaluation data

IDEA SRI data accumulated during the probationary years will be analyzed. In addition, during spring semester prior to the tenure year, a detailed questionnaire will be distributed to former students in the candidate's courses. Students will be selected from each course that the candidate has taught. This may include alumni. The questionnaire allows respondents to assess, based on personal experience, the candidate's role as teacher, advisor, mentor, and scholar in both the geography department and in the college as a whole. Alumni respondents may be asked to choose one of the following responses to the following responses to the question of whether the candidate should be granted tenure: "absolutely," "probably so," "uncertain," or "absolutely not." The geography department committee may also conduct oral interviews with current and former students.

b. Class visits

Throughout the probationary period, and in particular, during the two semesters immediately preceding that of the tenure hearing, the department Chair and other tenured members of the department will, on separate occasions, visit each of the candidate's classes, including team-taught courses.

c. Evaluation of syllabi, exams, and supplementary materials

The senior geography faculty will expect a candidate's expectations of students to be consistent with the standards of the geography department and the College. The committee will evaluate the quality of the candidate's syllabi, exams, homework, in-class and research assignments, and supplementary materials such as field-oriented exercises.

The Department of Geography values academic advising and mentoring as an important component of tenure and promotion, and as vital to the success of our geography students. Tenured and tenure-track faculty will be assigned major and/or minor advisees. Advising load will vary by year and by candidate, with advisees primarily assigned to department members with similar academic interests. New tenure-track colleagues will be exempt from advising during their first year. Although informal advising conversations are common, candidates should have formal advising meetings with their major and minor advisees at least two times a year, prior to registration. These meetings should be used to discuss progress in the major or minor, course planning, and career/internship conversations. More frequent meetings are recommended for certain students or time periods within the major. Advising handouts and electronic tracking of progress (e.g. e-portfolios, Student Planning, or Starfish) should be used to monitor progress of advisees and to promote conversations about goal setting, curricular advising tracks, or career paths. First year advising is encouraged (later in the tenure-track process) but does not supersede departmental advising. All department members are encouraged to promote geography to prospective students and to recommend potential new majors to the department chair. Candidates should also promote student engagement in the discipline outside the classroom through professional meetings, service, internships, and activities (also detailed under "service"). Mentoring and advising student research projects is detailed under "scholarship".

SCHOLARSHIP

A geography faculty member at Augustana College should be engaged in significant scholarly pursuits that are publically expressed. "Significance" will be judged by the extent to which professional expression contributes to the advancement of disciplinary knowledge, improves the reputation of the College, makes the College more attractive to prospective top faculty candidates, and contributes to the Senior Inquiry program.

The following activities will be considered as evidence of scholarship when the departmental tenure recommendation is written with a, b, and c considered as essential to the needs of the department and the candidate's success and d, e, f, and g considered highly desirable.

- a. **Dissertation**
Completion of a Ph.D. is a requirement for tenure in the Department of Geography.
- b. **Publication**
At least one article accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal describing research in any field of geography or closely-related subfield after arriving at Augustana College is required. The publication(s) may be in collaboration with other researchers, but a substantial portion of the research described must have been conceived, proposed, and directed by the Augustana faculty member.
- c. **Mentoring of geography major's research**
Serving as faculty advisor for a significant number (proportionally sharing the department load) of Senior Inquiry projects that culminate in student presentations at the college research fair or professional meeting.
- d. **Participation in research projects conducted by the candidate which includes Augustana students as research assistants is especially desirable.**
- e. **Application for research funding**
Submission of at least one grant proposal to an internal (Augustana College) or peer-reviewed external funding agency that seeks financial support for the faculty member's research at Augustana College.
- f. **Professional research presentations**
Presentations of research at national conferences and regional meetings and invited seminars at other institutions can also demonstrate professional activity.
- g. **Campus seminars**
A departmental presentation or seminar should be given during the first semester of the tenure decision year describing research performed with student(s). The seminar must be advertised campus-wide at least a week prior to the seminar date.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

Evidence of a commitment to increase equity, inclusion, and diversity are expected in tenure and promotion materials. Such contributions can be part of teaching, advising, scholarship, and/or service. Evidence of commitment (described in the "Example of ways to incorporate DEI" section) must be reflected in at least two of these areas and be apparent when the faculty member applies for tenure and promotion. Evidence of commitment to increase equity, inclusion, and diversity is a necessary but insufficient condition to be tenured or promoted, i.e., a candidate should meet the department's other requirements for tenure and promotion in addition to providing evidence of commitment to increase equity, inclusion, and diversity.

SERVICE

A candidate for tenure should have demonstrated a commitment to the liberal arts and to enhance the programs of the Geography Department, the larger College community, and the wider public community of which Augustana is a part of.

a. Departmental service

A geography department faculty member is expected to support, develop, and promote the department's mission, curriculum and academic program and participate in governance activities within the department, and support the activities of the department (e.g. participation in all of the following: mentoring, outreach to alumni and prospective students, participation on local and distant field experiences, willingness to cooperate with and or assist colleagues with geography-related questions.

b. Campus service

Campus service might include service on College committees and task forces, serving on Faculty Council, advising first-year students, participation in General Education courses, working on college-wide curriculum development initiatives, and serving in other administrative roles at the request of the Provost or President.

c. Public/community service

Public service includes involvement in community activities related to the faculty member's professional role or in any civic activity that represents the College to members of the community in a positive way. For the geography department tenure candidate, this involves a commitment to engage the broader public. The ethic of the geography department is one which sees active engagement with local and regional government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local educational organizations as central to our role in the College. These activities are consistent with the mission of geography departments in North America as described in the following quote from Association of American Geographers document on expectations of geography faculty:

“Geography's strong empirical and exploratory traditions and its rootedness in real places and regions often lead geographers to devote considerable energy and time to outreach. The ability and propensity of geographers to grapple with real problems is a disciplinary strength and an institutional asset. Geography programs should ensure that their departmental and institutional reward systems weight such contributions appropriately.” Reconsidering Faculty Roles and Rewards in Geography, 1994, Association of American Geographers, pp. 5-6

Examples of these types of activities could include: willingness to speak to community groups, developing and maintaining relationships with community and agency partners and internship opportunities, serving on local boards and task forces, participating in local conferences, and willingness to offer the services and expertise of the department to local organizations.

The department recognizes that the nature of service contributions will differ widely from person to person and will be difficult to measure quantitatively, but we argue that the 'public/community' service component is especially important to the life of the department.

PROMOTION FROM ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR TO FULL PROFESSOR

For promotion to full professor, the candidate is counseled to continue the efforts outlined above though no quantitative number of articles, monographs, books, or other academic productions will be specified. It is assumed that the candidate will find their particular niche and balance in the life of the department and the College in the years following the awarding of tenure. As teaching is still the central component in the priorities of the College, tenured colleagues should continue to demonstrate and model excellent student learning outcomes through the development of new courses and pedagogical approaches.

The rank of associate professor often comes with additional administrative duties such as department chair, program chair, Faculty Council, or special duties as assigned by the Provost or President. These important roles come with extra responsibilities, often without course release time. We value the importance of these roles and encourage our department members to take on these roles with the understanding that they may not be able to simultaneously show significant progress in all aspects of teaching, research, advising, and service. For promotion candidates who have these extra administrative duties, they should provide in writing one year prior to promotion hearing how they have chosen to prioritize their commitment to teaching, advising, service, and research. The department should not dictate how the faculty member should restructure their time, but their commitment to teaching should not be overlooked.

APPENDIX

Examples of DEI in faculty work

Contributions in all areas of faculty achievement that promote equal opportunity and diversity should be given due recognition in the academic personnel process and should be evaluated and credited in the same way as other faculty achievements. These contributions to diversity and equal opportunity can take a variety of forms, including efforts to advance equitable access to education, public service that addresses the needs of Augustana College's diverse population, or research in a scholar's area of expertise that highlights inequalities. Examples of activities include but are not limited to:

Teaching:

- Fostering an inclusive classroom environment that values diversity, takes into consideration students from a broad variety of backgrounds and learning styles and challenges students to their best efforts.
- Ensuring equity in the classroom by removing barriers that might otherwise prevent students from being able to participate.
- Developing courses or curricular materials that focus on themes of diversity, equity, and inclusion or include diverse texts and authors from a variety of backgrounds and genders, including historically underrepresented groups.
- Mentoring and advising of students from groups underrepresented in Geography.
- Development of inclusive techniques of instruction that meet the needs of students from underrepresented groups.
- Participation in teaching workshops to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom.

Research:

- Invited presentations, creative work, and or publications focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Grant writing to fund research that focuses on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Participation in professional development programs to improve ability to incorporate DEI into research.

- Recruitment and mentoring of students from groups underrepresented in Geography and closely-related fields for work related to the faculty member's research.
- Research contributions to understanding the barriers facing women and underrepresented groups in Geography or closely-related fields.
- Research that reflects culturally diverse communities or voices and contributes to diversity, equity, and inclusion opportunity in higher education such as research that addresses issues such as race, gender, health disparities, educational access and achievement, political engagement, economic or environmental justice, social mobility, or civil and human rights.

Service:

- Curricular design at the college or departmental level that fosters inclusivity.
- Participation in professional development programs designed to improve knowledge of needs for supporting a diverse student population.
- Mentoring faculty members and participation in activities that support successful recruitment, retention, and promotion of faculty from underrepresented and underserved populations.
- Participation in activities that support successful recruitment, retention, and graduation of students from underrepresented and underserved populations.
- Community-engagement activities in marginalized communities.
- Commitment to a professional organizations' equity, inclusion, and diversity work.
- Membership on departmental or college committees related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Service on local and/or statewide committees focused on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.