

**Dornsife Faculty Council Tenure Track Caucus
Memo for the Office of the Dean**

To: Dean Amber Miller and Divisional Deans of Dornsife College
Re: Clarifying Role of Service in the Merit and Promotion Review Processes
May 11, 2020

A. Background & Rationale

At the end of academic year 2018-2019, the DFC Tenure Track Caucus submitted a memo to the Dean's office outlining Dornsife T/TT faculty concerns regarding the evaluation of service in merit reviews and promotions. We raised several questions seeking clarification and made specific requests for guidelines on the issue. Finally, we identified three areas that could be developed in order to create a more equitable service structure (please refer to [the memo](#) dated April 29, 2019).

The Tenure Track Caucus reconvened in 2019-2020 to discuss how the professional profiles of our faculty could be assessed with greater transparency in the merit review process, and how service as well as research and teaching factor into the mentoring of faculty at both assistant and associate rank. The following are recommendations agreed upon by all members of the Tenure Track Caucus. The goal is to help T/TT faculty at all levels (but particularly the assistant and associate ranks) develop a more concrete sense of the university's expectations regarding their professional responsibilities, and to give clearer guidance for development after the assistant rank.

B. Clarifying the Merit Review Process

Recommendations:

1. The merit review should include a separate numerical score for each category, which would then be combined using the appropriate formula. For example, for a faculty profile with a 40/40/20 split between research, teaching, and service, the numerical score would be based upon the following equation: (research score) X 0.4 + (teaching score) X 0.4 + (service score) X 0.2 = total score.
2. Faculty under review may request in writing that their merit review committee use a different mix if there are extraordinary circumstances over the review period. For example, if they were doing major service work during the three years and had one course release per year supporting that work, the equation might be 40/30/30, meaning there would be an alteration to the equation producing the merit score: (research) x 0.4 + (teaching) X 0.3 + (service) X 0.3 = total score. Use of the requested mix is at the discretion of the review committee.
3. Departments should develop guidelines for what some normative score (e.g. a "4") should look like on average for each track and rank. For example, for an associate professor, a "4" might be: in research, 3 peer-reviewed articles or book chapters plus 6 conference presentations or invited talks; in teaching, one positive teaching evaluation

from a peer; in service, three years-service on a departmental committee plus participation in a search committee, and the mentoring of undergraduate students *or* significant community outreach/engagement. This normative score should be used as a baseline by the review committee for evaluations.

4. The final merit report that is returned to the faculty member should include:
 - i. A quantitative as well as qualitative assessment for each category (especially important for service at the associate and full rank).
 - ii. For each category that falls below some number the department designates (e.g. a “3.5”), explicit recommendations should include formative as well as summative evaluation, meaning that the report should offer advice on how to improve their score in a given category.

C. Mentoring

Recommendations:

1. The college needs to develop new mentoring guidelines that go beyond the current model, which focuses on assistant professors, and expand the mentoring program to include associate professors to support their promotions to full professor.
2. All assistant as well as associate TT faculty should be permitted to request a mentor be appointed by the chair of their department.
3. Each department should develop basic mentoring guidelines for the mentees and mentors, including helpful topics for discussion and recommended frequency of mentoring meetings, as well as types of questions that the mentees and mentors should discuss.
4. All assistant as well as associate professors should be permitted to evaluate their mentors, and mentors should appraise their mentees to assess the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship.
5. All faculty should be encouraged to share their merit review score and report with their mentor. On an annual basis, the Faculty Development Directors should transmit these guidelines to department chairs and ask for a tally of associate faculty do and do not have designated mentors.

The Tenure Track Caucus welcomes further discussion with the deans on any of the above requests and recommendations, and we look forward to continuing to develop these discussions around T/TT faculty service, merit reviews, and mentoring in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Submitted by:

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