

Guidelines for Appointment, Promotion and Tenure at Odum Library, Valdosta State University

Documents that govern this policy are the Valdosta State University Faculty Handbook (http://www.valdosta.edu/vsu/facsen/handbook/handbook_r97.pdf) current edition, and the Board of Regents Policy Manual, Section 803 (<http://www.usg.edu/regents/policymanual/800.phtml>). Our policy is informed by the ACRL Guideline for the Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Academic Libraries (<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/modelstatementcriteria.htm> --1987 policy and <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/promotiontenure.htm> -- 2005 draft). Familiarity with these sources will help candidates as they plan for tenure and promotion.

Appointment:

The rank upon appointment must be consistent with the job announcement. If the job is announced as starting at the rank of instructor to assistant professor, it may not be filled at the rank of associate professor. All persons appointed as library faculty must have at least the Master's of Library Science, the terminal degree for a practicing librarian, and show potential for a promising career in library science. Specific requirements beyond these are determined by library administration and the search committee. Appointment at this level carries the rank of Instructor.

Appointment at the rank of Assistant Professor requires the conditions above as well as either 1) at least three years of professional experience in the field of librarianship that evince significant contribution to the profession OR 2) a second Master's degree (or a doctorate) in a related field. Having both the second advanced degree and professional experience may qualify the candidate for an award of pre-probationary credit at the time of appointment.

Appointment at the rank of Associate Professor is very unusual; it is only possible when the position has been advertised to include such an appointment. If the applicant has five or more years of service at the rank of Assistant Professor or above at another institution, and evidence of substantial professional contributions, he or she could be appointed at the level of Associate Professor. Having the second master's degree or doctorate degree would make such an appointment more likely. Again, appointment at this level is rare.

Pre-Probationary Credit. At the time of appointment, up to three years of credit towards tenure may be allowed for service in tenure-track positions at other institutions (Faculty Handbook, "Tenure," p. 65)

As a guideline in assigning pre-probationary credit, some departments on campus award a new faculty member up to three years of service towards tenure for service at another institution if the faculty member earned tenure there. The faculty member may be awarded up to two years if he/she did not have tenure at a previous institution. These awards are unusual and should be considered the exception rather than the rule.

At the time of appointment, the candidate shall receive a copy of this policy and the Faculty Handbook, which is available at the VSU website. Working towards tenure and promotion is the responsibility of the candidate, but the library administration and departments also have a responsibility to assist the candidate with clarification and feedback.

Tenure:

Tenure represents a substantial commitment of the institution to the faculty member and, as such, comes as a result of serious evaluation on behalf of the institution and careful preparation by the faculty member. Guidelines and Qualifications for Tenure are outlined below:

A faculty member is eligible for tenure after serving for five years at the position of Assistant Professor. He or she may apply for tenure during his or her fifth year of service at Valdosta State University. If the librarian was appointed as an instructor, the five years towards tenure starts with that librarian's promotion to assistant professor.

The faculty member appointed at the rank of instructor who is then promoted to assistant professor has a total of ten years to achieve tenure. The faculty member appointed at the rank of assistant, associate, or full professor has a total of seven years to achieve tenure.

Pre-Tenure Review: Tenure is carefully monitored. The first step is "Pre-Tenure Review" which will happen two years before a faculty member becomes eligible for tenure, according to the timeline above. The faculty member provides the tenure and promotion committee and the University Librarian with a packet that includes evidence of "Superior Teaching, Outstanding Service to the Institution, Academic Achievement, and Professional Growth and Development." These are the qualifications for promotion outlined by the BOR in Section 803, and they also apply to tenure.

As a result of Pre-Tenure review the faculty member will receive written feedback on his/her progress towards tenure. A positive response at Pre-tenure review does not guarantee the granting of tenure later. See the *VSU Faculty Handbook* on Pre-Tenure review for a much more extensive description of this practice.

Tenure Review: Approximately two years after Pre-Tenure review, the faculty member may apply for Tenure Review. See the appropriate sections of the *VSU Faculty Handbook: Tenure*, p. 65 and the *Board of Regents Policy Manual*, Sections 803.09 and 803.0901 for a full discussion of the tenure process.

In any discussion of tenure it is necessary to state that eligibility for tenure, relative to rank and years in service, does not imply readiness for tenure.

Since the criteria for promotion are very close to the criteria for tenure, and are more clearly spelled out in the documentation, promotion criteria will be the starting point of

the following description of tenure. Criteria for a successful tenure application at Odum Library include,

- Successful performance at primary job assignment, to be judged by supervisor evaluations and other evidence of job performance, such as classes taught, instructional materials created, websites authored, original cataloging, and management, that would generally appear in the Annual Report. No tenure or promotion can be awarded without this level of performance.

For academic librarians, this category corresponds to what the BOR describes as “superior teaching” (803.08) and what ACRL calls “contributions to the educational mission of the institution.” p. 309. Because the educational mission of the librarian may not involve face-to-face teaching, other measures of performance are used for this BOR category.

- Outstanding service to the Institution (BOR 803.08) also includes the area of service to the broader profession. Activities that evidence such service include work undertaken to benefit the Odum Library, Valdosta State University, or our regional community: for example, service on committees, participation in local programs, writing grants that result in local programs, chairing committees, creating displays, organizing conferences and events for the local area. Since most written policies separate Service and Scholarship, this category also includes service to professional organizations, including holding office, organizing conferences, and working on professional committees. ACRL refers to this part of the category as “contributions to the advancement of the profession” and views it as very important. Faculty at the Odum Library are expected to maintain continuous memberships in the appropriate state and national professional organizations.
- Academic Achievement (BOR 803.08). This area of the BOR requirements is often conflated with the next one, “Professional Growth and Development” in other departments’ written Tenure and Promotion Policies. Together, it is taken to mean all research and scholarship and dissemination of that work. It also includes further educational attainment through other degrees or training. For the purposes of this document, Academic Achievement will be defined as Research and Scholarly Achievement. This includes research, publication in academic journals and other venues, and presentation of original scholarship at academic conferences, attainment of grant funding for areas of research and scholarship, consulting, appointment to review panels, and other high offices or committees involving scholarship and research. Because librarians are often generalists, their scholarly activities may fall outside the discipline of librarianship.
- Professional Growth and Development (BOR 803.08) For purposes of this discussion, Personal Growth and Development will mean further educational attainment or training in, or related to, the field of Library Science. Since the terminal degree for entering the profession in Library Science is the master’s degree, the pursuit of higher degrees and training, such as a second master’s degree or a doctorate, is a mark of dedication to growth in the profession and

should be rewarded. Also, further training documents a librarian's commitment to his or her profession.

According to the BOR discussion of these criteria as related to promotion, and by extension tenure, "noteworthy achievement in all four of the above need not be demanded but should be expected in at least TWO." (803.08) However, the first criteria, superior job performance, is an absolute requirement in all cases. Thus, the candidate should ignore no single category, but may excel in two or three.

Post Tenure Review: Post Tenure Review is a more recent addition to the faculty evaluation process. Its purpose is to 1) expand and strengthen established evaluation procedures, 2) recognize and reward outstanding professional accomplishments, and 3) direct and remediate sub-standard professional performance. For the specific activities and deadlines associated with Post-Tenure Review, see the *VSU Faculty Handbook*, pp. 63-69 and the *Board of Regents Policy Manual*, (803.09 and 803.0901) Post-Tenure Review takes place at five year intervals from the last promotion or "personnel action" (tenure). It is not meant to require as much documentation as the other reviews.

Promotion:

The criteria outlined above are promotion criteria as well and will inform this discussion of what is appropriate for promotion at Odum Library.

The discussion of BOR criteria, "Superior Teaching, Outstanding service to the Institution, Academic achievement and Professional growth and development" is informed by ACRL guidelines for academic library promotion:

Assistant Professor: Promotion to this rank shall require evidence of significant professional contributions to the library or to the institution.

Associate Professor: Promotion to this rank shall require evidence of substantial professional contributions to the library and to the institution as well as attainment of a high-level in research or other professional endeavors.

Professor: Promotion to this rank shall require outstanding achievements in librarianship, research, and other professional endeavors. (p. 310)

Such adjectives as "significant," "substantial," and "outstanding" are hard to quantify when judging readiness for promotion. Some departments try to quantify achievement by assigning points to each activity and requiring a certain number of points in the BOR categories above for promotion. While the library does not use nor advocate such a system, we have attached a graduated list of activities to use as a guide for faculty members to consult when planning or evaluating their professional activities.

Timeline discussion: The *Faculty Handbook* specifies time-in-service criteria for promotions to various levels: "three years as instructor, four years as assistant professor,

and five years as associate professor.” p. 62. Each department, however, may lengthen that schedule as it deems necessary, and many do so. For Odum Library, the earliest one may apply for promotion is

From Instructor to Assistant Professor:

- The candidate for promotion from the rank of Instructor to Assistant Professor may apply during the third year of service. The promotion should become effective after three years of service at Valdosta State University.

From Assistant Professor to Associate Professor:

- A librarian WITH a doctorate, or the equivalent in advanced degrees, should follow the timeline laid out in the faculty handbook. Applications for promotion to Associate Professor can be accepted from these candidates in their fourth year from appointment as, or promotion to, Assistant Professor at VSU. The promotion should take effect in the candidates fifth year.
- A librarian with two master’s degrees is eligible to apply for promotion to Associate professor in his or her fifth year of service at VSU at the level of Assistant Professor.
- A librarian with one master’s degree, the terminal Master of Library Science, is eligible to apply for promotion during his or her sixth year of service at VSU at the level of Assistant Professor.

While this may seem to be creating divisions within the library, such a graduated approach is necessary because of the recent change in the BOR policy as it applies to promotions to Associate Professor without the doctorate:

“Research and Regional Universities: . . . [for] promotion to the rank of associate or full professor, the earned doctorate or its equivalent in training, ability, and /or experience” is required.

By adopting a graduated approach to the granting of promotions, we ensure that all Odum Library promotions are acknowledged as having the “equivalent” in training, ability, and/or experience.

For promotion to the rank of Professor:

- A librarian with a doctorate may follow the VSU Handbook guidelines and apply for promotion to Professor during his or her fifth year of service as an Associate Professor. Promotion should take effect after five years of service at this level.
- A librarian without a doctorate should approach the rank of Full Professor as the culmination of a career of long and extraordinary service. It is rare for a librarian without a doctorate to be promoted to Full Professorship; however, it is not impossible. A reasonable timeline for this promotion is that a candidate would be eligible to apply during his or her tenth year of service as an Associate Professor. Most successful applicants would have a long history of service and academic achievement, and would also have additional educational qualifications, such as additional degrees or certifications.

These represent a minimum timeline for promotion as a librarian at Odum Library. Longevity or achievement of a specific degree is not a guarantee of promotion. While these timelines exist, each librarian works towards promotion and tenure in his or her own way, and in his or her own time. Though some may desire to take on the extra work inherent in promotion beyond the Assistant Professor level, others may set different priorities and make effective contributions without rushing towards promotion.

Promotion and Tenure Packets

The candidate is responsible for approaching the University Librarian with notification of his/her intention to apply for promotion or tenure. The administration will communicate general deadlines and eligibility, but it is up to the candidate to initiate the process. After informing the University Librarian of his/her intent, the candidate for promotion or tenure must create a portfolio for consideration by the Tenure and Promotion Committee. The portfolio must include a complete vita, letters of support, evidence of superior job performance, such as two or more evaluations, samples of work, such as policies written, handouts and web pages created, etc.. It must also include copies of publications and other scholarly work. The same portfolio may be used for simultaneous promotion and tenure.

The candidate for tenure or promotion should be familiar with the provisions of this policy, with the *VSU Faculty Handbook*, and with the *Board of Regents Policy Manual*. The “ACRL Guideline for the appointment, promotion and tenure of academic librarians, a draft” C&RL News, April 2005, 308-315, is also a source for this document and librarians should be familiar with it. The University Librarian and Associate University Librarian, as well as tenured and promoted faculty, are important sources of information for faculty with questions about tenure and promotion.

Library Professional Activities Organized by Significance as Determined by a 2005 Survey of Georgia Regional Universities

The list below derives from a survey of librarians within the University System that asked them to rank the importance of activities towards promotion and tenure. This ranking was compiled based on results from the two regional universities, Georgia Southern University and Valdosta State University. This list is not an attempt to assign “point value” to activities that may contribute to promotion and tenure. Instead it is meant to serve as a guide to candidates in planning their professional activities and in evaluating their own performance towards promotion and tenure. The survey was designed and disseminated by Fred Smith of Georgia Southern University.

Activities graded as of highest significance professionally: Mean score of 8 or 9 out of 10 on the survey.

- Research article in a refereed journal or scholarly article in librarianship or serious publications in general
- Holding an office in a national or regional professional organization, chairing a national committee or a regional committee
- Holding major office in a state-wide organization
- Presenting at a national or regional conference (regional is defined as including several states)
- Applying for and receiving a major grant
- Editing a journal in librarianship or related area
- Earning a Doctorate degree

Activities graded as of high significance professionally: Mean score of 6 or 7 out of 10

- Holding office or chairing a committee in a statewide organization,
- Presenting at a statewide conference
- Applying for and/or receiving a small grant
- Serving on a national or regional committee
- On editorial board of journal in librarianship or related area
- Consulting Work
- Earning a Second Masters degree
- Creating a large Exhibit representing significant research
- Officer in a community organization
- Organizing a conference or arranging for speakers or moderating a meeting or indexing conference proceedings
- Organizing, planning, leading a workshop
- News article or book review written
- Teaching a for-credit class or team teaching a for-credit class
- Being a Faculty Senator or on an Executive Committee
- Chairing a Library Committee
- Chairing a campus committee
- Being a member of a GIL committee
- Serving as a Webmaster, which can include creation of web pages.

- Assisting with research and being listed as author or significant contributor

Activities graded as significant professionally: Mean score of 5 or less out of 10

- Short book review
- Attending state, regional, and national conferences
- Being a member of a library committee or a campus committee
- Taking a for-credit course or a continuing education course
- Attending Workshops or Training Sessions
- Creating a library exhibit, see also the high category above for larger exhibits
- Advising a student organization
- Reporting for a conference proceedings
- Taking minutes at internal meetings regularly
- Chairing fundraising drives
- Moderating Listservs
- Holding office in community organization not related to librarianship.

These items and their mean scores indicate how the preceding activities are valued by librarians at the Regional Universities in Georgia. Many activities that are of considerable value that librarians perform or participate in are not on this list; however, by studying the list, candidates can see where things might fit. For example, items at the “highest” level involve ratification of the value of the activity by a rather broad reviewing mechanism. Items that are “significant” tend to focus on continued training or attendance at workshops and conferences, rather than presentations, and activities that enhance local or campus life.