**AY20-26-F**

Committee F recommends the following be inserted into the Faculty handbook to clarify exceptional

*Demonstrably exceptional is defined as meeting or exceeding expectations quantity and quality of achievements for teaching, scholarship, research, and service needed to qualify for tenure prior to the conclusion of the normal probationary time period.*

Faculty Senate Issue Form

Title of issue: Seeking clarity re/qualifications for early tenure

Description of issue: Seeming internal contradictions in policy language

Rationale for submission:

Here is the relevant language from the Tenure policy in the ODU *Teaching and Research Faculty Handbook* regarding early applications for tenure:

*A faculty member may apply for early consideration for tenure, if the faculty member believes that he or she has met or exceeded the expectations of quantity and quality of achievements for teaching, scholarship, research, and service needed to qualify for tenure before the end of the normal probationary time period. The criteria for the award of tenure for such faculty will be the same as for those who apply after the normal probationary time period, i.e., the total body of work must be equivalent to that expected after a normal probationary period. A faculty member who applies for early consideration for tenure and is denied tenure will be offered a terminal contract for the ensuing year. It is the sense of the Board of Visitors that only demonstrably exceptional faculty or faculty with equivalent experience at a commensurate rank at another accredited institution of higher education or national institutions will be awarded tenure under this clause. Any faculty member considering an application for early consideration for tenure should first elicit feedback on this plan from the department chair, the dean, the provost and vice president for academic affairs, and the chair of the departmental Tenure Committee, in particular, in a case where no pre-tenure review has occurred yet.*

Here are three critically important passages from the policy on “early” applications for tenure:

\*Faculty members must have “*met or exceeded the expectations of quantity and quality of achievements for teaching, scholarship, research, and service needed to qualify for tenure.”*

*\*“The criteria for the award of tenure for such faculty will be the same as for those who apply after the normal probationary time period.”*

*\*“It is the sense of the Board of Visitors that only demonstrably exceptional faculty or faculty with equivalent experience at a commensurate rank at another accredited institution of higher education or national institutions will be awarded tenure under this clause.”*

*Demonstrably exceptional is defined as meeting or exceeding expectations quantity and quality of achievements for teaching, scholarship, research, and service needed to qualify for tenure prior to the conclusion of the normal probationary time period .”*

Given that the first two passages may appear to be inconsistent with the third passage and therefore be confusing to faculty members, any faculty member contemplating an early application for tenure is encouraged to first seek guidance from her/his chair, dean and the Provost before submitting the early application. This is particularly important, as once the tenure review process has begun, the faculty member may not withdraw from the process. Approval of external reviewers by the Provost’s office is considered to be the official beginning of the tenure review process.

Even so, would it be possible for the *T&R Faculty Handbook* to offer some additional clarity about what level of performance would characterize a faculty member as “demonstrably exceptional”? I would argue doing so could be of great benefit to our tenure-eligible faculty members