

Pathways for successful faculty development and promotion

May 2011

Introduction

1. This document is designed to aid faculty, Department chairs and appointment and promotion committees in outlining expectations of faculty that will lead to successful career development and promotion at the University of Chicago. Our intention is to provide guidelines, meaning that significant room is left for reasonable expert judgment. Thus the document intentionally does not spell out every rule in detail. Just as prior documents that addressed these issues, the University Statutes and the Shils Report, articulate general principles and are interpreted by the body of law that follows them, these will too.
2. Patient care can and should be an intellectually rigorous and challenging academic activity. We should aspire to practice medicine that involves the real-time acquisition and analysis of data grounded in deep knowledge of the literature, the proposition and testing of hypotheses, and the formulation of conclusions that must withstand peer review. If practiced in this way, patient care can be intellectually satisfying and have as great an impact as scholarship and education. It is thus appropriate that patient care should be viewed alongside scholarship and education as one of the three primary missions of the BSD and Pritzker School of Medicine.
3. Outstanding means outstanding. Any set of guidelines and rules is only as good as the faculty's determination to insist on the highest standards. It's not a matter of guidelines, but of the faculty's insistence on quality. This can't be legislated.
4. For the new system to work, promotions in the two tracks need to receive equivalent scrutiny regarding the quality of the candidate. Each rank in the two tracks should recognize faculty of similar outstanding quality differentiated only by focus of work, areas of interest and nature of work activities. When evaluating faculty performance we need to focus primarily on the quality, importance and impact of the work, the effort expended, and the productivity.
5. Tenure is such a longstanding commitment of institutional resources that we reserve it for individuals who have made outstanding contributions to knowledge and are expected to do so for the indefinite future.

The following is a revision of the BSD tracks and tenure system. The goals of the revision are to provide benefit to our faculty. They are designed to grant equivalent credit to outstanding activity in all three missions of the BSD, legitimize diverse pathways to promotion, provide greater flexibility in the timing of promotion and tenure decisions, and allow clinically active faculty to make seamless adjustments to the time devoted to patient care, teaching and scholarly activities without the need to change tracks. The document is intended to serve as the authoritative source for BSD faculty in lieu of the various reports and amendments that currently govern the practice for appointment and promotion.

Pathways for Faculty Advancement in Biological Sciences Division (May 2011)

The following are **guidelines** for appointment, promotion, and tenure of faculty in Biological Sciences Division. As such, they legitimize allowable pathways for advancement, and articulate the general principles that will guide appointment decisions. They require the judgment of knowledgeable faculty to be applied in each appointment case, and guide the development of more detailed rules of practice after their approval.

1. The system of tracks, pathways, and tenure is one of the purest expressions of the institution's values. It represents 'what we stand for' and serves as a mechanism for assuring the quality of the faculty. As faculty quality goes, so goes the University.
2. The BSD at the University of Chicago has three primary missions-scholarship, education and patient care. The goals of the current proposal are
 - a. To facilitate the recruitment, retention and recognition of faculty whose performance is outstanding.
 - b. To provide faculty with flexibility to focus effort on activities that interest them and in which they excel and, in the case of clinical faculty, alter this focus as interests change over time without having to change tracks.
 - c. To reinforce excellence in education and institutional impact as important considerations for promotion. Education can take many forms and includes formal teaching in The College, the graduate programs, and in the medical school; involvement in curriculum and course development; clinical teaching on the inpatient wards and in outpatient clinics; and one-on-one interactions with and mentorship of trainees and junior colleagues. Evaluation of teaching should be supported by objective, systematic evaluation by those educated and/or other faculty. Patient care is an important means of institutional impact, as it underlies the University's achievement of many of its goals.
3. We propose two categories of faculty appointments. * See Footnote at the end of this document
 - a. Appointment or promotion to the same rank in either category must signal performance that, while different in nature, is equally outstanding and to which the same scrutiny of

evidence will be applied. Accordingly, the same rank in either category will signal equal distinction.

- b. Departments must propose appointments in the category that is consistent with the faculty member's prior training and preparation, job description, and how the faculty members will spend their time.
- c. The definitions of the categories, and not their names, determine their nature. That is, those faculty on the SOM (School of Medicine) pathways are members of the Biological Sciences Division, and those faculty in the BSD (Biological Sciences Division) track will typically contribute to the Pritzker School of Medicine.
- d. BSD (Biological Sciences Division) track (Statute 11.1)

Criteria:

- i. This track is for faculty who are appointed primarily because of their potential to make world-class contributions to knowledge, who devote the vast majority of their effort to scholarship, and whose performance as faculty is judged primarily by their scholarly contributions. We define scholarship as the creation of knowledge. Probationary faculty on this track must advance towards tenure on the primary basis of outstanding scholarship according to a timetable, or leave the institution.
- ii. To be appointed on this track, faculty must already have the background, rigorous training and demonstrated potential for achieving the required contributions in research or scholarship.
- iii. The topic of the scholarship is secondary to its quality, and all forms of scholarship conducted by our faculty can form the basis for appointment and advancement in this track as long as they meet the expected levels of quality.
- iv. The overriding consideration for promotion and tenure is that the faculty member has produced a body of scholarly work of the highest quality characterized by originality, rigor and importance in comparison to others in their respective fields at the same career stage. To be tenured, a faculty member must be responsible for an outstanding body of knowledge. This body of work should be coherent, and readily identifiable as that of the candidate. Elements of this achievement in the biological sciences typically include formulation of original research ideas, developing the research methodology, recruiting necessary personnel, obtaining funding through peer-reviewed mechanisms, analysis and interpretation of the results, presentation at significant scientific meetings, and publications in high-quality peer-reviewed journals. Publications in the peer-reviewed literature of which the faculty member is typically the first or senior author are typically the primary basis for promotion or tenure. The number of publications is considered, but of more importance is the quality of the body of work, as evidenced by where the publications appear, the impact of the contributions, and the opinions of

experts in the field. Work that has not undergone peer review should not be considered. In areas of scholarship for which external funding is necessary to conduct the research, past and likely future peer-reviewed funding success are important considerations. Such success serves as another affirmation that the research is of high quality and forecasts continued productivity.

- v. Where major components of a faculty member's research accomplishments arise from collaborations, the quality and originality of the faculty member's individual contributions to the formulation, design, analysis, and interpretation of the published studies must be carefully documented so that they can be evaluated. These contributions should meet the same standards as for faculty whose research is not collaborative.
- vi. Associate Professors on the BSD Track should have sufficient stature to be regarded as en route to becoming leaders in their respective research fields by the scholarly community when compared to leading faculty members of similar experience and seniority at other top ranked departments and/or institutions. Full Professors must be among the leading scholars in their field.
- vii. Significant and high quality contributions to the educational missions and institutional citizenship are also important.

Process:

- viii. Departments proposing appointments on this track must protect the amount of time necessary for scholarship that will satisfy the criteria described above, and qualify for promotion and tenure.
- ix. Faculty members who begin their appointments in this track as associate or full professors must satisfy the criteria for tenure.
- x. Promotion to associate professor on this track must be achieved by 7 years from the time of appointment of assistant professor as required by University statutes (6 years if an Instructor for 4 years or more). Promotion requires that quality of research is judged to be very high and tenure is judged highly likely to be approved within a specified time. Education and institutional citizenship are also considered. Both promotion and tenure may be proposed simultaneously.
- xi. Tenure will be conferred when the faculty member has achieved a record of scholarly accomplishment that warrants an indefinite commitment. That is, the record of past scholarship and proposals for future scholarship should clearly establish that the candidate for tenure at the rank of associate professor will be among the leading scholars in a field, and for tenure at the rank of professor is and will remain among the leading scholars in a field. The Provost will consider tenure only once for a given faculty member and, if tenure is not approved, the faculty member's academic appointment

must end. A faculty member promoted to associate professor without tenure must either be tenured within 3 years or promoted to Professor with Tenure within 5 years.

- xii. Untenured faculty members in this track may apply for open faculty positions in the SOM pathways up until the fifth year as appointment as assistant professor, but not to avoid a negative promotion or tenure decision. Such open positions should not be created ad hoc to retain an untenured BSD track member.

e. SOM (School of Medicine) pathways (Statute 11.2)

Criteria:

- i. Faculty on these pathways are judged on the entirety of their contributions to the BSD and University in the three primary missions. Unlike in the BSD track, there are multiple pathways to advancement (including those culminating in a tenured appointment on the BSD track).
- ii. With rare exceptions (see vii), contributions to the patient care and educational missions are required on these pathways. Some faculty on the SOM pathways will lead programs devoted to traditional scholarship i.e. the creation of knowledge. Others will enhance the intellectual life of the BSD by contributing to its scholarly and educational missions. These academic activities may appropriately take a broad range of forms depending on clinical obligations and the ability to obtain funds to support these activities:
 - a) Research studies that result in peer-reviewed publications in high-quality specialty journals and/or with peer-reviewed funding. A range of research is appropriate including research that seeks to advance the practice of medicine, outcomes and health services research, community based research, research in education, etc.
 - b) peer-reviewed publications as part of a research team or collaboration; co-I; some % effort on grants
 - c) case studies
 - d) presentations in clinical conferences, grand rounds, etc.
 - e) scholarly support of clinical trials
 - f) success in obtaining K-level funding
 - g) Production of scholarly teaching materials (demonstrating incorporation of latest findings into education)
 - h) Teaching or training demonstrating incorporation of latest findings into education
 - i) Evidence-based formulation of research, educational, and clinical policy at a local, regional, or national level

- j) service on study sections, examining Boards, as scholarly editors, etc. involving the application of current expertise in an area of knowledge
 - k) educational scholarship, incorporating appropriate methods to assess impact of innovative curricula and dissemination of results
 - l) evidence-based improvements in institutional clinical practices
 - m) enrolling patients in clinical trials; technical assistance with others' research
 - n) support of 'scholarship infrastructure' (e.g., maintaining rapport with community organizations, which is necessary for community-based scholarship)
 - o) other contributions with great value to BSD, UCMC, and/or the University; e.g. building and maintaining relationships with community organizations to facilitate community-engaged scholarship
- iii. Except as in vii, to be appointed on these pathways faculty must have undergone rigorous clinical training in their chosen fields and demonstrate the potential for superior performance in patient care, a desire to practice in an academic setting such as the University of Chicago, and to participate in our educational mission and scholarly activities. Clinicians are defined as faculty who provide direct patient care, practice veterinary medicine, or directly support the provision of patient care. Examples of the latter include directors and faculty who work in clinical laboratories, physicists designing radiation doses, engineers creating equipment or programs used in clinical practice, and clinical informaticists.
- iv. Appointment and promotion to associate and full professor will consider the total of the contributions of the faculty member in the three missions, and weight these contributions in proportion to the time spent on each mission^{** See Footnote at the end of this document}. Weighting will therefore adjust the level of the contributions and corresponding expectations without compromise in the quality. Administrative and other academic activities as well as citizenship also receive credit. Pathways on which the primary contributions to the BSD are in an administrative capacity are legitimate but administration should not be the only area of contribution.
- v. Expectations will reasonably vary from unit to unit/specialty to specialty because the nature of the clinical activity differs. Expectations will also vary with an individual's time allocation, such that expectations for 50% clinical effort should be different than for 90% clinical effort. Clinical activity and quality might be framed in terms of RVUs or other measures in relation to appropriate benchmarks, ability to build a referral practice, etc., as appropriate for circumstances. However the expectations are framed, performance commensurate with promotion should be equally outstanding.
- vi. Except as in vii, for appointment as and promotion to associate and full professor on the SOM pathways, faculty are expected to be outstanding clinicians in their respective fields, and to be competent to provide a level of care that is unambiguously at the

highest level. If appropriate to the nature of their practice at the time that appointment or promotion is being considered, opinions on clinical performance will be gathered from senior faculty members and other physicians and/or health professionals and trainees who have interacted with the candidate and can judge his/her abilities. In some fields they will have sufficient reputation that they receive referrals of challenging clinical problems from physicians and other institutions in Chicago and regionally. Where referral is not customary (e.g. radiology, pathology, anesthesiology), evaluation of clinical excellence also includes recognition of superior performance of consultative services (intensive care units, interventional radiology, etc.). Evidence of productive clinical activity (clinical volumes and revenue) in comparison to benchmarks will also be considered. Where objective reliable data relating to outcomes are available, these will also be taken into account.

- vii. In exceptional circumstances, faculty on the SOM track may have no clinical responsibilities. These non-clinicians might include, for example: (a) a researcher whose principal value to the institution is as a facilitator of team science, or (b) one whose primary mission is to develop, organize, and deploy major educational programs, or (c) one who plays a leadership role in developing and maintaining the research infrastructure of the BSD. The job description of these faculty must be different from that of faculty on the BSD track and their initial appointment must be on this track except under the circumstances described above in xii under the BSD track. Promotion of appointees under this provision will consider the quality of performance of duties, the impact on the institution, and whether the value to the institution warrants a continued appointment.
- viii. Excellence in education and institutional citizenship are important considerations for promotion on all SOM pathways.

Process:

- ix. The effort devoted to each of the primary missions is jointly decided at the time of initial appointment by the faculty member, the Department Chair and, where appropriate, the Section Chief. The effort assignment may be adjusted on a regular basis, e.g. at the time of annual reviews, by mutual agreement of the parties. Thus some faculty will be primarily clinicians with some educational activities, others primarily educators with some clinical work, others primarily research with education and clinical work etc. This allows substantial flexibility and for career paths to evolve based on interests/accomplishments. Faculty members are encouraged to focus on their areas of interest and strength and on activities that they like to pursue. If interests change, changes in effort devoted to the three missions can occur seamlessly without the need to change track. Faculty in clinical departments who fulfill the criteria and whose job descriptions are those of the BSD track should be on that track.

- x. Promotion will occur when the faculty member has reached the requisite level of accomplishment. It is anticipated that in the majority of cases promotion to associate professor will occur 6-7 years after appointment as assistant professor as with the BSD track. In the SOM pathways there is not an up-or-out decision on promotion. It is expected that the Department/Section will provide career guidance to facilitate promotion in a timely fashion.
- xi. Tenure. Faculty that satisfy the criteria for tenure may be appointed with tenure in the BSD track. Although the Provost will consider tenure only once for a given faculty member, a SOM faculty member denied tenure need not disaffiliate from the institution.
- xii. Unlike other appointees in the SOM pathways, appointees under provision vii must be approved for promotion by the end of the eighth year of the assistant professorship or must disaffiliate from the institution.

5 Faculty on both the BSD track and SOM pathways may qualify for tenure. The quality and persuasiveness of the scholarly record that justifies tenure should be equivalent on the BSD track and SOM pathways. Because faculty on the SOM pathways have additional responsibilities, there is flexibility regarding the time of a tenure proposal on their behalf. These and other issues related to tenure are described in more detail below.

Scholarly Requirements for tenure

Quality of scholarship “unambiguously at the highest level”, typically reflected by

- peer review and publication of a body of work in high-quality publications. Scholarship not published in journals or books is allowable, but the case must clearly establish dissemination to the peer community via high-quality routes. Success in meaningful competition for funding can be an important indicator of peer esteem.
- importance and impact of the body of work for a major field, in terms of citations in the peer-reviewed literature, invited speaking, invited service (e.g., on study sections), and/or the opinions of the leading scholars in that field. For recent work, the opinion of leading scholars that the work will be impactful is essential. Irrespective of track, faculty who achieve tenure are expected to be amongst the very best of their peer group nationally defined as tenured faculty at peer institutions.
- coherence and focus; i.e., a program of scholarship. Ordinarily there should be a logical progression from one work to the next, with maturation/refinement/advancement evident, and/or well-reasoned ventures into new areas. A program is not a ‘random walk’ dictated by the patients who happen to present or a number of first steps that are never followed through.

Sustainability of high-quality scholarship, established by

- thoughtful plans and proposals for future scholarship
- where funding is necessary or customary, a track record of successful funding and its likely continuation
- consistency. A track record of ongoing scholarship that is not episodic, one-time, or occasional.

That is, the record of past scholarship and proposals for future scholarship should clearly establish that the candidate for tenure at the rank of associate professor will be among the leading scholars in a field, and for tenure at the rank of professor is and will remain among the leading scholars in a field.

Tenure of faculty from the SOM track

Faculty who satisfy the criteria for tenure may be appointed with tenure in the BSD track. Scholarship of such caliber may take the same form as that typical of faculty on the BSD track. However, it may also create impactful knowledge that brings high distinction to the BSD in the clinical or educational arenas. This might include intellectual leadership in clinical trials that establish the standard of care, important scholarly contributions in education or curriculum development that have national/international impact, technical innovation (new procedures, treatments, or devices), or other paradigm-shifting advances. The quality and impact of these contributions will also be judged by the quality of the peer-reviewed publications that describe them. Evidence of consistency (a track record of ongoing scholarship that is not episodic, one-time, or occasional) and sustainability, such as success in obtaining research funding, is necessary. Comparisons of the body of work are made to the very best tenured clinician-scholars within peer programs in the specific specialty/discipline. Scholarly productivity (as opposed to quality) should be commensurate with clinical and other responsibilities.

Timing of the tenure decision

BSD track

Departments must propose assistant professors for promotion in time for the current statutory announcement (~6.5 years). This timing can be extended subject to the University's "Stopping the Clock" policy. Both promotion and tenure may be proposed simultaneously.

A faculty member promoted to associate professor without tenure must either be tenured within 3 years or promoted to Professor with Tenure within 5 years.

The distinction between promotion to associate professor and tenure is intended to accommodate circumstances such as:

- When a faculty member is pursuing a research problem at the highest level but circumstances unforeseeable or beyond control impede progress (e.g., mouse with no phenotype; bad luck rather than poor performance or defects in contingency planning).
- When a faculty member is pursuing a difficult research problem and making slow progress because the problem is a challenging one. That is, the faculty member is advancing at the same rate as the best in the field.
- When a faculty member's work is advancing new interdisciplinary science and requires mastery or implementation of multiple laboratory, field, or theoretical techniques from disparate existing disciplines.
- Where the nature of the problem studied requires multiple years for the relevant data to become sufficiently mature to address the scientific issues, or for collaborative, community-based partnerships to mature to levels needed for rigorous community-based scholarship.

SOM track

Because of clinical responsibilities, no time limit by which tenure must be proposed – except that ongoing scholarship commensurate with a tenured appointment on the BSD track must be clearly expected after conferral of tenure. The Provost will consider one tenure proposal per individual.

Footnotes

*Faculty currently on the Clinical Scholar (CS) track will be able to continue on that track or elect one of the other tracks. Continuation on the CS track, however, implies ongoing productivity as a scholar without the flexibility afforded by the SOM pathways.

**Pre-existing schemes have required 'regional' vs. 'national' recognition for the higher ranks, and then 'internal impact' vs. 'external recognition'. These attributes will continue to receive due credit, but only insofar as they establish that a faculty member is outstanding, which is the primary consideration. A faculty member may thus be outstanding by other metrics, such as those discussed in the text. Qualification for associate and full professor will require that the faculty member be as outstanding as others at similar ranks here and at peer institutions or departments.