



## University Senate CHARGE

<b>Date:</b>	September 12, 2011
<b>To:</b>	Charles Fenster Chair, Faculty Affairs Committee
<b>From:</b>	Eric Kasischke Chair, University Senate 
<b>Subject:</b>	Reform of the University APT Committee Procedures
<b>Senate Document #:</b>	11-12-03
<b>Deadline:</b>	April 2, 2012

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) requests that the Faculty Affairs Committee review the attached proposal entitled, "Reform of University APT Committee Procedures" and make recommendations on whether the current procedures are appropriate.

The University Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure (APT) Committee services a vital role in ensuring the quality of the faculty at our University. It is important that their procedures for review have clearly defined guidelines so that the process can be fair and equitable to our faculty. The SEC requests that the Faculty Affairs Committee review the committee's current procedures and advise on whether they should be revised.

Specifically, we ask that you:

1. Review APT Committee procedures at our peer institutions.
2. Consult with the University's Office of Faculty Affairs regarding the current procedures and their advantages and disadvantages.
3. Review whether the current APT Committee procedures are fair and equitable.
4. Review whether the current metrics for reviewing APT candidates are appropriate.
5. If appropriate, recommend whether specific changes should be made to the current APT Committee procedures.

We ask that you submit your report and recommendations to the Senate Office no later than April 2, 2012. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Reka Montfort in the Senate Office, extension 5-5804.



## University Senate PROPOSAL FORM

<b>Name:</b>	Professor Arthur M. Eckstein
<b>Date:</b>	May 25, 2011
<b>Title of Proposal:</b>	Reform of University APT Committee Procedures
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<b>Unit/Department/College:</b>	Department of History
<b>Constituency (faculty, staff, undergraduate, graduate):</b>	Faculty
<b>Description of issue/concern/policy in question:</b>	<p>1. This year the University APT Committee employed the number of external reviewers who declined to write letters as a significant factor in rejecting candidates for promotion to full professor. This even occurred in a case where all of the actually received letters of recommendation were (a) strongly positive, (b) said the candidate would receive promotion to full professor at their institution (e.g., Johns Hopkins, UCLA, Stanford, Yale), and (c) came from prominent figures in the candidate's field. The Committee nevertheless viewed the number of "declines to write" as an issue--an indirect indication of a candidate's alleged low standing in the field.</p> <p>2. The University APT Committee has also recently employed raw student evaluations of popularity, coming out as "average", as a determinative factor in denying a candidate promotion to full professor despite that candidate's stellar record of scholarship and publication (two books, an edited book, numerous articles, editorship of a prominent journal.)</p> <p>3. The University APT Committee, further, has recently used an argument that someone had remained too long in rank as an associate professor before publishing a second book as a reason to deny promotion to full professor (this time despite a stellar teaching record). What is the justification of the University APT Committee for not rewarding those who improve themselves by writing a book after a long delay? If this becomes the rule, then there will be little incentive indeed for those who are long in</p>

	<p>rank to attempt to restart their scholarly production.</p> <p>What are the precedents for these three policies? When were these policies written down? Where were these policies written down? When and how were Departments, and candidates, officially notified that these were now significant or even determinative factors in promotion? Were these policies applied uniformly across all cases?</p>
<p><b>Description of action/changes you would like to see implemented and why:</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The incoming University APT Committee should be told by the Senate that they cannot use the number of declined invitations to review as a negative factor in determining promotion when the number of outside reviewers meets the number required (or more) by the promotion guidelines, and all letters received are positive. The number of declined invitations should not be a relevant, let alone an important factor, in decision to promote in such a situation.</li>   <li>2. The incoming University APT Committee should be told by the Senate that raw student evaluations entered by computer should not be used as the determinative metric in evaluating teaching ability. They constitute both inadequate data and highly skewed data. In many Departments the rate of return is both low (for instance, 43% in once case this year) and distorted (especially towards those who dislike a course). In addition, several studies have shown that there is a significant statistical correlation between high student evaluations and the easiness of the course. Numeric ratings given by computer in Week 13 of a tougher than average course cannot be the determining metric for showing if a professor is a good teacher. In my own Department the method of computerized student evaluations is viewed as so dangerous and inaccurate that the untenured are advised to stick to the old in-class paper evaluations, which give a much higher rate of return and a more accurate evaluation. The University APT should be told that the raw data of student evaluations is not a valid tool for evaluating the quality of teaching. The quality of dissertations directed or mentored, new courses developed, the quality of “A” papers in undergraduate courses—all of these would be better ways by which to judge the effectiveness of teaching.</li>   <li>3. In Arts and Humanities Departments, and often in the Social Sciences, the basis for promotion to full professor is usually the publication of a second book (the first book having brought</li> </ol>

	<p>tenure and promotion to associate professor). The incoming University APT Committee should be told by the Senate that “hiatus” in publication of a second book should not be considered an insuperable obstacle to promotion to full professor as long as it is followed by significant publication.</p>
<p><b>Suggestions for how your proposal could be put into practice:</b></p>	<p>The incoming University APT Committee should be given explicit instructions by the Senate on these three matters.</p> <p>The faculty hurt by the arbitrary application this year of these new and sudden “standards” must be made whole, and the damage to their careers undone.</p>
<p><b>Additional Information:</b></p>	<p>I enclose the official letter I received as Chair of a Departmental APT Promotion committee, with the first two of these issues stated in writing as the reasons for rejection of a candidate with a stellar record of publication.</p>

***Please send your completed form and any supporting documents to [senate-admin@umd.edu](mailto:senate-admin@umd.edu) or University of Maryland Senate Office, 1100 Marie Mount Hall, College Park, MD 20742-7541. Thank you!***