

Review of the Report of IULFC Promotion and Tenure Review Committee and its implications for
Bloomington librarians.

Submitted to BLFC by the BLFC Faculty Standards Committee

March 2004

We express our appreciation for the tremendous work of the IULFC Promotion and Tenure Review Committee in preparing this report. It is an excellent report and gives the faculty a solid foundation on which to begin discussion. Also, as the BLFC Faculty Standards Committee (FSC) shares some of the same charge, we want to express our appreciation of this effort on behalf of the faculty. We agree with the majority of the report and have some recommendations that we hope will strengthen the report's outcome.

The Committee's discussions were focused on some key areas which are underlined. The quotes from the report are in bold and the committee's comments are indented.

General Observations:

“The campus or library mission statement should be central to each promotion and tenure case...” (p. 6)

The Committee felt that there should be more workshops or guidelines achieving this part.

“Support on each campus for research leaves, support grants, and sabbaticals seems to vary even though many librarians considered such support very important.” (p.6)

The Committee noted that the research support on each campus or each department varies greatly and the response of librarians indicates that support is inadequate and should be addressed and improved.

“The role of the supervisor is important and requires more training and support through mentoring and workshops.” (p. 6)

“Further clarification regarding the role of the Human Resources Officer was considered desirable. Many perceived this role as that of a facilitator for the process.” (p. 6)

“There was general support for the role of the IULFC to be more of an advocate for librarians, to be more proactive, and to have a more clearly defined role in promotion and tenure.” (p. 6)

The Committee agrees with these three observations and wishes to highlight their importance.

Specific Recommendations 3. Mentor Program:

The Committee felt that there is no specific recommendation in terms of programs or activities assigning mentors. The Committee recommends a varied approach, where mentoring librarians is handled on different levels, including administration, supervisors, the Human Resources Office and Officer, the BLFC Faculty Standards committee, an assigned mentor, workshops, and other personal contacts. The Committee thinks that both formal and informal approaches are needed for the greatest success in mentoring librarians through the promotion and tenure process. A Web site gathering information

for assigning mentors, or having mentors assigned randomly would not provide the personal touch that is needed for this process.

Recommendation 4. Mid-Tenure Review

Committee members agree with the report's statement that Mid-Tenure review be strongly recommended, but not required. Also the members recommend that supervisors need to be involved more fully and be strongly encouraged to attend the workshops by their supervisors.

Recommendation 5. Role of the Ruth Lilly University Dean of University Libraries

“Another role for the Dean is to communicate the importance of faculty status for librarians to those both inside and outside the IU Libraries.” (p. 9)

We agree and commend the report's description of the Dean's role in mentoring and in the tenure and promotion process. The Committee notes the different roles of the Dean in the tenure and promotion process for library faculty on the Bloomington campus and on the system-wide level and recognizes that these two roles are both important and need balance.

Recommendation 7. Role of the IULFC Promotion and Tenure Committee

“We strongly recommend that the IULFC Promotion and Tenure Committee be limited to tenured librarians. Having untenured librarians on the Promotion and Tenure Committee runs counter to the faculty model. Furthermore, untenured librarians may lack the necessary experience to make informed judgments

If this recommendation is not accepted and untenured librarians remain on the IULFC Promotion and Tenure Committee, we recommend that untenured librarians not be appointed to chair this committee.” (p. 10)

The Committee recommends that untenured librarians remain on the IULFC Committee. This model has worked for us in the past as library faculty and our criteria are different from teaching faculty. IULFC's past experience with the Committee is evidence that untenured librarians who serve on the Promotion and Tenure Committee make solid contributions. Service on this Committee becomes a foundation for untenured librarians to contribute back to the Libraries through better understanding of promotion and tenure criteria. This is true both in performance and future library service and committee responsibilities.

Recommendation 9. Promotion to Full Librarian

The Committee expanded the original guidelines with the following statement: “The librarian's performance and contributions to the secondary area must be carefully documented so that the quality is unquestionable and extraordinary in relation to peers” (p. 11)

- The committee notes that the promotion and tenure process needs to more strongly encourage promotion to full librarian. Barriers such as limited opportunities for research leaves, access to support, etc., should be further investigated.
- The Committee wishes to express their concern about using the language of the last sentence **“unquestionable and extraordinary in relation to peers.”** We wish to remove this language. This language seems to us to escalate the criteria

of promotion from Associate to Librarian rank compared to the previous language which used the words “superior” and “continued significant contribution.” We think the new wording could be applied to a quota or competitive environment and goes beyond explanatory to actually setting up new standards more consonant with criteria for teaching faculty. We recommend that the criteria for this specific promotion in rank is explained by using the language previously used. We also request that the language used be flexible enough to recognize the pressure of library faculty to have excellent performance and extraordinary quality in the secondary area, while having less time available to achieve this compared to teaching faculty.

- Another problem with this same language is the definition of the word “peers.” Who are our peers? Does it vary from campus? Could it be redefined in relation to teaching faculty for specific campuses?

“We recommend that a stronger mentoring role is needed to encourage librarians to pursue full rank.” (p. 11)

The committee agrees with this statement and wishes to highlight its importance.

Appendix X. Promotion and Tenure Criteria for Librarians, A. Principals for Promotion and Tenure for Librarians

The Committee expresses a serious concern about the *Indiana University Academic Handbook*, 2001 and whether the language pertinent to librarians is current. We recommend to BLFC that the policies and procedures relating to librarians in the *Indiana University Academic Handbook* be reviewed and updated as necessary, as a recommendation separate from the P. and T. Review Committee Report. There could be serious implications and potential conflict concerning library faculty in interpreting the *Academic Handbook* if the language is not kept up-to-date.

Appendix X. Promotion and Tenure Criteria for Librarians, A. Principals for Promotion and Tenure for Librarians. D. General Criteria for Promotions. 3 Promotion from Associate Librarian to Librarian

Promotion is based upon achievement beyond the level required for associate librarian. The librarian must demonstrate exceptional achievements in performance. Professional development, research and/or creativity and service are secondary criteria. The librarian must demonstrate excellence in one of the two areas and be at least satisfactory in the other area. “The librarian’s performance and contributions to the secondary area must be carefully documented so that the quality is unquestionable and extraordinary in relation to peers. (Appendix XD3, p. 3)

Our concerns regarding this language are addressed under recommendation 9. Also, the Committee thinks that the statement **“The librarian’s performance and contributions to the secondary area must be carefully documented”** is true for all 3 promotion levels listed. We suggest that this sentence be moved to the last paragraph before the list after the sentence **“It shall be the privilege of any librarian to submit a recommendation for the promotion of any librarian, including one’s self.”**

Appendix X. Promotion and Tenure Criteria for Librarians, F, G and H

“The list is not exhaustive, nor are the indicators meant to be equally weighted for each librarian. Not all indicators will apply to every librarian.” (Appears on p. 3, 4 and 5 under indicators of quality of performance, professional development and service respectively)

We recommend that further guidance on specific type of supporting documentation be available for Bloomington library faculty. It is appropriate that these do not appear here, however, it is advisable that they appear elsewhere. These would also be suggestions that are not comprehensive. For example, for Professional Development a list of documentation actually used in dossiers to support promotion and tenure would be useful, i.e. the specific nature of the articles, books, presentations, conference attendance used in past dossiers, etc.

This should be highlighted to make it absolutely clear that these indicators for assessing the quality of the dossier in these three areas are only a partial list and a place to begin for assessment.

Appendix X. Promotion and Tenure Criteria for Librarians, H. Service

“Service to the discipline or the profession involves activities designed to enhance the quality of disciplinary or professional organizations or activities (e.g., serving as an officer of a professional society, etc.). (p. 5)

The Committee recommends that language is inserted to clarify committee participation is valid in service as well as election to an organization: **“e.g., serving as an officer of a professional society, committee participation and service, etc.”**

Technically, we don’t think the term **“disciplinary”** is used correctly. “Disciplinary” means “of, pertaining to, or of the nature of discipline” or “pertaining to the acquirement of learning” (OED) and it is used here to mean Discipline-related. We recommend that the language be changed.

Appendix X. Promotion and Tenure Criteria for Librarians, F. Performance. 1. Indicators of quality of performance, first bullet

“impact of furthering the goals of the libraries, the specific campus, and the University” (p. 3)

AND

Appendix X. Promotion and Tenure Criteria for Librarians, H. Service. 1. Indicators of quality of service, first bullet

“impact on furthering the goals of the libraries, the specific campus, and the university” (p. 5)

The Committee recommends that the language is changed by inserting an “or” to clarify the language to read as **“impact on furthering the goals of the libraries, the specific campus, or the university.”** It would show that having impact on furthering the goals at all three levels is not implied as an indicator of quality.