

SOUTHWEST TENNESSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SUBJECT: Academic Tenure

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2003; Revised November 1, 2004; Revised April 29, 2020;

Revised July 1, 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the criteria and process regarding academic tenure for full-time faculty members at Southwest Tennessee Community College (“Southwest” or “the College”).

Definitions (These are general definitions of terms used in this policy, which are further defined in the subsequent sections below.)

Academic Tenure- an indefinite faculty appointment conferred in recognition of faculty members who have demonstrated sustained excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service. Tenure status is subject to Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and Southwest policies governing termination or separation from employment.

Cause (related to termination)- includes, but is not limited to, unsatisfactory performance and misconduct as defined in TBR Policy [5.01.00.03, Faculty Disciplinary Action](#).

Financial Exigency- the formal declaration by TBR that an institution faces an imminent financial crisis, that there is a current or projected lack of sufficient funds (appropriated or non-appropriated) for the College as a whole to maintain current programs and activities at a level sufficient to fulfill educational goals and priorities, and that the budget can only be balanced by extraordinary means that include termination of existing and continuing academic and non-academic appointments.

Faculty Member- an individual holding a position with instructional responsibilities for classes that earn credit as defined in TBR Policy, [5.02.01.00, Definition of Faculty](#). The different types of faculty appointments are explained in TBR Policies [5.02.07.00, Faculty Appointments at Community Colleges](#) and [5.02.02.30, Faculty Promotion at Community Colleges](#).

Probationary Employment- period of full-time professional service by a faculty member for whom an appointment letter denotes a tenure-track appointment in which the faculty member does not have tenure and in which the faculty member is evaluated by Southwest for the purpose of determining satisfaction of the criteria for a recommendation for tenure. Probationary employment provides an opportunity for the individual to self-assess commitment to the College and for the College to determine whether the individual meets its standard of quality and projected need.

Policy/Guidelines

I. Introduction

- A. TBR affirms its commitment to tenure, which serves as an important safeguard for academic freedom as set forth in TBR Policy [5.02.03.30, Academic Freedom and Responsibility](#), the advancement of knowledge, and the protection of intellectual independence. TBR further affirms its commitment to free speech and the First Amendment as set out in [1.03.02.60 Freedom of Speech and Expression](#).
- B. Tenure is awarded only by positive action by TBR, pursuant to the requirements and procedures of

this policy. Only positive recommendations for tenure are considered by TBR. Tenure granted through Southwest is specific to Southwest.

- C. The award of tenure recognizes a faculty member's demonstrated merit and affirms the expectation that the faculty member will continue to meet the long-term staffing and academic needs of their department and program at Southwest.
- D. Tenure is awarded to those members of the faculty who have exhibited professional excellence and outstanding abilities sufficient to demonstrate that their future services and performances justify the recognition and presumption of continued employment afforded by academic tenure.
- E. Tenure review is an important component of assessing each faculty member's professional work and maintaining academic quality at Southwest.
- F. TBR does not award tenure in non-faculty positions or to part-time faculty.
- G. The provisions in this policy are minimums and should be implemented in a manner appropriate to the missions, traditions, and needs of Southwest.
- H. TBR's Academic Tenure policy provides that Southwest may supplement its guidelines by creating additional requirements for eligibility of faculty for tenure consideration. The additional requirements must be consistent with TBR's Academic Tenure policy and applicable law.
 - 1. Any additional requirements set forth herein are intended to comply with TBR regulations and applicable law. TBR regulations and the law will supersede all additional requirements stated herein that are not in compliance with the same, if any are found by TBR or Southwest's President to exist.
 - 2. Allegations that Southwest's additional requirements, if any, do not comply with TBR regulations or applicable law shall be considered by the Executive Vice President of Academic Strategy and Student Outcomes (EVP of ASSO) who will then discuss the matter with the President.

II. Consideration of Tenure

- 1. The following is the schedule of activities for faculty to be considered for promotion to a higher rank or for tenure. Both promotion and tenure processes follow the same schedule.

To be eligible to apply for promotion:

- Assistant Professor- must be in rank as Instructor for two (2) full academic years
- Associate Professor- must be in rank as Assistant Professor for three (3) full academic years
- Professor- must be in rank as Associate Professor for five (5) full academic years

(Schedule Below)

Fall Semester Activities

October	EVP of ASSO will announce the promotion and tenure application process to all full-time faculty.
October	Given the TBR mandated time constraints of this promotion and tenure timeline, faculty who know they meet eligibility requirements should begin compiling their dossiers.
October	Applicants should request letters of recommendation from tenured faculty within the department and external to the department, but within the institution (maximum of three (3) internal letters and three (3) external letters). <i>(Dossiers are due in January)</i>
October	Each department chair will submit to the President of the Faculty Senate the names of <u>three</u> (3) tenured faculty members to serve in the pool for the selection of the <i>College Promotion and Tenure Committee</i> and the <i>Promotion and Tenure Appeals Committee</i> . (These tenured faculty members should be elected by the department and cannot be department chairs, deans, applicants, or relatives of applicants for promotion and/or tenure during this year.)
November	Applicants must send their letter of intent to apply for promotion or tenure to the EVP of ASSO with copies to the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs & Instructional Excellence, department chair, and dean. <i>It is the sole responsibility of the faculty member to initiate the promotion or tenure application process by sending the letter.</i>
November	Department chairs and deans will verify dates of service and years in rank with the department of People and Culture (HR). The department chairs and deans then collaborate with the Director of Academic Support and Operations. to ensure academic credentials are in compliance with policy. The approved list(s) should then be sent to the EVP of ASSO.
November	Applicants will meet with their dean.
November	Department chairs will post and distribute eligibility lists to applicants and departmental faculty.
November	The Faculty Senate President will randomly select from the elected departmental pool the names of seven (7) faculty and three (3) alternates for the <i>College Promotion and Tenure Committee</i> and seven (7) faculty and (3) three alternates for the <i>College Promotion and Tenure Appeals Committee</i> . The selected names will be sent to the EVP of ASSO for certification and notification of membership on the committees. The President of the College may add committee members from the overall faculty to achieve balance (academic representation by discipline) on the committees.
November	Any faculty member who submitted a letter of intent, who is not verified as eligible, and who wants to appeal, must do so in writing to the EVO of ASSO within five (5) working days of the distribution date of the eligibility list.
December	Appeal decisions on eligibility will be completed by the <i>Promotion and Tenure Appeals Committee</i> and conveyed to the individual and the EVP of ASSO by the first week of December.

Spring Semester Activities

January	Individual faculty members who are eligible must submit a formal letter of application and complete a digital dossier. Applicants should prepare their dossier according to the required format. Each applicant is responsible for providing the required documentation. The eligible faculty member will place the letters of recommendation in the dossier. The dossier will be made available to the departmental members for review. • Any request for “Stopping the Tenure Clock” must be received by the applicant’s department chair by this date (referencing the Stopping the Tenure Clock date on the current year’s calendar, which your chair can provide). <u>See</u> below for additional information regarding stopping the tenure clock. • Applicant access to digital dossiers will be removed end of the business day. • Department members’ access will be granted in view only mode.
January	The department chair will convene the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee (consisting of all tenured department members) and requests of them in writing the committee's recommendation of the applicant in the form of a vote to recommend or not to recommend the applicant. The committee will review the dossiers and vote by secret ballot. • Department members’ access will be removed by end of day. • Department chairs’ access will be granted in contribute mode.
January	The department chair will complete the following items in each dossier for their area: ❖ 1.1 Recommendation Signature Page- department portion ❖ 2.1 Departmental Vote and Comments ❖ 2.2 Chair Recommendation Letter • Department chairs’ access will be removed at end of business day. • Division dean access to be granted in contribute mode.
January	The division dean will complete the following items in each dossier for their area: ❖ 1.1 Recommendation Signature Page – Dean portion ❖ 2.3 Dean Recommendation Letter • Division Dean access will be removed at end of business day. • College Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair access will be granted in contribute mode. • College Promotion and Tenure Committee Members’ access will be granted in view only mode.
February	The <i>College Promotion and Tenure Committee</i> will vote to recommend or not recommend each applicant by secret ballot. The <i>College Promotion and Tenure Committee</i> Chair will complete the following items in the dossier: ❖ 1.1 Recommendation Signature Page – College P/T portion • College Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair access will be removed by the end of the business day. • College Promotion and Tenure Committee Members’ access will be removed by end of the business day.
February	The EVP of ASSO will review the dossier of each applicant and the recommendations of the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee, department chair, department

	dean, and the <i>College Promotion and Tenure Committee</i> . The EVP of ASSO will make a recommendation to the President of the College on each applicant for promotion or tenure considering qualifications, recommendations, existing needs. The EVP of ASSO will notify all applicants in writing whether they have been recommended or not.
February	Applicants can review their dossiers, including all correspondence. This process is for review only. No modification will be allowed to the faculty dossier. Applicant access to be granted in view only mode for the day.
March	Any applicant who would like to appeal the EVP of ASSO's recommendation must do so in writing to the President within five (5) working days of the notification of the recommendation.
March	If there are appeals, the President will notify the <i>Promotion and Tenure Appeals Committee</i> in writing no later than one (1) week after the President receives a written appeal. Promotion and Tenure Appeals Committee Members' access will be granted in View only mode.
March	The <i>Promotion and Tenure Appeals Committee</i> will review any contested matter and submits recommendations regarding appeals to the President. The Appeals Committee may obtain clarification on issues from applicants or people providing recommendations. Promotion and Tenure Appeals Committee members' access will be removed by end of the business day.
March	The President will review the dossier and recommendations for each applicant, review any appellate action, and submit to the Chancellor a listing of all faculty members being recommended for promotion and/or tenure.
April	The President will inform the applicants and appropriate supervisors of the College's recommendation.
July	Upon notification of action taken by TBR, the President will notify the applicants within two (2) weeks of TBR action. A copy of the letter will be sent to the EVP of ASSO, AVP of Academic Affairs & Instructional Excellence, dean, department chair, and Vice President of People and Culture (HR).
	A faculty member's dossier will be available to the faculty member in edit mode at the completion of the promotion and tenure process.

Dossier Format

Dossiers must be formatted using the following sections in the SharePoint site.

1.0 Cover Page	2.1 Chair Recommendation Letter	4.1 Service Summary Page
1.1 Recommendation Signature Page	2.2 Dean Recommendation Letter	4.2 Service -College
1.2 Letter of Intent	3.1 Teaching Summary Page	4.3 Service - Public
1.3 Letter of Application	3.2 Teaching Philosophy	4.4 Service - Profession
1.4 Recommendation Letters-Departmental	3.3 SET Summary form and comments	5.1 Professional Development Summary Page
1.5 Recommendation Letters-External	3.4 Course Curriculum Development	5.2 Scholarship
1.6 Annual Evaluation	3.5 Other – Teaching	5.3 Creative Activities and Research

Departmental Promotion and Tenure Ballot Format

To provide College-wide consistency, the departmental promotion and tenure committee ballots will follow the format below. The ballot will name the department and division at the top center of the ballot. It will then list the name of each applicant for promotion and/or tenure along with the academic status for which the applicant is applying. Just below the applicant information will be an area for faculty to indicate their “Yes,” “No,” or “Abstain” vote. Directly below that will be a space for comments to be written about the applicant. A sample ballot for two (2) applicants is included below.

Southwest Tennessee Community College Promotion and Tenure Ballot
Division: _____ Department: _____ Faculty Member's Name here: _____ Application for Promotion to Rank of _____ Reviewer's Vote: ____ Yes ____ No ____ Abstain Comments: _____
Faculty Member's Name here: _____ Application for Tenure Reviewer's Vote: ____ Yes ____ No ____ Abstain Comments: _____ *If you are voting no, provide comments on the applicant's job performance. *If you are abstaining, you must explain why.

Reporting of Departmental Votes

After the departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee has voted on applicants for promotion or tenure as stated in the timeline, department chairs will input votes and comments in the Recommendation Signature Page in the dossier on SharePoint.

Peer committees may have confidential individual tenure votes unless there is evidence that casts doubt upon the integrity of the peer committee. This policy shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with applicable law, including the Tennessee Public Records Act, codified in Tennessee Code Annotated, §§ 10-7-503 and 504.

2. Tenure Appointments

Academic departments may request tenure upon appointment for applicants with extraordinary credentials.

Annual evaluations conducted by the applicant's department chair or other appropriate head of an

academic program unit are an important aspect of the probationary process and the ability to meet criteria for tenure at Southwest; therefore, all consideration of faculty members for tenure status must include serious review of annual performance evaluations. Southwest's criteria and guidelines for evaluating faculty are in policy [5:01:00:03/34, Faculty Development and Evaluation](#). This policy as well as policy [5:02:02:01/37, Faculty Promotions](#), this policy [5:02:03:01/38, Academic Tenure](#), and policy <https://www.southwest.tn.edu/policy/section5/5-02-03-02-39.pdf> 5:02:03:02/39, Academic Freedom and Responsibility should be distributed to all new faculty members. They are readily available to all faculty in the College's electronic [Policy Manual](#). Faculty will be notified if guidelines are updated. Applicants must provide **documented** evidence that the criteria have been met.

- a. Recommendations for or against tenure shall originate from the department or academic program unit in which the faculty member is assigned.
 - (1) Review committees shall include appropriate participation in the recommendation by tenured faculty in the department or academic program unit.
 - (2) Each department must ensure that information relative to applicants' teaching is available at the time they are considered for tenure.
- b. The recommendation for tenure must be made by the President to the Chancellor and by the Chancellor to the Board of Regents. The President shall provide the faculty member with written confirmation of the award.
- c. The locus of tenure will be awarded in the department or division of the faculty member as appropriate to the organizational structure of the College.
- d. Only the President has the authority to make representations concerning tenure to faculty members.
- e. Failure to give timely notice of non-renewal shall not result in the default attainment of tenure but shall result in the right of the faculty member to another year of service at the College, provided that the faculty member has not delayed any outstanding appeals related to the tenure process.

3. Minimum Eligibility Requirements

- a. **Employment Status.** Tenure may be awarded only to:
 - (1) Full-time faculty members who:
 - (a) Hold academic rank as instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor.
 - (b) Have been employed in a tenure-track appointment and have completed the minimum probationary period of service as stated in the Southwest policy, and/or as agreed upon in writing and signed by the EVP of ASSO; and
 - (c) Have been determined to meet the criteria for tenure as stated in this policy and have been so recommended.
 - (2) Special contract faculty, which is faculty members supported in whole or in part by funds available to the College on a short-term basis, such as grants, contracts, or foundation-sponsored projects. This group of faculty members might be eligible for tenure if continuing support for such members can be clearly identified in the regular budget of the College.

4. Length of Probationary Employment

- a. Probationary faculty may be employed on annual tenure-track appointments for a maximum probationary period not to exceed six (6) years.
- b. To be eligible for tenure, a faculty member must have completed a minimum of five (5) years in residence in a tenure-track appointment prior to submitting a letter of intent to apply for consideration for tenure in the appropriate fall semester. An exception to the minimum probationary period may be made under special circumstances upon the recommendation of the President and approval of the Chancellor. If the Chancellor approves, the faculty member's recommendation for tenure will go forward to the Board.
- c. If no exception is sought to the five-year probationary period, the application for tenure will be made during the sixth year of employment.

- d. To apply for tenure, a faculty member must have completed the requisite number of full academic years in rank prior to making application in the Fall semester (of the next academic year).
- e. Note that faculty members hired during a spring or summer term of an academic year will have completed more months of service than the required minimum number of academic years, at the time of their application. See below for calculation of the probationary period.
- f. Applicants for tenure should make application only after having developed an exceptional record and after consultation with the applicant's chair and dean. Formal application for tenure is made at the time of submission of the letter of application included in the dossier.
- g. Probationary candidates may be provided with a tenured faculty mentor who can conscientiously address deficiencies in the applicant's progress towards tenure and provide feedback to the candidate. In addition, the applicant, in consultation with the faculty mentor, may request a preliminary review by an *ad hoc* tenure review committee prior to application for tenure as a mechanism to assess the progress of the candidate for tenure. This committee shall be composed of the faculty mentor from within the candidate's academic unit and the chair or dean of the academic unit where tenure will be granted.
- h. Faculty members will be permitted only one (1) opportunity to apply for tenure.**

5. Calculating the Probationary Period

- a. Employment during summer terms and in part-time positions shall not be credited toward satisfying the probationary period.
- b. Only full-time continuous service at Southwest will be included in determining completion of the probationary period unless one (1) of the following is approved:
 - (1) Credit for Prior Service- the minimum probationary period of five (5) years may include credit for prior service when agreed to by the President, and subject to the maximum permissible credit for prior service as noted below:
 - (a) Credit toward completion of the probationary period may at the discretion of the President be given for a maximum of three (3) years of previous full-time service at other colleges, universities, or institutes provided that the prior service is relevant to the institution's own needs and criteria. Any credit for prior service that is recognized and agreed to must be confirmed in writing at the time of the initial appointment.
 - (b) Credit toward completion of the probation period may, at the discretion of the President, be given for a maximum of three (3) years of previous full-time service in a temporary faculty appointment or term appointment at the same institution or in an earlier tenure-track appointment at the same institution that has been followed by a break in service. Any credit for prior service in a temporary full-time faculty appointment at the same institution in an earlier tenure-track appointment (at the same institution) that has been followed by a break in service must be recognized and confirmed in writing in the appointment letter to a tenure-track position.
 - (2) Leave of Absence- the period of approved leave of absence must be excluded from the required probationary period. A tenure-track faculty member may apply for a maximum of two (2) non-consecutive one-year leave increments.
 - (a) Leave of absence must be approved by the EVP of ASSO.
 - (b) Exceptions may be granted by the President of the College in writing prior to the leave of absence.
 - (c) Exceptions include:
 - (1) Crediting the leave periods to the probationary period; and/or
 - (2) Granting more than two (2) non-consecutive one-year increments.

- (3) Stopping the Tenure Clock
 - (a) Faculty members may request to “stop the tenure clock” during the probationary period when circumstances exist that interrupt the faculty member's normal progress toward qualifying for tenure.
 - (b) In such cases, the faculty member may request to “stop the tenure clock” for one-year if the faculty member demonstrates that circumstances reasonably warrant the interruption.
 - (c) Reasons will typically be related to a personal or family situation requiring attention and commitment that consumes the time and energy normally addressed by faculty duties and professional development.
 - (d) Examples include childbirth or adoption, care of dependents, medical conditions or obligations, physical disasters or disruptions, or similar circumstances.
 - (e) Upon recommendations from the chair and dean, the EVP of ASSO may approve such requests.
- (4) Administrative Appointment
 - (a) A faculty member appointed to an administrative position may remain eligible for tenure consideration.
 - (b) The faculty member must:
 - (1) Qualify for tenure under the College's guidelines; and
 - (2) Maintain a significant involvement in academic pursuits including teaching, service/outreach, and scholarship/creative activities/research.
 - (c) The time “or prorated portion of time” spent on the administrative position may be credited toward completion of the probationary period upon approval by the EVP of ASSO.
- (5) Transfer to Another Department or Unit
 - (a) When a faculty member transfers to another department or unit, the faculty member may, with the approval of the President, elect to begin a new probationary period on the date the transfer occurs.
 - (b) If the faculty member does not so elect (and confirms this in writing to the President), time spent in the first appointment shall count toward establishing the minimum and maximum probationary period.
 - (c) The probationary period is terminated when the faculty member makes application for tenure.

III. Criteria to be considered in Tenure Recommendations

- A. Recommendations for tenure depend upon the nature, mission, and goals of the College, as well as the department and academic program in which the faculty member is employed and will be tenured.
 - 1. The performance and effectiveness of the faculty member during the probationary period will be assessed together with the long-term staffing needs of the College and of the faculty member's assigned department/division.
 - 2. The faculty member must demonstrate willingness and ability to work effectively with colleagues and in a professional manner to support the mission of the College and the common goals of both the College and the department/division.
 - 3. TBR's academic tenure policy states that Southwest must identify criteria to be considered in tenure recommendations and specify in broad terms their relative importance.
 - 4. At Southwest tenure decisions are also based upon the performance in the following three (3) areas: teaching, service/outreach, and scholarship/creative activity/research.
 - 5. The weight and magnitude of importance of each of the three (3) areas will be directed by

Southwest policies and guidelines. Effective teaching is of paramount importance.

- B. Evaluation of these three (3) criteria will be conducted by one (1) or more of the following (as stated in Southwest Policy [5:01:00:03/34](#)): department chair, peers, students, self.

1. Teaching

- a. Effective teaching is an essential qualification for tenure, and tenure is granted only with clear and documented evidence of a candidate's teaching ability and potential for continued development.
- b. Each of the items listed below must be submitted as evidence of effective teaching and be included in the annual faculty evaluation dossier. The evaluation of teaching shall be based on the following criteria (evidence of each should be submitted):
 - (1) Evidence of ability to organize and present the subject matter in a logical and meaningful way.
 - (2) Evidence of ability to motivate and stimulate creativity in students.
 - (3) Statement of teaching philosophy.
 - (4) Course materials (*i.e.*, course syllabi, handouts, exams/evaluation instruments, instructional materials).
 - (5) Results of student evaluations for every course evaluated during the probationary period.
 - (6) Curriculum and/or program development.
 - (7) Development and application of effective instructional techniques including development of online and computer assisted course development.
 - (8) Documentation of effective teaching methodologies.
 - (9) Documentation of staying current in the discipline/specialization.
- c. Additional types of documentation can also include:
 - (1) Open-ended or other student input.
 - (2) Student products.
 - (3) Teaching recognitions/awards.
 - (4) Evidence of professional development in teaching.
 - (5) Evidence of disciplinary or interdisciplinary program or curriculum development.
 - (6) Alumni surveys.
 - (7) Student exit interviews.
 - (8) Evidence of supervision of student projects and other forms of student mentorships.
 - (9) Other evidence of excellence in teaching, mentoring, or both.

2. Service/Outreach

- a. Service and/or outreach encompasses a faculty member's activities in College service, outreach or public service, and professional service. Here, service applies to service within the community as defined by the College's role and mission; service to the College, and service within the bounds of the applicant's academic discipline and budgeted assignment.
- b. Evidence of performance of three (3) activities should be submitted. Evaluation should be based on all three (3) areas although it is realized that differences in emphases might exist. The College has the responsibility for determining the emphases as well as the responsibility for determining specific criteria based on the individual's aspect of work. These criteria should include: College committee and administrative responsibilities, community service programs, public service consultations, and active contributions to professional associations. The following three (3) guidelines should be utilized in evaluating faculty performance and effectiveness in Service/Outreach.

- (1) Faculty performance should be examined, in relation to assigned and budgeted duties (as described in the applicant's position description, which includes a statement of the mission or purpose of the position and of the objective(s) of the applicant's service unit, as well as the specific assigned tasks and responsibilities of the applicant).
 - (2) The applicant's effectiveness, as judged by impact on the College, individuals, groups, or organizations served. This should include documenting the success of internal and external service, in terms of improvement of communities, programs, operating agencies, production processes, or management practices. It should also include indications of satisfaction with the service provided by the applicant, and of the magnitude and complexity of work (as opposed to perfunctory activity that does not lead to useful results).
 - (3) Service/outreach work is sometimes not publishable. The results may be in the form of direct consultations, planning reports, or instructional time directed largely to the recipients of College service programs. But certain aspects of service work are suitable for publication in professional journals. For example, unique techniques developed to motivate students or others or new approaches to the transfer and application of knowledge, would be of interest to peers in other public service programs.
- b. Evidence of performance and effectiveness in the three (3) areas listed below must be documented.
- (1) College service refers to activities other than teaching and scholarship performed at the department or College level. It is expected of every faculty member; indeed, colleges could hardly function without highly engaged faculty who perform committee work and other administrative responsibilities. College service includes, but is not limited to, serving on departmental committees, and participating in College activities and on College committees. Activities such as a leadership role in the Faculty Council/Senate, membership on a specially appointed task force, advisor to a College-wide student organization, and membership on a College search committee should be taken into account in consideration for tenure.
 - (2) The outreach or public service function is the College's outreach to the community and society at large, with major emphasis on the application of knowledge for the solution of problems with which society is confronted. Outreach primarily involves sharing professional expertise and should directly support the goals and mission of the College. A vital component of the College's mission, public service must be performed at the same high levels of quality that characterize the teaching and research programs.
- c. Professional service refers to the work done for organizations related to one's discipline or to the teaching profession generally. Service to the profession includes activities such as presentation at a professional meeting, association leadership, service on statewide or TBR committees, journal editorships, article and grant proposal review, guest lecturing on other campuses, and other appropriate activities. While it is difficult to define the exact nature of significant professional service, clearly more is required than organizational membership and attendance.

3. **Scholarship/Creative Activities/Research**

Research applies to the studious inquiry, examination, or discovery that contributes to disciplinary and interdisciplinary bodies of knowledge. Scholarship/creative activities/research may include, but is not limited to, typical professional growth and development activities, disciplinary and interdisciplinary activities that focus on the boundaries of knowledge, community-based scholarship,

creative activities (e.g., performances or other artistic creations), and the development of cutting-edge teaching approaches.

- a. Candidates for tenure must present documented evidence of their scholarship, creative activities, and/or research.
- b. While each item listed under “teaching” must be included, the weight and magnitude of evidence required for activities in scholarship or creative activities or research are set by the College, pursuant to TBR’s guidelines.
- c. Evidence should cite typical professional development activities such as presentations at a professional meeting, journal editorship, article and grant proposal review, performances, exhibitions, creative activities, as well as completing books, journal articles, or monographs, and other appropriate activities.
- d. The following examples illustrate but do not limit appropriate activities for this criterion:
 - (1) Scholarly pursuits in support of the discipline or the teaching profession (This should include typical professional development activities such as taking classes, presentations at a professional meeting, journal editorship, article and grant proposal review, etc.)
 - (2) The scholarship of teaching is a valid measure of research capability. Creative teachers should organize, record, and document their efforts in such a way that their colleagues may share their contributions to the art of teaching. Authoring appropriate textbooks or chapters within a book, writing educational articles, making presentations, and using innovative contributions to teaching, constitute scholarship of teaching.
 - (3) Implementation and use of cutting-edge teaching approaches including instructional technologies and learning theories
 - (4) Performances, compositions, and other artistic creations.
 - (5) Professional or scholarly papers presented at international, national, or regional meetings.
 - (6) Publication of research or scholarly works, such as books, journal articles, and other scholarly papers, or media of similar quality. Publications that are reviewed by peers are more significant than those that are not subjected to such rigorous examination – quality is more important than quantity.

IV. Exceptions to Minimum Rank Qualifications

The minimum rank qualifications should be met in every recommendation regarding appointment to academic rank and for promotion in academic rank.

V. Changes in Tenure and Tenure-track Status

A. Non-renewal of Probationary Tenure-track Faculty

1. When tenure-track appointments of faculty are not to be renewed, the faculty member shall receive notice of the non-renewal for the ensuing academic year as follows:
 - a. In the first academic year of service:
 - (1) For appointments expiring at the end of the academic year, notice must be given no later than April 1 of that academic year.
 - (2) For appointments expiring at the end of the current calendar year, notice must be given no later than November 1 of that year.
 - (3) For appointments expiring during an academic year, notice must be given at least sixty (60) days prior to the expiration date.
 - b. In the second academic year of service:
 - (1) For appointments expiring at the end of the current academic year, notice must be given no later than February 1 of that academic year.
 - (2) For appointments expiring at the end of the current calendar year, notice must be given no later than August 1 of that year.
 - (3) For appointments expiring during the academic year, notice must be given at least 150

days prior to its termination.

- c. In the third or subsequent academic year of service:
 - (1) For appointments expiring at the end of the academic year, notice must be given no later than May 31 of the preceding academic year.
 - (2) For appointments expiring at the end of a calendar year, notice of non-renewal must be given no later than December 31 of the preceding year.
 - (3) The above stated dates are the latest dates for notice of non-renewal of faculty or tenure-track appointments. Pursuant to TBR's policy, Southwest may adopt annual dates that provide for longer notice of non-renewal.
2. Applicable time periods for notice of non-renewal are based upon actual years of service at Southwest and are in no way affected by any credit for prior service that may have been awarded.
3. Notice of non-renewal shall be effective upon delivery of the notice to the faculty member by either hand delivery, via e-mail to the faculty member's College e-mail account, or upon the date notice is mailed, certified mail, return receipt requested, postage paid, to the faculty member at the faculty member's home address on record with the College.
4. When necessary to calculate time for notice of non-renewal, exclude the day the notice is served; count every day thereafter, including intermediate Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays; and include the last day, but if the last day is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the period continues to run until the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.
5. A faculty member in a tenure track appointment may be in probationary status for a maximum of six (6) years. If a faculty member is not awarded tenure by the end of the sixth year, the faculty member will be permitted to teach for another academic year. This is the terminal year.
6. **A faculty member may apply for tenure only once;** if the faculty member does not receive tenure, regardless of the number of years of previous probation, the faculty member will receive their terminal contract for the year following notification of the denial of tenure.
7. It is possible to apply for tenure, without completing a minimum of five (5) years of service in a tenure track appointment at the College, by means of recognized prior service upon appointment or by means of an exception approved by the President and Chancellor.
8. A faculty member will receive a terminal appointment upon being denied tenure, regardless of the number of probationary years served.
9. The College will provide appropriate notice as early as possible but no later than June 30 prior to the start of the terminal year. Failure to provide notice, however, will not result in an additional period of employment.
10. Faculty members on tenure-track appointments may have their employment terminated for any reason that would justify termination of another faculty member. The process for termination of faculty employment is discussed in [TBR's Policy 5.01.00.03](#), Faculty Disciplinary Action, as well as Southwest's Policy, Faculty Disciplinary Action [5:00:00:00/56](#).
11. The non-renewal or non-reappointment of any faculty member on a tenure-track appointment does not necessarily carry an implication that the faculty member's work or conduct has been unsatisfactory.
12. Neither non-renewal of a tenure-track faculty appointment during the probationary period nor denial of tenure is appealable to the Chancellor.

B. Transfer of Tenure

1. A faculty member tenured in an academic program unit may be transferred to another academic program unit. In such cases, the transfer will be made with tenure; moreover, the tenure appointment will be transferred to the new academic program unit. In no instance may the faculty member be compelled to relinquish tenure as a condition for effecting the transfer.
2. Faculty members with tenure who are appointed to administrative positions will retain tenure in

former faculty positions only. A faculty member otherwise eligible for tenure who also holds a non-faculty position may be awarded tenure in the faculty position only, subject to the requirements of this policy.

C. Expiration of Tenure

Tenure status expires upon retirement. Tenure also expires in the event of permanent physical or mental inability of a faculty member, as established by an appropriate medical authority that prevents the faculty member from performing the essential functions of the job, either with or without reasonable accommodations.

D. Relinquishment of Tenure

A faculty member will relinquish or waive the right to tenure upon resignation, termination of employment, or failure to report for service at the date designated by the College at or prior to the beginning of an academic term, which will be deemed to be a resignation unless, in the opinion of the President, the faculty member has shown good cause for such failure to report.

E. Termination of Tenure for Reason of Financial Exigency

The employment of a tenured faculty member may be terminated as a result of financial exigency at a TBR institution subject to TBR declaration that such financial conditions exist. See TBR's Financial Exigency policy, [5.02.06.00](#).

F. Termination of Tenure for Curricular Reasons

1. The employment of a tenured faculty member may be terminated because:
 - a. An academic program is deleted from the curriculum; or
 - b. Because of substantial and continued reduction of student enrollment in a field or discipline.
2. Before declaring that curricular reasons exist, the President will ensure meaningful participation by the College's representative faculty body in identifying the specific curricular reasons, evaluating the long-term effect on the College's curriculum and its strategic planning goals, and judging the advisability of initiating further action.
3. Prior to initiating the process described below, the President will present- either verbally or in writing- a description of curricular reasons that may warrant the termination of a tenured faculty member's employment.
4. The College must present the curricular reasons warranting termination to a representative faculty body, and that body will have the opportunity to respond in writing to the President before action described below is initiated.
5. Each of these reasons for termination of tenure for curricular reasons must denote shifts in staffing needs that warrant greater reductions than those which are accommodated annually in light of shifting positions from one department to another or among colleges to handle changing enrollment patterns.

G. Process for Termination of Tenure for Financial Exigency and/or Curricular Reasons

1. Upon determining the termination of employment of one (1) or more tenured faculty members is required for financial exigency and/or curricular reasons, the President shall furnish each faculty member whose employment is to be terminated a written statement of the reasons for termination.
 - a. Those reasons shall address fully the curricular circumstances that warranted the termination and shall indicate the manner and the information upon which the decision was reached regarding which faculty members' employment would be terminated.
 - b. The President's written statement shall also indicate that the faculty member has the

opportunity to respond in writing stating any objections to the decision.

2. The President's decision to terminate a tenured faculty member's employment for financial exigency and/or curricular reasons is subject to appeal in accordance with the terms of TBR Policy [1.02.11.00](#), Appeals to the Chancellor.
3. When a tenured faculty member's employment is terminated for curricular reasons, the position will not be filled by a new appointee with the same areas of specialization as the terminated faculty member within a period of three (3) years unless the terminated faculty member has been offered, in writing, reappointment to the position at the previous rank, tenure, and salary (with the addition of an appropriate increase which, in the opinion of the President, would constitute the raise(s) that would have been awarded during the period that the faculty member was not employed).
4. Upon determining that termination of employment of one or more tenured faculty members is warranted for curricular reasons, the President shall base the decision about which faculty member(s) employment should be terminated upon the President's assessment as to what action would least seriously compromise the educational programs in a department or division.
5. Termination for curricular reasons presumes a staffing pattern in a department or academic program unit that cannot be warranted either by comparison with general load practices within the College or by comparison with faculty loads in comparable departments or academic program units at similar colleges. In that light, the President shall also, at the President's discretion, base the decision on a careful assessment of the impact of the curricular reason on staffing requirements in the department or academic program unit as compared to overall patterns in the College and to comparable departments or academic program units.
6. Unless the President demonstrates that an exception should be made to minimize qualitative compromise of an educational program, the following considerations should guide the President in determining the order of faculty reductions in a department or academic program unit where termination of tenured faculty is proposed for curricular reasons. These considerations should not be construed as being mandatory, as the President's decision should be based on the best interest of the students and the College:
 - a. Quality of performance, particularly teaching, shall be the prime consideration, which the President is permitted to value over other criteria.
 - b. Part-time faculty appointments should not be renewed if tenured faculty positions are terminated.
 - c. Temporary faculty or tenure-track faculty appointments in the probationary period should not be renewed if tenured faculty positions are terminated.
 - d. Among tenured faculty, those with higher rank should have priority over those with lower rank.
 - e. Among tenured faculty with comparable rank, those with appropriate higher academic degrees should have priority over those with lower degrees.
 - f. Among tenured faculty with comparable rank and comparable degrees, those with greater seniority in rank should normally have priority over those with less seniority.
7. When a tenured faculty member's employment is to be terminated for curricular reasons, the President will make significant effort to relocate the tenured faculty member in another existing vacant position for which the tenured faculty member is qualified. In instances where, in the opinion of the President, relocation within the College is a viable alternative, the College has an obligation to make significant effort to relocate the faculty member, including the bearing of reasonable retraining costs. The final decision on relocation is within the discretion of the President.

H. Contextual Application of Terms

1. "Program is deleted from the curriculum" means that TBR takes formal action to terminate a degree major, concentration, or other curricular component and that such termination eliminates or reduces need for faculty qualified in that discipline or area of specialization.
2. "Substantive and continued reduction of student enrollment in a field" means that over a period of at least three (3) years, student enrollment in a field has decreased at a rate in considerable excess of that of the College as a whole and that such reduction has resulted in faculty-student ratios that, in the opinion of the President, cannot be warranted either by comparison with equivalent faculty load practices within the College or by comparisons with faculty loads in comparable departments or academic program units at similar colleges which the President would deem to be appropriate for comparison.

I. Termination of Employment and Suspension

1. TBR policy [5.01.00.03, Faculty Disciplinary Action](#), governs the process for disciplining faculty members and sets forth the procedures for considering whether suspension, termination of employment, or disciplinary action is appropriate. Southwest's policy [5:00:00:00/56, Faculty Disciplinary Action](#), is intended to compliment TBR's policy.
2. Termination of employment is a relinquishment of tenure.

Responsible

Source of Policy: TBR Administrators: EVP of ASSO; VP of People & Culture

5:00:00:00/9; 5:00:00:00/41

5:02:07:00/50; 5:00:00:00/19

5.02.01.00

Related Policy: 5:01:00:03/34; 5:00:00:00/56 TBR Policy Reference: 5.02.03.30; 5.02.06.00; 5.01.00.03

Approved: _____



President

Date: _____

July 1, 2026