

Academic Council Procedures Manual

Faculty Responsibilities Homewood Schools

The Tenure Regulations of the Homewood Schools (The Krieger School of Arts & Sciences and the Whiting School of Engineering) state that:

"Each faculty member of the Homewood Schools, regardless of rank, normally devotes half-time to research and half-time to the formal instruction and guidance of the undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral students and fellows in their scholarly endeavors."

This principle has long served as the only official statement regarding the responsibilities of members of the Homewood faculty. The purpose of this document is to amplify and interpret these principles to provide guidance for faculty members, department chairs, and deans.

The freedom to pursue one's own scholarly interests in whatever direction they may lead is unquestionably the essence of the academic enterprise. The centrality of research to all academic activities, including teaching, has long been the hallmark of Johns Hopkins. Any attempt to codify faculty responsibilities runs the danger of limiting that freedom in some way, and is potentially inimical to good scholarship. It is nonetheless plain that freedom of this kind carries responsibilities with it. We think it appropriate to articulate some of the central points concerning our obligations as faculty members.

We take it that the principle enunciated in the Tenure Regulations is to be interpreted broadly, and that the specified division of effort between teaching and research is intended to represent an average commitment, to be balanced over an individual faculty member's career. Junior faculty have a special need to establish their research agendas, and department chairs should be prepared to allow them to spend more than half time doing so for a year or two. At some stages of their careers, faculty may find it necessary to devote full time to research; the current practice of permitting this practice where grant funds are available to cover salary should be continued. If at times some faculty become less active in research, they should be encouraged to compensate by taking on additional teaching and advising responsibilities.

It should also be understood that teaching responsibilities include much more than lecturing. They include advising undergraduates and graduate students, formal and informal mentoring, the guidance of TA's in matters of pedagogy, and the supervision of TAs with responsibility for grading. The fair evaluation of papers and other assignments, and the timely return of papers and dissertation drafts with appropriate comments are especially important. Faculty participation in doctoral oral examinations inside or outside one's own department is similarly essential to the university's functioning. Finally, all faculty should maintain regular office hours or provide some comparable method of assuring easy student access to them.

The Tenure Regulations properly avoid specifying a standard proportion between undergraduate and graduate teaching for all faculty. The appropriate mix can be

expected to vary between individual faculty, but it is generally expected that all faculty will regularly participate in undergraduate teaching and advising. In some departments, junior faculty may be most effective at graduate instruction, and may spend less time on undergraduate education. Senior faculty commonly develop a breadth of vision and experience that is particularly useful in teaching undergraduates, especially at the introductory level. Department chairs must be able to take full advantage of differing faculty talents. They should be given considerable flexibility in determining formal teaching assignments, as long as the faculty of each department collectively cover the full range of teaching responsibilities of that department.

The tenure regulations make no explicit mention of the need for faculty to perform departmental and university tasks by serving on committees. Because these services are clearly essential to running the Homewood Schools, deans and department chairs should take care to distribute such duties broadly, and to reward faculty who undertake them. In some cases it may be advisable to reduce the teaching responsibilities of faculty who take on unusually heavy committee loads. Given the small size of the Homewood faculties, it is especially important to encourage interdepartmental and interdivisional programs, and chairs should encourage and reward participation in them.

In some departments regular consulting is a normal faculty activity. Chairs should recognize the effort that goes into such work, but faculty should not allow it to decrease their performance of their university duties by more than the equivalent of one day per week.

In sum, every faculty member is to contribute in substantial ways both to the research programs of the Homewood Schools and to graduate and undergraduate education. Deans and department chairs should be flexible and imaginative in taking maximum advantage of individual interests and talents to ensure that faculty responsibilities are shared equitably by the members of each department, while providing for the needs of all the constituents of the department and the school.

*Approved by Academic Council
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