

# Tenure, Permanence & Promotion Workshop

## Tenure Track Faculty, Teaching Stream, Chairs and Directors

### Online: December 1 2025

Ana Campos, Professor, School of Interdisciplinary Science

Adapted from slides prepared by  
Ken Cruikshank, Peter Graefe, Gail Krantzberg and Rita  
Cossa.

These slides were originally presented during a live workshop and are provided here for reference. Please note that some content may require context or discussion. For any questions about applicability, check with your Chair, Director or Dean's Office.



## **Land Acknowledgement**

McMaster University recognizes and acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the Dish With One Spoon wampum agreement.

# Presentation Overview

- Where to find policy documents (6,7)
- Chair and faculty responsibilities through career progression (8-14)
- Timing of career progression (15-17)
- Assembling the (Renewal or T&P or Promotion) dossier (19-22)
- Overview criteria to assess teaching, research and service (23-26)

# Questions?

**PLEASE HOLD YOUR QUESTIONS UNTIL AFTER OUR PANELISTS SPEAK**

Faculty T&P Committee Representatives may address some of your queries...

# What's different about T/P/P for the Teaching Stream?

(at present)

- Permanence is not quite the same as Tenure
  - relevant if an academic program/department is closed
- "excellent teacher" > "effective teacher"
- Permanence and Promotion are decoupled
  - possible to earn permanence without promotion to Associate Professor
- Referees:
  - None for permanence without promotion
  - Two (at least one external) for promotion to Associate
  - Three external for promotion to Professor

# Three pillars of academic assessment supporting career progression

*“Where the rubber meets the road”*

## Teaching

- Effective/ Excellent
- Scholarly command; willing and able to assist students

## Research

- Some form of scholarly activity
- Quality a key factor


## Service

- Diligently and effectively
- Satisfactory (does not substitute)

# Where to Find Documents: Academic Appointment, Tenure and Promotion [2012]\* [Tenure and Promotion Policy] / T&P Policy

**Question:** I am confused. What is the “yellow document” I sometimes hear about when discussing T&P?

**Answer:** The T&P Policy used to be distributed on **yellow paper**.

**McMaster University**  **Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

Complete Policy Title: **McMaster University Revised Policy And Regulations With Respect To Academic Appointment, Tenure And Promotion [2012]\* [Tenure and Promotion Policy]**

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by: **Senate  
Board of Governors**

Date of Most Recent Approval: **December 14, 2011  
December 15, 2011**

Date of Original Approval(s): **June 10, 1970  
September 29, 1970**

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated: **March 11, 2009  
May 7, 2009**

Responsible Executive: **Provost and Vice-President (Academic)**

Enquiries: [University Secretariat](#)

**DISCLAIMER:** *If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails*

# Where to Find Documents: Supplementary Policy Statements (SPS)

Every year, as term II starts, I send a call to all faculty regarding the coming T&P&P season with the deadline for submission of their complete material (March 31). To this email, that contains a synopsis of the process divided into my job/your job lists, I attach a marked YD, and all relevant SPSs.

And they are:

**SPS B1** Procedures for the Assessment of Teaching

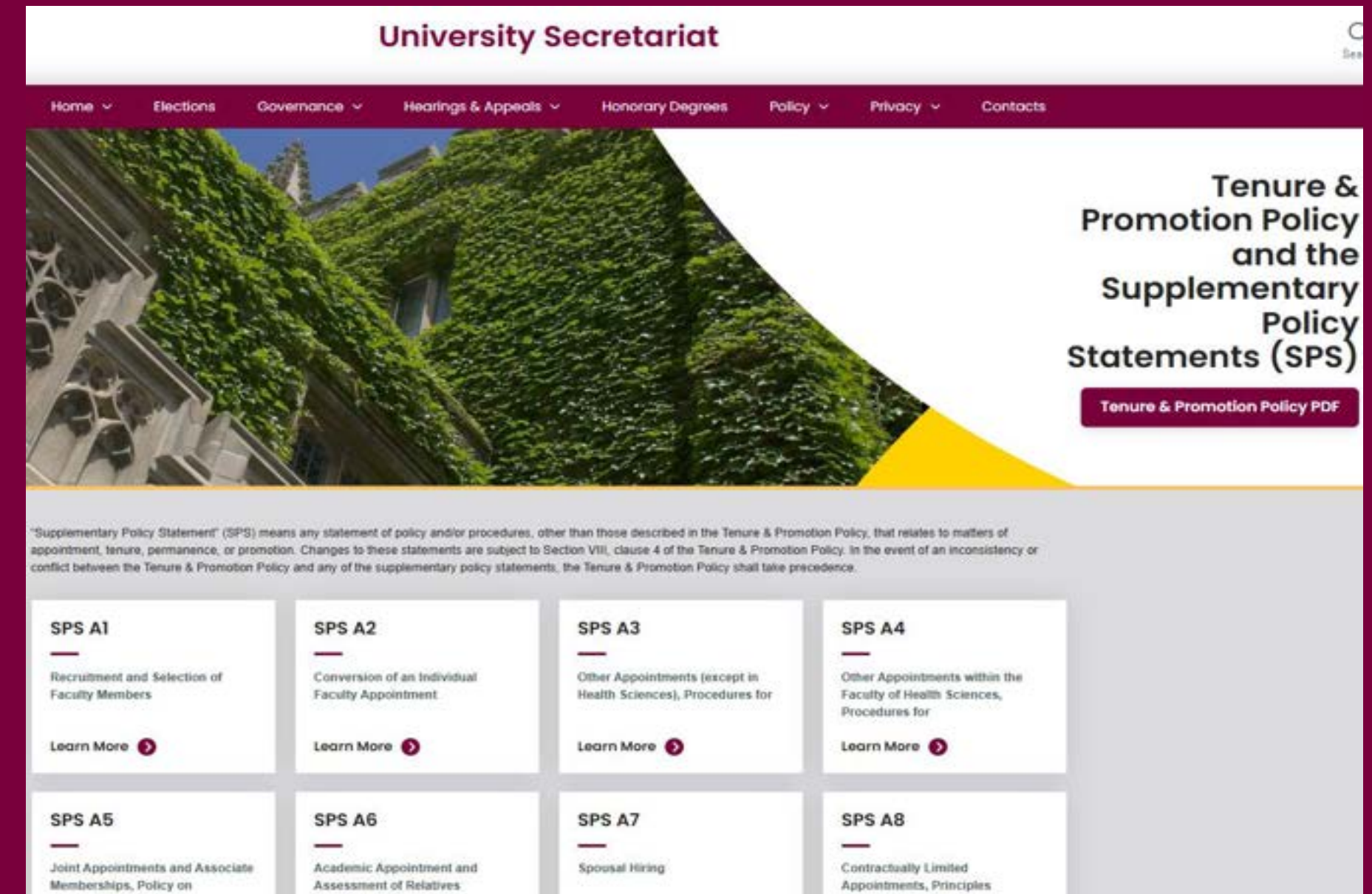
**SPS B2** Teaching Portfolios

**SPS B5** Selection Communication Internal and External Referees

**SPS-B8** Policy for Referees Teaching Stream

**SPS B11** CV

**SPS B12** Preparation of Dossiers



I also indicate that it is the faculty's responsibility to access the most recent copy of the policy in the University Secretariat page

# Collective shared responsibility

# Chair Responsibilities

The Chair's responsibility is to ensure that candidates are given every opportunity and all possible support to earn tenure/permanence. To that end Chairs must mentor, instruct as to the expectations, inform as to the process and support faculty in their development.

*“It is the responsibility of the Chair of each Department to inform all members of the Department of the University’s criteria for re-appointment, tenure or permanence, and promotion together with any Faculty and Department guidelines or interpretations of those criteria. Faculty members shall be informed at the time of their first appointment by the Department Chair or their Faculty Dean of the performance normally expected of successful candidates for tenure, permanence and promotion....” (Section III, clause 37 a.)*

# Chair Responsibilities, Cont'd

*“...Section III 37b. The Department Chair shall also inform all members of the Department of the procedures for making recommendations to the Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee  
“(see Appendix B, SPS B1 through B12).*

*Section 39c. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair to ensure the dossier is prepared for each candidate”*

First day on the job, chat about YD, SPSs, including teaching portfolio and peer review of teaching, review grant, scholarship strategies and expectations. Moving forward, bespoke meetings with faculty in academic unit to address specific issues of concern as they progress through the ranks (e.g. bar for research excellence, CPM, criteria for promotion of teaching faculty etc.)

# Chair Responsibilities, Cont'd

- **Monitor Progress in Meeting Expectations**

*“Department Chairs should meet at least once each academic year with all potential candidates for re-appointment, tenure or permanence to review and discuss the progress of the faculty member’s research program, as well as their teaching and university service. Results of these discussions must be recorded in writing and agreed to by both parties.” (Section III, clause 37 a.)*

This is a key part of the job of Chairs and Directors and the bedrock upon which one can hold the threshold for academic and teaching excellence supported by an administrative process that is transparent, fair, equitable and compassionate

# The Chair needs to speak to the candidate about teaching effectiveness...

- Explain how their department conducts evaluation: “Sound evaluation of teaching mandates evaluation by multiple people, on multiple occasions and in multiple contexts.” (SPS B1). Peer review of teaching, classroom visit discussion and filing of a report followed by a conversation and subsequent inclusion in teaching dossier
- The Chair could use the teaching portfolio (SPS B2) as an aid to frame the discussion on teaching effectiveness
- The Chair should confirm in writing both (1) areas in need of improvement and (2) steps taken to achieve such improvement Annual ROA meeting is a great opportunity

The faculty member should ask for specific feedback and clarification in writing after ROA meeting and consult widely in order to improve teaching skills. Be proactive!

# Faculty Member Responsibilities

*“ Take the bull by the horns”*

- Ask questions
- Inform oneself of the process
- Seek out advice and clarification
- Identify and seek out mentors
- Make sure peer review of teaching is occurring
- Carefully attend to guidance and mentorship being provided.

**In other words, take control of the process from day 1**

# Faculty Member Responsibilities

*“It takes two to tango”*

*Section III 39 b. “It is the responsibility of each faculty member who is eligible to be considered for re-appointment, tenure, permanence, and/or promotion to prepare and maintain an up-to-date curriculum vitae in accordance with the requirements approved by the Senate Committee on Appointments (Appendix B, SPS B11), an up-to-date Teaching Portfolio (see SPS B2) and to ensure that all the relevant evidence is made available for inclusion in the dossier”.*

I urge all faculty members to take control of the process by making sure they understand the policy, the requirements and the bar for promotion tenure and permanence and begin assembling a teaching portfolio from the start.

This presentation is a primer an overview of the process such that you can seek out information and advocate when needed.

# Timing: Academic Assessment for Tenure and Permanence

*“For a person whose first appointment is as a full-time Assistant Professor in a tenure- or teaching-track position, this general timing applies” (Section III, clause 28 a. ii):*

- An academic assessment/review occurs in Year 3 of the candidate’s appointment before they can be extended for one, two or three years.
- Year 2 is when the candidate prepares and updates teaching portfolio (SPS B2) and CV (SPS B11) for assessment and submission (July and August). Peer evaluations, classroom visits, should be occurring from the **start of appointment** and will be gathered and used to support the preparation of Department Teaching Evaluation Report (DTER SPS B1)

Time flies so Chairs need to confirm timelines with candidates every year at the time of the ROA meeting beware of credits and other faculty-specific issues that impact timing. Faculty members must not rest in the assurance that Chairs and Directors are looking after everything.

# Timing: Academic Assessment for Tenure and Permanence, Cont'd

Tenure or permanence must be considered in Year 5 for approval for implementation in Year 6 **unless the candidate agrees** in writing to a one-year deferral and provided that the appointment extends to that year.

- Term II of Year 4 (circa March) is when the candidate submits their material (CV, publications, and research statement and teaching portfolio) to T&P&P committee to be forwarded to external referees (for tenure) or not (permanence).
- External letters (for tenure) must be in by early-late July such that the dossier (CV, candidate submission DTER, teaching portfolio, external letters as the case may be) can be evaluated, voted on, and together with the “departmental submission” forwarded to the Faculty in August) *near the beginning* of Year 5 (Aug. to Sept.). (**Section III clauses 28-34**)

**SPS B12** Preparation of Dossiers is important here.

**Consideration in year 5 does not demand exceptionality**

# Timing: Academic Assessment for Tenure and Permanence, Cont'd

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Start early!!! From the start of the academic year Chairs and Directors should know who is up and due to have a dossier submitted to the Faculty circa 1 year later.

Faculty members should know from day 1 when they will be considered for re-appointment, and later T&P&P.

# Timing: Exceptions - Follow the Policy

Variations must always be confirmed in letter from President signed back by the candidate

- Accelerated > Tenure-track (Section III, clause 28 d. i): “Outstanding success” considered in 4<sup>th</sup> year (material prepared and submitted end of year 3)
- Extension > COVID-19 (SPS B13): One year if holding appointment as of June 30, 2022
- Delay > Unpaid leaves of absence (SPS C3): For research or other endeavours which will not involve salary support; decision made by the Research Leaves Committee
- Delay > Pregnancy/parental leave (SPS C4): Parent of a child and who has at least 13 weeks’ continuous employment; automatic deferral unless faculty chooses not to
- Delay > Reduced workload (SPS C5): By as much as 50%; applies to, but not limited to personal situations

Faculty members should review their appointment letters!!!!

# Assembling the dossier for re-appointment, tenure, permanence and/or promotion: SPS B12 Preparation of Dossiers

## TENURE, PERMANENCE AND/OR PROMOTION DOSSIER: Dr. E. Z. Rider

### Table of Contents

1. Written Recommendation of the Departmental Tenure and Promotion Committee based on an examination of the following elements of the dossier:
2. Curriculum Vitae
3. Candidate's Statement
4. Departmental Teaching Evaluation Report (**DTER**)
5. Candidate's Response to Departmental Teaching Evaluation Report
6. List and Biographical Sketch of Potential Referees
7. Referee Letters
8. Sample Copy of Chair's or Dean's Letter Sent to Referees, and the Relevant Policy for Referees

I indicate by my signature that this index describes precisely the contents of the dossier of Dr. E. Z. Rider, and that this dossier is complete and ready for consideration by the appropriate committees.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Chair (signature) Date

\_\_\_\_\_

In yellow items not required for re-appointment or permanence.

# About External Referee Letters

## Key process for tenure and promotion of research stream faculty

Section III (Research stream)

13- ---"the Department shall have obtained written judgements on the quality of the candidate's scholarly work from **at least three referees** outside of the University. Care shall be taken to ensure that the referees are at "**arm's length**" from the candidate. In addition, when such a candidate is being considered for promotion to the rank of **Professor**, the referees must be scholars with respected **national and/or international reputations** who can assess whether the candidate is known widely on the basis of scholarship, however that may be defined in the discipline in question"

14-" A list of at least six possible referees known for their work in the relevant field(s) **shall be prepared by the Department Chair in consultation with the Faculty Dean** and, in the case of a faculty member who participates in a Program, the Director of the Program. **The candidate shall be shown this list and may object, and give reasons for objecting, to any person or persons on it.** The candidate shall confirm in writing to the Chair that she or he has seen the list of candidates and has had an opportunity to register any objections. The Departmental Tenure and Promotion Committee shall consider any such objection(s), but shall retain the right to select the referee(s) in question and shall inform the Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee of the objection(s) and its decision(s) concerning the referee(s) (see also Appendix B, SPS B6)".

Previous presentation stated: **Chair and candidate work beforehand on a list of external referees. Chair, in consultation with senior colleagues, T&P&P committee draws up a list of referees, which is first approved by Dean then commented upon by candidate. The candidate should not be asked for a list of referees or be asked for approval prior to submission to the Dean. The process of approval and commentary by the faculty member is provisioned in YD as process that occurs after Dean's approval of the list of referees.**

**Draw up a list of referees that is at least 3 times longer than the number of letters needed for each case. Start the process EARLY!!!**

# Bio sketch form for each referee

## SPS B12 Preparation of Dossiers and SPS B5 Selection Communication Int. & Ext. Referees



Tenure, Permanence and/or Promotion Dossier  
External Referee Listing and Biographical Sketch

Candidate Name:		
<b>External Referee</b>		
Name:		Rank:
Institution:		
Department:		
Address:		
E-Mail:		Website:
<b>Degrees Held</b>		
Degree	Institution	Date Earned
<b>DEAN'S APPROVAL: I indicate by my signature that (check one)</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> I APPROVE of this external referee.	<input type="checkbox"/> I DO NOT APPROVE of this external referee.	
Signature:	Date:	
Comments:		
<b>CANDIDATE'S CONFIRMATION: I indicate by my signature that (check one)</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> I HAVE NO OBJECTIONS to this referee.	<input type="checkbox"/> I HAVE OBJECTIONS to this referee as indicated.	
Signature:	Date:	
<i>Candidates to sign after Dean's approval provided.</i>		
Objections:		

In addition to the information above, please complete page 2 of this form.  
Both completed pages are required for inclusion in the Candidate's dossier.

See the T&P Policy, SPS B5, B7, B8 and B12 for further information.

External Referee List and Biographical Sketch

Page 2

Candidate Name:	
External Referee:	
<b>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</b>	
<b>Areas of Specialization</b>	
□	
<b>Professional Experience</b>	
□	
<b>Recent/Major Scholarly Activity</b>	
□	
<b>Details of Any Previous Affiliation with the University and/or the Candidate</b>	
□	

The list of external referees (i.e. the Bio sketch forms) is sent to the Dean for approval and after provided to candidate for comment and signature.

Chairs start early in the identification of appropriate external referees !!!!!

Faculty members should read the Bio sketch forms carefully to make sure all proposed referees have appropriate expertise and do not present COI

# Faculty member responsibilities

*“Keep your eyes on the prize”*

- Do keep track of the process and timelines
- Don't abdicate this responsibility in favour of the TPP committee: it is your career, folks don't know everything, they make mistakes
- In case of doubt consult MUFA
- Be proactive: imagine that every PI/faculty in Canada and abroad you come in contact with, could be called upon to review your file
- **Read the bio sketch forms carefully, object if deemed necessary**
- Never say: “Oh well ...”

**In other words, take control of the process from day 1**

# Academic Assessment: Teaching

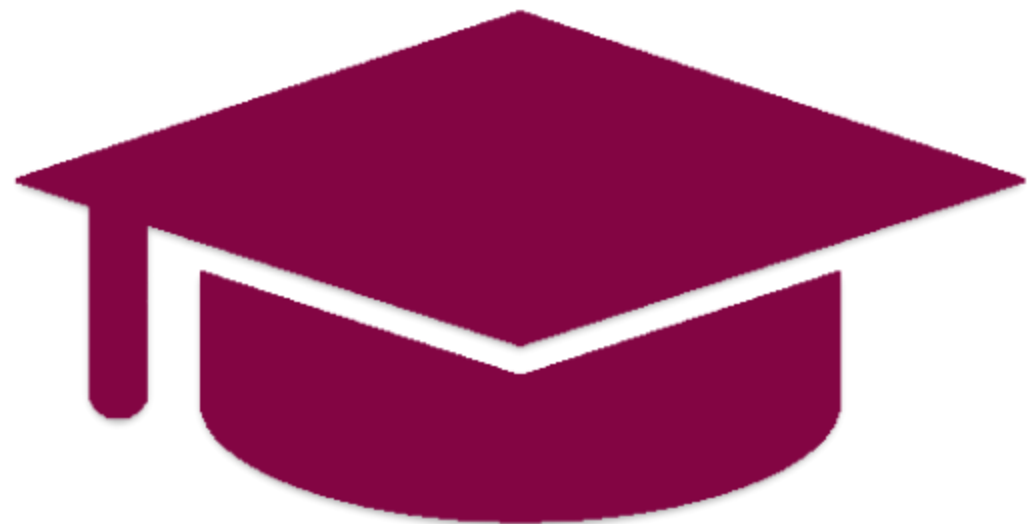
*“A candidate for **re-appointment, tenure and/or promotion** must demonstrate that he or she is an **effective** teacher.” (Section III, clause 5)*

*“A candidate for **permanence** must demonstrate that he or she is an **excellent** teacher. The required standard of performance is higher for teaching-stream faculty than for tenure-stream because this is the primary criterion by which teaching-stream faculty are judged; there are not two equally important criteria as there are for tenure-stream faculty.” (Section III, clause 6)*

**NOTE 1:** Teaching must **not** be based solely on student evaluation data from the **Student Course Experience Survey**, previously known as the Student Evaluation of Teaching it must include peer review of teaching of individual courses on several occasions over the course of several years prior to academic **assessment**

**NOTE 2:** Evidence of scholarship (SoTL) is appreciated **but not required** for permanence, and is one of the various types of evidence considered for promotion of the teaching stream faculty.

# Academic Assessment: Scholarly Achievement



*“... , it is expected that all tenure-track and tenured faculty members will be engaged in some form of **scholarly activity** and the assessment of the quality of this work will be **a key factor** in the consideration of each faculty member’s case for re-appointment, tenure and/or promotion.”*

*“.... scholarship in teaching or pedagogy **is required for promotion for teaching-stream faculty**. In those assessments, these same guidelines should be followed, except for the number of external evaluations. **Section III, clause 11***



# The T&P Policy statements about research and publications are very general...

- Because there are large cultural differences across disciplines, Chairs need to be as clear as possible about Department and broader disciplinary expectations that include:
  - Research and grant-getting productivity
  - Publications (e.g., issue of authorship, books vs. articles, chapters in books, conference presentations, originality and independence, etc.)
  - Faculty members must consult and seek feedback as to the bar and expectations for career progression

## Academic Assessment: Service

“..., each faculty member will assist at some level(s) in the committee work of the University and perform such assignments diligently and effectively. The meritorious performance of these duties **shall not** substitute for either effective teaching or scholarly achievement in the consideration for re-appointment, tenure, permanence, and/or promotion; however, unsatisfactory performance in the discharging of these duties may be an important factor in the delaying or denial of tenure, permanence and/or promotion.” ([Section III, clause 17](#))



# Moving forward

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The **Department T&P Committee** will decide on the dossier and forward this decision to the **Faculty T&P Committee** which will in turn forward this decision to the **Senate Committee on Appointments**

