

## Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotions

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Overview: Baylor University's policy regarding scholarly expectations for promotion has changed significantly in the last year, impacting associate professors in departments across the university. Prior to 2006-07, faculty members who had served the university for at least 15 years and had received the recommendation of the department chair could apply for promotion. The Policy required that the faculty member give "significant evidence of effective teaching, of scholarship, and of supporting the mission of the department and the university, and of assuming one's share of departmental and university-wide responsibilities." The faculty member was to be "recognized as distinguished in teaching, scholarship, or in providing special leadership in important areas of university, professional, or community life." The administration stated that "this flexibility in criteria is a reflection of both the different gifts that faculty members have and the different departmental situations in which they carry out their responsibilities."

As of 2006, the new policy states that a faculty member must have established a recognized body of scholarship in the field and obtain positive letters of recommendation attesting to that attainment from distinguished professors at other universities, preferably from Tier 1 institutions. Such a change has created uneven possibilities for associate professors across the university to aspire to promotion to full professor. While faculty members from all areas of the university are affected, this disparity is particularly significant in the sciences where large capital outlays for development of laboratory facilities and equipment are required. In spite of the president's offer to fund release time for associate professors to meet these new promotional standards, experiences of the last year indicate that in many cases it is not feasible for the university to provide the extensive resources needed for this purpose. With rare exceptions, it is unrealistic to expect those who have devoted their careers to teaching, service, and limited research and publication to move suddenly in another direction and achieve tier one status as a research scholar. The result has been a serious erosion of morale among many associate professors.

Thus, the Faculty Senate reaffirms the principle that, in the interest of fairness and justice, faculty members should be evaluated for promotion by the policies in effect when they were hired.

### Recommendation:

Expectations for promotion by those hired before 2006 should be scaled to the resources and requirements of their position before the new guidelines were enacted. Accordingly, the procedures for nomination, recommendation, and evaluation for promotion that were in place at the time of hire should be applied to these associate professors seeking to become full professors.