Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review Tenure and Promotion Policies and Procedures

Table of Contents

Appendices (Available from CRTP Public Space at R:\committees\crtp\public)

    A. Bucknell Faculty Survey: Forced Choice Questions
    B. Bucknell Faculty Survey: Comments
    C. Peer & Aspirant School Procedures: Faculty Handbook Info
    D. Peer & Aspirant School Procedures: Provost/VPAA Survey

I. Executive Summary

The ad-hoc committee to review tenure and promotion (CRTP) began its work in the fall of 2007. CRTP spent much of its time gathering, synthesizing and analyzing internal data to characterize Bucknell's tenure and promotion system as accurately as possible. CRTP also gathered and examined external 'benchmarking' data describing our peer institutions' tenure and review systems so that Bucknell's system could be placed within the appropriate context.

In general, the Bucknell system for tenure and promotion works well, and falls well within the norms of our peer institutions. Since 1987, Bucknell has tenured 66 percent of tenure track faculty hired; 10 percent of tenure track faculty hired left due to a failed review. These numbers are in line with the means at our peer institutions.

Bucknell's tenure system balances administrative and faculty input, via Departmental and Program Review Committees, the University Review Committee (URC) and the recommendations of the president. Peer institutions also balance administrative and faculty input, although sometimes in different ways. The wisdom of collective decision-making engendered in Bucknell's process is a strength of our system, and should be maintained.

At Bucknell as well as at our peer institutions, the university-level review committee plays a central role in the retention, tenure and promotion process. This assures that consistent standards and procedures are applied across the university. This practice should continue.

It was evident from the survey of the faculty and from the comments of current and former URC members that more needs to be done at the university to enhance the clarity and consistency of DRCs and PRCs.

Bucknell's tenure system results in outcomes that faculty members, for the most part, have confidence in. However, faculty members have little faith in the methods by which teaching is evaluated at Bucknell. A more robust system for evaluating teaching should be developed.

Bucknell's system is time consuming, as is the review process at peer institutions. This seems to be an inevitability of a careful tenure system. The only area in which Bucknell's tenure system was a significant outlier was in the timeline for reviews. Bucknell does more reviews in a shorter period than any of our peer institutions. In order to ensure the sanctity of the tenure review process, Bucknell should move as quickly as possible to a less compressed review schedule.

Bucknell's tenure system is a good one that is worth keeping. The sharing of power between faculty and administrators on the URC is consistent with the models at our peer institutions, and the fact that these decisions are made in a group context reduces the chances that one individual could make a decision that is out of touch with the realities of tenure at Bucknell. Thus, we recommend that the system be kept in place, with reforms based on the changes recommended in section IV of our report.

II. Background

The Ad Hoc Committee to Review Tenure and Promotion Policies and Procedures (hereafter CRTP) was created in the fall of 2007 with the following charge:

Charge from the Faculty Council, the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure, and the co-chairs of the University Review Committee to the Ad Hoc Committee to Review Tenure and Promotion Policies and Procedures, September 20, 2007

Tenure and promotion policies and practice play a critical role in shaping the faculty, and thus the future of the university. This committee is charged to undertake a critical examination of Bucknell's system of evaluation for tenure and promotion, and make recommendations to the faculty regarding any changes that will help us to develop the faculty that can best serve our students and university. In considering such changes the committee should undertake a review of Bucknell's record of hiring, retention, tenure, and promotion, and it should also compare Bucknell's tenure and promotion system to those in place at peer institutions. (Any changes that are recommended should be implemented in such a way that they will not affect in any substantive way those untenured faculty who have already begun careers at Bucknell at the time the changes are made.)

In addition the committee is asked to examine the following issues:
- *the fundamental charge of the URC and its relationship to DRCs[1];*
- *the procedures that the URC uses in evaluation of materials;*
- *the appropriate process by which evolving standards for tenure and promotion should be determined;*
- *a consideration of which elements of DRC statements can be made more uniform;*
- *the communication of standards to departments and to individual candidates;*
- *the workload of the URC;*
- *the presidential role in tenure and promotion; and*
- *the annual schedule for reviews.*

The committee is asked to present an interim report to the faculty no later than the March meeting of the faculty. In addition to summarizing the preliminary work of the committee, this report could introduce motions to amend the Faculty Handbook so that they could be voted on at the April faculty meeting. The committee should make a final report to the faculty in the Fall semester of 2008 with recommendations for changes that should be brought the faculty for consideration.

The original members of the committee were: Ben Vollmayr-Lee (Chair), Paula Davis, Geoff Schneider, Linden Lewis, Jim Rice, Peter Stryker, Julian Bourg, and Kim Daubman. Julian Bourg and Paula Davis were replaced by Molly McGuire and Paul McGuire in the fall of 2008.

---

[1] Note: the document uses "DRC" to refer to department review committees as well as program review committees.

Initially, the task seemed too vast for our committee to undertake in a year of work. After much early discussion, the committee decided to focus on some key issues that seemed most important given the campus climate: 1) What is Bucknell's tenure rate, and how does it compare with the tenure rates at peer and aspirant schools? 2) How does Bucknell's tenure model compare with those at peer and aspirant schools? 3) How do faculty and administrators view the tenure system, and what do they see as its major strengths and weaknesses? 4) What is the appropriate tenure model for Bucknell given its history and character and given the views of its faculty and administrators? 5) What is the appropriate role for the President, Provost and the faculty in the tenure model at Bucknell? 6) Does Bucknell's timetable for reviews make sense? We also considered the specific issues raised in the CRTP charge.

Having identified the key issues embedded in its charge, the committee next began the process of defining the data it would require to inform its deliberations. These data requirements fell into two general categories: 1) internal data describing Bucknell's rates of tenure as well as faculty experiences with and perceptions of the tenure review system and its standards, and 2) external 'benchmarking' data describing our peer institutions' tenure and review models, standards, processes, and rates.

An impediment to the collection of internal data was the lack of central record keeping of review outcomes. This information was eventually obtained from the Office of the Provost, with assistance from University Archives, Institutional Research, and department and program chairs to compile the appropriate list of faculty members. Concurrently, the committee also recognized the need to measure faculty experiences and perceptions regarding Bucknell's model, processes, and standards regarding review for tenure and thus conducted an internal faculty survey that attempted to target key issues/questions and current faculty opinion relating to them. Finally, to supplement the other internal data gathering initiatives, the committee undertook a series of interviews with current and former URC members and key administrators, including the President and Provost and the Deans of both Colleges.

External 'benchmarking' data were collected from a variety of sources: 1) the committee's examination of Faculty Handbooks from Bucknell's peer/aspirant institutions and additional institutions immediately above and below Bucknell on the US News & World Report rankings, 2) an informal e-mail survey of provosts and VPAA's from the same institution list, and 3) quantitative tenure rate data, obtained by the office of Institutional Research, for five peer institutions. The data retrieved from these sources focused on peer institutions' tenure review models and processes in terms of 1) the sequence and timeline of the process, with decision-making actors identified, 2) the relative importance of the departmental and university-level review bodies, 3) tenure rates, and 4) perceptions of systemic strengths or weaknesses.

After reviewing the extensive data that was gathered, the committee gained a measure of confidence that it had a comprehensive understanding of Bucknell's system, processes and performance as well as those of our peer/aspirant institutions. The committee then synthesized its data and developed the formative conclusions and recommendations comprising this report.

In section III we present the data we obtained from our investigations, along with analysis where appropriate. In section IV we present our recommendations.

III. Data and Analysis

In this section we present a summary of the data we obtained from internal surveys, internal and external tenure rate examination, and external "benchmarking" efforts. This information provides the basis for the recommendations that follow in section IV. Ideally, this information will prove useful to the faculty in deciding whether to accept the recommendations of the committee, or in determining alternate measures. The detailed data, in particular the full contents of the faculty survey, are presented in the appendices. Some data, both internal and external, is confidential, and has either been redacted for public view or used only in a summary presentation format.

The subsections below cover, in order, a) the faculty survey, b) interviews with the URC, Deans, Provost, and President, c) Bucknell's tenure data, and d) comparison with our peer institutions.

III. A. *Faculty Survey Analysis*

The CRPT surveyed faculty in the spring semester of 2008. Through forced-choice questions faculty were asked about their experiences with and beliefs and attitudes about the review process. The survey concluded with a broad open-ended question asking respondents what they thought was "important for the committee to address that was not included in the survey." 228 faculty completed the survey.

Forced choice questions revealed the following:

Overall Process Rating
- Only 17% of faculty as a whole (with little variability across division or rank) *disagreed* that our system of evaluation works well; however, only 37% of faculty *agreed* that it worked well (the rest were of mixed opinion). Most likely to agree that our system works well were natural scientists (49%), associate professors >5 years (54%), full professors (42%), those who have served on DRCs ((45%), and those who have served on the URC (62%). Least likely to agree that our system works well were untenured faculty (28%) and humanists (27%).

Pre-Tenure Reviews
- 77% agreed that it's important for junior faculty to have two pre-tenure reviews; those who served on the URC were especially in agreement (92%).

Clarity of Process
- 53% of untenured faculty agreed that the retention and tenure review process in the department or program is communicated clearly; only 14% of untenured faculty agreed that this process is communicated clearly at the university level. Higher percentages of tenured faculty thought this review process was clearly communicated at the department/program (64%) and university (32%) levels.

- Most untenured faculty did not think teaching and scholarship expectations were communicated clearly. In fact, only 19% thought teaching standards were clear and only 5% thought scholarship standards were clear. Tenured faculty were less negative, but still only 32% thought teaching standards were clear and only 16% thought scholarship standards were clear. 32% of the faculty as a whole thought service expectations were communicated clearly.

Effectiveness of Teaching Evaluation
- Only 21% of faculty as a whole and only 10% of untenured faculty agreed that our current system for evaluating teaching for retention and tenure is fair. Only 31% of faculty as a whole and only 13% of untenured faculty agreed that our current system for evaluating scholarship for retention and tenure is fair.

Standards and Expectations
- Few faculty (3%) agreed that our expectations for tenure and promotion are consistent across programs and departments, but nearly half (47%) thought they should be (19% disagreed and 34% were neutral or of mixed opinion).
- There was wide disagreement as to how specific expectations for retention and tenure should be.
    o 45% of faculty as a whole but only 21% of untenured faculty *disagree* that DRC documents should specify the number and prestige of publications expected for retention and tenure; 21% of faculty as a whole and 33% of untenured faculty *agreed* with this practice (the balance are neutral or of mixed opinion); those who served on the URC are most in disagreement with this practice (79%)
    o 46% of faculty as a whole but only 23% of untenured faculty *disagree* that DRC documents should specify average ratings on teaching evaluations expected for retention and tenure; 24% of faculty as a whole and 37% of untenured faculty *agreed* with this practice (the balance are neutral or of mixed opinion); those who served on the URC are most in disagreement with this practice (62%)
    o 57% of faculty as a whole and 67% of untenured faculty agreed that DRC documents should specify the level of service expected for retention and tenure
- 61% of faculty in arts and sciences agreed that standards for scholarship have increased in recent years; however, only 38% of engineers agree. A majority (58%) disagreed that scholarship expectations should increase as a consequence of going to a 5-course load. Similarly, 58% disagreed that new faculty should be held to a higher standard of scholarship.
- Opinions about whether teaching standards have increased in recent years were mixed. A majority disagreed that teaching expectations for new faculty should be increased over the current level.

DRC-URC Relations
- 76% of faculty agreed that if DRC/PRCs are doing their job, then URC decisions should rarely diverge; 75% of current/former URC members agreed with this statement.

- Only 26% of former/current DRC/PRC members agreed with the statement that DRC/PRCs take up too much faculty time; 58% of former/current URC members agreed that the URC workload is excessively heavy.
- 50% of faculty believe the URC is the most appropriate body to make the critical decision about retention and tenure; 40% believe it is the DRC/PRC. A clear majority (73%) rejected the idea that the President should have the power to accept or reject the decision of the URC on retaining, tenuring, or promoting someone.

The following major themes emerged from the open-ended question:

1. Far too much emphasis is placed on student evaluations of teaching. Furthermore, the student evaluation forms could be much better designed.
2. Criteria for evaluating teaching, scholarship and service should be communicated more clearly to candidates by both the URC and the DRCs.
3. There is a lack of transparency to the tenure process.
4. The DRC/URC committee system ensures a systematic evaluation of faculty that is not subject to the whims of one person nor a rapid shift in evaluative criteria due to an administrative change.

III. B. Input from URC, Deans, Provost, and President

The following four questions were asked in the spring of 2008 of ten former and current faculty URC members, whose membership on the URC spanned the last decade, and the current deans. The interviews were conducted in small groups and interviewees were encouraged to submit more detailed individual responses and several chose to do so. Provost Smyer met with the committee in October of 2008 and a conversation was held on these same questions. We also met with President Mitchell whose perspective aided the Committee's deliberations. The responses of the faculty, deans, provost and president are summarized below without attribution.

1. What is and/or should be Bucknell's primary goal for our tenure review process?
2. Is our current process successful in realizing that goal? If not, in what ways is it failing or falling short?
3. What specific recommendations do you have for improving the process?
4. What do you think should be the principal role of the URC in the tenure review process?

Question 1: *What is and/or should be Bucknell's primary goal for our tenure review process?*

The general consensus is that the primary goal of the process is to attract, retain, and promote high quality faculty. The quality of the faculty is "measured against a bar" set by the University through the DRC-URC process, which, in turn, relies for guidance on the Faculty Handbook and the DRC documents. The process has both the developmental role of providing feedback to faculty about expectations as well as the evaluative role of "sorting faculty with respect to the bar." Almost all respondents acknowledged both roles, although there was a range of opinion in regard to how heavily to weight the developmental aspect versus the "sorting aspect."

In more than one way, the point was made that the tenure process begins at hiring. One view is that a well functioning process is necessary to attract strong candidates. An additional point is that not all candidates are hired at the same starting points, as some enter with significant post-doctoral experience while others are hired fresh out of graduate school or "all but dissertation." Given both the range of starting points and the ultimate primary goal, there was recognition that the process should be consistent and fair, both longitudinally and across the University, and that the goal is the development of faculty who demonstrate, through their probationary performance at Bucknell, the likelihood of long term success as a teacher, a scholar, and a contributing member of the Bucknell community.

Question 2: *Is our current process successful in realizing that goal? If not, in what ways is it failing or falling short?*

Respondents agreed that the current process has been and continues to be a successful one. Having said that, concerns were raised about several aspects of the process. Generally, the view was that a well functioning evaluative process by the DRC is viewed as critical to achieving the primary goal. Concern was raised that the university review criteria and those within many departments are too vague, requiring committees and individuals to substantially interpret them. This can compromise "consistency over time" due to changes in committee memberships and provide less effective guidance to untenured faculty. One response suggested that there are perceptions that the goalposts are being moved without acknowledgement and that service is being treated with ambivalence.

Additionally, many respondents expressed concern about how well the system functions at the DRC level and the need for DRC's to evaluate and not advocate.   They asserted that critical analysis by the DRC is necessary in order to do a better job at identifying areas of improvement and giving good developmental feedback.

Several respondents cited the compressed time frame for the URC to conduct reviews as a stress on the system.   One respondent raised a concern about the nature and administration of teaching evaluations. One final suggestion was to provide a method of generic feedback to DRC's by the URC.

Question 3: *What specific recommendations do you have for improving the process?*

The recommendations for change generally fell into the following six categories.
1. There was a strong recommendation for changing the timeline to allow more time for URC reviews.
2. Overall the respondents favored keeping a process of three reviews. Several suggested conducting second and third-year reviews without the provost. One respondent suggested that fourth and fifth- year reviews could be conducted without the provost. Although a couple of responses floated the possibility of doing second

and third-year reviews without the URC, most respondents favored the URC continuing to conduct all reviews.

3. The respondents recommended more guidance for DRC's in conducting reviews. A university-wide standard template for conducting reviews was suggested.

4. A recommendation was made to continue efforts to improve the nature and administration of teaching evaluations.

5. There were recommendations for more clarity in the process. These included clarity in: expectations at the point of hiring a faculty member, the process for selection of external reviewers, the process for conducting reviews at the department level, and how cases of disagreement are presented to the board of trustees. One respondent recommended that more care be given to ensuring that contractual and spoken arrangements at hiring conform more strictly to University review guidelines with regard to teaching and scholarship. In the event of an unresolved disagreement between the president and the URC, there was a recommendation that this disagreement be made explicit and that the president carry the URC decision as well as his or her own to the board of trustees. A suggestion emerged that in such a situation the chair of the URC should accompany the president to present the view of the URC to the Board. Additionally, some suggested a method be devised for monitoring the system and regularly reviewing the standards under which it operates. For example, records should be kept (while safeguarding privacy of individuals) of positive and negative decisions that allow analysis by gender, race, and division.

6. There was a recommendation by one respondent that there be more explicit recognition of service in the review process. This respondent suggested that if we do not intend to hold people accountable for doing service, then service should be removed as a tenure requirement and instead rewarded with either release time or pay.

Question 4: *What do you think should be the principal role of the URC in the tenure review process?*

The consensus of the respondents was that the URC should play a decisive role in the review process. The respondents viewed the URC as an aid to DRC's in mentoring untenured faculty and as a body to ensure that consistent University-wide standards are upheld. While respecting the important roles of DRC's, the administration, and the president in the review process, there was clear agreement that the URC should be the central decision maker.

III. C. Bucknell Tenure Data

Historically, Bucknell has maintained no compiled data regarding how many tenure track faculty members go up for review and how many are tenured. The CRTP decided to locate and compile this data for faculty members hired to tenure track positions in the 15 year window from the 1987-88 to the 2001-2002 academic years. The reason for not considering more recent hires is that the vast majority have their tenure outcome still undetermined. This 15-year window created a cohort that could be tracked fully through the process.

The list of hired faculty was compiled with assistance of University Archives, Institutional Research and department chairs, and then the confidential review history of each hire was compiled within the Provost's Office. The CRTP then received the compiled data with the names removed. A summary of these results follows.

- Of the 228 faculty hired during this 15-year window, 150 or 66% went on to receive tenure, 55 or 24% left before receiving tenure, but without failing a review, and 23 or 10% left because of a failed review.   Presumably, in some of the cases where someone left without failing a review, the review process played a role in the decision, but it is not possible to quantify this effect.

- There is a gender difference: 72% of the 131 men hired received tenure, compared to 58% of the 97 women hired. The rate of failing reviews is the same (10%), but women are far more likely to leave before receiving tenure than men (32% to 18%). As before, it is not easy to determine what impact the review process has on these decisions.

- There is a change over time. If we break the 15-year data into three consecutive 5-year windows, we find the rate of hires receiving tenure to be decreasing, from 74% to 66% to 60%. The change is primarily due to an increase in the fraction of hires who leave before receiving tenure, as the percentages of failed reviews remained relatively constant at 11%, 8% and 11% respectively.

- The rates of hires receiving tenure were uniform across division. However, the composition of those not receiving tenure differed from the University-wide sample for Humanities and Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the former having a higher fraction who left without failing a review, and the latter having a slightly higher fraction failing reviews

Hire date or group	Hires	Left before 2nd	Failed 2nd	Left before 4th	Failed 4th	Left before tenure	Failed tenure	Tenured	Percentages		
									Tenured	Left	Failed
Fa87-Sp92	72	6	1	1	1	4	6	53	74%	15%	11%
Fa92-Sp97	62	2	1	7	2	7	2	41	66%	26%	8%
Fa97-Sp02	94	7	1	16	3	5	6	56	60%	30%	11%
Female	97	10	1	15	3	6	6	56	58%	32%	10%
Male	131	5	2	9	3	10	8	94	72%	18%	10%
ENGR	34	0	1	2	0	6	3	22	65%	24%	12%
HUMN	78	7	1	13	0	4	3	50	64%	31%	5%
NS&M	49	1	1	5	4	2	3	33	67%	16%	16%
SOCS	67	7	0	4	2	4	5	45	67%	22%	10%
All	228	15	3	24	6	16	14	150	66%	24%	10%

III. D. Comparison of Peer & Aspirant Schools

As charged, the CRTP undertook a systematic survey of tenure practices at peer institutions. We identified a set of 22 schools (listed below) by adopting the Peer & Aspirant Institution list adopted by the Board of Trustees (13 institutions) and supplemented this with schools ranked within five places of Bucknell in the US News and World Report rankings. Our study of practices at peer and aspirant institutions consisted of three parts:

- An informal survey of Provosts/VPAA's of the institutions in our group,
- An examination of Faculty Handbooks for policy descriptions from each of our 22 identified peer and aspirant group
- Quantitative tenure rate data for five peer institutions obtained via the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium

The peer institutions are

Barnard, Bates, Bryn Mawr, Colgate, Colorado College, Dartmouth, Davidson, Furman, Kenyon, Lafayette, Lehigh, Macalaster, Middlebury, Holy Cross, Occidental, Richmond, Scripps, Trinity, Union, Villanova, Wake Forest, and William & Mary.

III. D. 1. Provost Survey

An informal survey of Provosts/VPAA's at a number of peer and aspirant institutions was conducted. Responses were received from fifteen institutions. Each of the four survey questions are listed here, followed by a summary of the responses.

1)   What is the president's role in the tenure process? What is the role of the Provost/VPAA/Dean of Faculty? Has either or both ever over-turned a decision?

With all but one exception, the president made the final recommendation on tenure and promotion of faculty to the institutional board for their final approval.   There was great variety in the role the president played in the review committee process itself—ranging from no role to the president playing an active (even chairing) role. The roles played by the provost and/or VPAA/Dean of Faculty was equally variable, with common models having the provost either a) as an independent decision role as the receiver of the university-level committee's recommendation or b) as an active (often chairing) voting participant. Few respondents provided data regarding frequency of overturned decisions; those that did tended to report a very low or rare rate of occurrence.

2)   Assuming that your institution has both departmental and university-level bodies evaluating candidates for tenure and promotion, which is more `powerful' or makes the critical decision? Who makes the penultimate recommendation to the president?

Again, all but one respondent reported that the university-level committee was the more powerful or critical decision-making body.

3)   What is your tenure rate in terms of percentage of faculty hired who are awarded tenure? Given that precise data may not be available, what is your perception of your institution's tenure rate (e.g., high, low, average)?

Most responded with a percentage of faculty tenured out of those who `stand' for tenure, rather than of those hired. The responses were rather uniform, around 90%.

4)   What would you identify as the strengths and weaknesses of your institution's process?

The responses varied somewhat. The principal positives outlined by respondents were a sense of openness, fairness and commitment to a rigorous process. The principal negatives were that the process was excessively time-consuming and labor intensive, there were often inconsistencies in communications of standards at the various levels of review, there were difficulties ascertaining and weighing student input, and there were variations in the value/utility of departmental and external reviewers' recommendations.

III. D. 2. Faculty Handbook Survey

A thorough reading of the faculty handbooks from our comparison list of 22 institutions is summarized as follows.

1) *University review committees are the major force in tenure decisions at our peer institutions.*

Almost all of our peer institutions use a university level review committee as a key part of the tenure process. Furthermore, at almost all of our peer institutions, the university review committee (URC) or its equivalent makes the penultimate decision in the tenure process.

2) *All peer institutions balance faculty and administrative input in the tenure process.*

URCs are composed primarily of tenured faculty. In most cases, they do not seem to include deans of colleges, but they include the Provost or Dean of the Faculty at about half of our peer institutions. In those cases in which the Provost is on the URC, the Provost does not usually submit an independent evaluation. In 9 out of 10 cases in which the Provost sat on the URC, the Provost did not submit an independent evaluation of candidates. In cases where the Provost or the Dean makes an independent evaluation of the candidate, the URC is usually a faculty-only committee. Thus, all institutions balance faculty and administrative input in the tenure process, although the methods of soliciting that input differ.

In this area, Bucknell's tenure process, which includes four faculty members and three administrators on the URC, is similar in spirit but different in process than our peer institutions. Given that the Bucknell URC consists of two Deans, the Provost and four elected faculty members, the administration shapes the tenure process at Bucknell through the URC. At other universities, it is more common for the URC to be primarily a faculty voice, while an administrator such as the Dean, Provost or President can choose to accept or reject the URC recommendation.

3) *The President can choose to accept or reject URC recommendations at most peer institutions.*

At 90% of peer institutions for which information was available, the President was granted the power to accept or reject recommendations for tenure. At a number of peer institutions, if the President's decision diverges from the recommendations of the URC, a discussion must be undertaken between the President and the URC and/or DRC to try to resolve the disagreement before the recommendation goes on to the Board of Trustees. In some cases, if the President and URC cannot reach agreement, then both recommendations go forward to the Board of Trustees, which makes the final decision.

The President of Bucknell, as a voting member of the Board of Trustees, has the power to speak and vote for or against the recommendations of the URC, which is somewhat similar to the role of other presidents. The President of Bucknell can also ask the URC to reconsider its recommendations.

4) *Bucknell does more reviews in a more compressed time period than most other peer institutions.*

Many peer institutions only do one pre-tenure review rather than two. Most peer institutions have a much longer schedule for reviews that spreads the work load more evenly over the year. This is clearly an area that Bucknell needs to work on, especially given the increase in the size of the faculty and the corresponding increase in the number of reviews.

5) *Many of our peer institutions notify candidates of pre-tenure and/or tenure review decisions in the spring semester.*

While Bucknell informs candidates of review decisions by December 15th, it is clear from our survey that this is not the norm and that notification dates vary widely. Many peer institutions do pre-tenure reviews one semester and tenure reviews a different semester, with notification dates varying accordingly.

6) *Department chair role.*

A number of peer institutions include department chair evaluations as part of the departmental review process. This model seems to be more prevalent where chairs serve longer terms and play more of an administrative and evaluative role.

7) *Provost's role.*

Most peer institutions (62%) do not give the Provost an independent evaluation role in the tenure process.

III. D. 3. Peer Institution Tenure Rate Data

The Office of Institutional Research was able to obtain accurate quantitative information regarding the tenure rates at five peer institutions via the Higher Education Data Sharing

Consortium. We note that, given the confidentiality of tenure data, published studies of tenure rate comparison typically have one institution as their comparison set, so this is a data-rich comparison. The five institutions, all ranked in the 20's to 40's in the US News rankings, are not identified in order to preserve requested anonymity.

For these institutions, the percentage of faculty hired who ultimately receive tenure were 51%, 65%, 73%, 75%, and 84%. Bucknell's rate is 66%.

For these institutions, the percentage of faculty tenured who 'stand' for tenure were 75%, 90%, 93%, 100%, and 100%. Bucknell's rate is 91%.

III. D. 4.   Additional Summary Conclusions.

1) *Most systems are seen as rigorous, fair, and extremely time consuming.*

Administrators at peer institutions who responded to our questions about their tenure review systems almost all tend to believe that their tenure systems are rigorous and time consuming, as well as fair and reasonably transparent. The data from the faculty survey indicate that the Bucknell system is also viewed as rigorous, time consuming and fair for the most part, although many faculty have not found the system to be transparent.

2) *URC decisions are rarely reversed by presidents, provosts, or the board of trustees.*

Almost all of our peer institutions that addressed this issue reported that the tenure recommendations of the URC were rarely, if ever overturned.

3) *Bucknell's tenure rate is similar to that of peer institutions.*

Of the peer institutions that submitted information to us, most told us that the percentage of faculty standing for tenure who received tenure was high. And, for the 9 institutions who estimated their tenure rate, the average percentage of faculty who stood for and received tenure was 91%. This is very close to Bucknell's tenure rate over the last 15 years. Most peer institutions also reported that the actual percentage of any cohort who received tenure was much lower due to attrition and negative signals at earlier reviews. All evidence indicates that Bucknell is well within the norm of our peer institutions in terms of its tenure rate.

IV. Recommendations

We reaffirm the teacher-scholar model, the value of teaching, scholarship and service, and the balance that has historically evolved at Bucknell. Both teaching and peer-reviewed scholarship are central to the role of the university as an institution of learning.

We also reaffirm the role the DRC plays in mentoring and reviewing candidates based on their expertise in the discipline, and the central role of the URC in insuring consistency across departments and in making the major decisions in the tenure and promotion process. Benchmarking indicates that we are well within the norm with our tenure structure, and the faculty survey indicates widespread support for the tenure process at Bucknell. The system is a good one and it works well for the most part.

Nevertheless, there are a number of areas in which our tenure system could improve. In what follows below, we describe the changes we recommend to the tenure and promotion system at Bucknell. Our recommendations fall into three categories: a) the timeline of reviews, b) DRC-URC tenure and promotion process reforms, and c) the tenure and promotion model at Bucknell.

IV. A. Timeline of Reviews

Bucknell does more reviews in a shorter period of time than any of our peer institutions. Indeed, this is the area in which Bucknell is most out of step with our peer and aspirant institutions. Review decisions are too important to rush, so it is essential that the URC be given enough time to do its work. To decompress the URC's schedule, we recommend the following changes:

1. Second and fourth year reviews should be submitted earlier in the fall. Tenure review documents should be submitted by November 1st. Second and fourth year review decisions would be sent by December 15th. Tenure review decisions would be sent by February 15th. (See below for a detailed calendar proposal.)
2. The date by which the URC must meet with the President should be changed from a specific date to "on or about" a specific date to provide some much-needed flexibility.

The revised timetable would be as follows:

Fall: All second, third, fourth, and fifth year reviews to be completed. Begin tenure reviews. The URC is to continue to employ subcommittee procedures. Discussion of URC recommendations with president should continue.

Spring: Complete tenure reviews, all appeals, and promotion reviews. The URC is to continue to employ subcommittee procedures for tenure reviews and can employ subcommittee procedures for promotion reviews. Report and discussion of URC recommendations with the president should continue.

The table below delineates how the calendar would work for each review.

	Proposal to Revise the Timeline of Reviews			
	2nd & 3rd year	4th & 5th year	Tenure	Promotion
9/20	DRC reports to candidates			
9/30	Materials sent to Dean, URC	DRC reports to candidates		
10/10		Materials sent to Dean, URC		
10/15			DRC reports to candidates	
11/1			Materials sent to Dean, URC	
12/1	URC discussion with President	URC discussion with President		
12/15	URC letters to candidates	URC letters to candidates		
1/15	Appeals to URC	Appeals to URC		
1/31			URC discussion with President	
2/1	Appeals responses to candidates	Appeals responses to candidates		DRC reports to candidates
2/15			URC letters to candidates	Materials sent to Dean, URC
3/7			Appeals to URC	
3/21			Appeals responses to candidates	
4/1				URC discussion with President
4/15				URC letters to candidates
9/1				Appeals to URC
9/30				Appeal responses to candidates

The above schedule would mean that tenure cases would be completed in time for candidates to lodge an appeal with the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure in the spring semester. Furthermore, given that many disciplines begin reviewing job applications before December 15th, and that candidates who receive a negative DRC review may choose to be on the market without a record of a failed tenure review, we do not think the later date of completion of the tenure

review process will significantly harm job market prospects of any faculty who are not tenured. Finally, we feel it is more important to protect the quality of the review process than to ensure candidates two years rather than one year on the job market. We note that this is consistent with AAUP guidelines on promotion and tenure.

After one year of using this timetable, we recommend that the URC and CAFT evaluate how well the new timetable works and suggest changes if they are deemed necessary.

IV. B. DRC-URC Tenure and Promotion Process Reforms

1. **Guidelines in DRC Documents.** There should be more consistent guidelines across departments wherever possible. In our survey of the faculty and in conversations with URC members, inconsistent standards of DRCs emerged as one of the key problems in the review process at Bucknell University. Departments should rewrite DRC documents to be much clearer about what is expected of new faculty if they are to be recommended for tenure. These documents should also make issues specific to disciplines clear to the URC. At minimum, what constitutes good teaching, scholarship and service and how it will be measured should be clear in the DRC document. The procedures for identifying outside reviewers and obtaining letters from them should be standardized. A set of standardized guidelines should be established to govern the collection of supplemental student input.

2. **Revising and Updating DRC Documents.** The preparation and review of departmental DRC documents and procedures should be done carefully and in a more timely fashion. Clear procedures should be in place that help to guide the process. DRC documents should be reviewed regularly with an eye toward insuring procedures and standards are consistent across the university. We recommend that CAFT and the Provost reevaluate the existing system of reviewing and approving DRC documents and procedures in order to achieve more consistency and clarity across departments. CAFT and the Provost should prioritize this work and insure that all DRC documents are current, consistent with the Faculty Handbook, and clear.

3. **DRC Review Philosophy.** DRCs need to adopt a consistent philosophy with respect to reviews. Currently, some DRCs act as advocates for candidates, while others are evaluative in nature. Feedback from URC members indicates that is not helpful when departments act exclusively as advocates. This undermines the DRC's credibility and places the URC in the difficult position of evaluating material in a field in which they are not experts. This does a disservice to candidates as well as to the URC. For our system to work effectively, DRCs must do a thorough job of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. Every letter of DRC evaluation should contain within it a judgment as to whether or not the candidate has met the criteria for retention or tenure in each of the areas of teaching, scholarship and service, and should assess the strengths and weaknesses in each area.

4. **External DRC Member.** One possible way to improve the consistency and transparency of DRCs would be to include a member from outside of the home department or program on every DRC. This model is employed by several of our peer institutions. The implementation of this change would require careful thought.

5. **Mentoring of candidates by Deans.** Bucknell must do a better job communicating with candidates. We must make sure that all candidates are getting a clear, consistent message about the tenure process both from within their department or program as well as from the larger university. This consistency of message must ensue from the point of hiring and continue throughout the entire tenure process. We recommend that a Dean or Associate Dean of the faculty meet annually with each candidate for mentoring and to ensure that candidates are aware of all university processes and procedures and that the mentoring being provided by the department/program is consistent with the expectations of the DRC document and the expectations of the general university as laid out in the Faculty Handbook.

6. **Mentoring of candidates by Departments.** Departments should mentor candidates, providing consistent feedback throughout the tenure process so that candidates are aware of the tenure process and the DRC and university expectations for tenure. We recommend that every department develop a mentoring program to insure that all candidates are given clear and consistent developmental feedback throughout the tenure process. It is extremely important for candidates to receive developmental feedback early in the tenure process.

7. **DRC-URC Communications.** Both the URC and DRCs could benefit from improved communication. Problematic aspects of DRC reviews are likely to recur when no effective channel for feedback from the URC exists. Historically, DRCs have received essentially no feedback from URC out of concern for confidentiality of the candidate. Some compromise that attends to legal concerns but contributes to a better functioning review system should be attempted. There should be clearer communication between the URC and DRCs. Some avenue of feedback from the URC should make it clear to departments when there is something in their review process that is problematic so that problems can be avoided in the future. DRCs need to be clear about issues relevant to their discipline that may not be clear to the URC.

8. **Centrality of the URC role.** At Bucknell and at our peer and aspirant institutions, the university review committee plays a central role in the retention, tenure and promotion process. Furthermore, we believe that it is important for issues of consistency that the URC be involved in *all* pre-tenure and tenure reviews. To compensate for this major time commitment, URC members should continue to be granted one course release per year.

9. **The appropriate process by which evolving standards for tenure and promotion should be determined.** Judging by the survey results and other feedback we received, Bucknell faculty members do not have a clear idea what the standards for tenure are and whether they are changing. Currently, standards are set jointly by the faculty and by the administration through Faculty Handbook guidelines, departmental DRC documents (monitored by CAFT and the Provost), and the interpretation and application of these standards through the DRC/URC review process. This process seems appropriate, in that the standards are being set by the community via its practices. And, despite the desire for clearer written standards, the handbook statements of most institutions are necessarily vague because such statements need to be written to encompass practices in all departments and disciplines. Thus, the objective of the URC and DRCs should be to

construct philosophical statements to guide the process, as opposed to a detailed list of expectations.

10. **URC Procedures and Practices**. The faculty survey indicates that many faculty members find the Bucknell tenure system unclear. We recommend that the URC, in consultation with CAFT and the Provost, review all procedures relevant to the review process and create a single, clear document consistent with and inclusive of the language in the Faculty Handbook. Any changes in the procedures or the process should be brought before the faculty for approval.

IV. C. The Tenure and Promotion Model at Bucknell

Although a variety of tenure models exist at our peer institutions, there are a number of commonalities. The section below outlines some of the key issues with respect to tenure models and recommends some minor changes in the tenure and promotion model at Bucknell.

Regular reviews of the tenure system
The tenure system should be reviewed regularly, probably every ten years.

The Role of University Review Committees
First and foremost, a university review committee of some sort makes the key decision about tenure at almost all of our peer institutions. On these review committees, faculty almost always make up the majority of members. In cases where the Provost makes an independent recommendation, the review is usually a faculty-only committee.

The Role of the Provost
While some of our peer institutions allow the Provost to make an independent recommendation in the tenure process, it is also common for the Provost to sit on the university review committee. We recommend that the Provost continue to be a member of the URC at Bucknell. However, because of the Provost's time constraints, we recommend that the Provost should not participate fully in second and third year reviews (see our recommendation below regarding changes to the second year review).

The Role of the President
Most of our peer institutions give the President the power to give an independent recommendation to the board of trustees, and in some cases to reverse a recommendation from the university review committee. However, in practice, the power to reverse a tenure recommendation of a university review committee is a power that is seldom used.

Given that Bucknell's president sits on the Board of Trustees and is able to address the Board, s/he also has the ability to make an independent recommendation to the board as part of the tenure process. The Faculty Handbook explicitly states in section II.C.5.:"The final authority to grant appointments, promotions, and tenure rests with the Board. The President, as agent of the Board, is not required to concur with, nor is the Board required to accept, a recommendation of the department or of the University Review Committee." Thus, the President at Bucknell currently plays a similar role to those of other university presidents: s/he has the ability to agree

with the URC, return a case to the URC for further consideration and engage in a dialog with the URC, or disagree with the URC.

We recommend, in cases where the President disagrees with the URC (after meeting with them and asking the URC to reconsider its decision), that her/his decision be communicated to both the candidate and the URC at least two weeks prior to the trustee meeting. Subsequently, a representative of the URC presents the URC's case to the Board.

Due to the President's extremely busy schedule, we believe that it is not necessary for the President to be involved in second and third year reviews (see our recommendation below regarding changes to the second year review).

Changes to Second and Third Year reviews.
To reduce the burden on the Provost and the President, we recommend the following changes in second and third year reviews. The Provost should only participate in problematic second and third year reviews. Problematic cases would be defined as those in which the URC, excluding the Provost, reaches a negative decision, experiences a tie vote, or otherwise decides that it is necessary to involve the Provost. The President would not be involved in second and third year reviews other than to report the outcomes of these reviews to the board at the appropriate time.

Evaluating Teaching
The survey of faculty that we conducted indicated widespread dissatisfaction with the way that we evaluate teaching at Bucknell. Survey respondents were clear in their opinion that Bucknell could implement more effective student evaluations, and also rely less heavily on student evaluations of teaching in the tenure and promotion process, using more comprehensive methods of evaluating teaching. We recommend that the Committee on Instruction undertake a study of this issue to begin the process of constructing a more robust system for evaluating teaching.

Promotion
CRTP recommends that the Faculty and Academic Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Faculty Council, the University Review Committee, and the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure, craft new handbook language regarding promotion to address the following problem areas:

1. CRTP finds the language for promotion to be generally too vague. Finally, some members of the committee believe the faculty should revisit the language of promotion that privileges outstanding teaching as a criterion for promotion. Other committee members disagreed. We all agreed that a conversation about standards for promotion was warranted.

2. Procedural guidelines should be established about who is eligible to serve on a promotion review both at the DRC and URC levels. Procedures and guidelines for promotion should be standardized across the university. CRTP recommends against having assistant or associate professors serving on promotion DRCs. And, the University should consider whether it is appropriate for associate professors on the URC to evaluate promotion cases. Bucknell may want to consider establishing a separate URC for promotion cases, or altering the structure of the URC for promotion cases.

3. CRTP also recommends that Bucknell consider whether faculty members could be considered for accelerated promotion and under what circumstances.

Improving the Model via Better Record Keeping
CRTP's work was difficult in part due to the lack of data regarding tenure and promotion rates, and in particular due to the lack of reliable information about why faculty chose to leave Bucknell. Bucknell should keep accurate summaries of tenure data within the Provost's office, in order to discern important trends in a timely manner. The data compilation for CRTP reveals gender differences in the rate of leaving Bucknell. On the surface, this is worrisome, and we recommend that the Provost's office work to better understand, via exit interviews, the reasons why tenure candidates choose to leave. We also recommend that the Faculty and Academic Personnel Committee undertake a study of the gender differences in the rate of leaving Bucknell to determine if anything can and should be done to reverse this situation.

The Benefits of the Bucknell Model
We are convinced of the wisdom of collective decision making in the tenure process: the large degree of support for the tenure system at Bucknell among the faculty is an indication that the process is working reasonably well. The sharing of power between faculty and administrators on the URC is consistent with the models at our peer institutions, and the fact that these decisions are made in a group context reduces the chances that one individual could make a decision that is out of touch with the realities of tenure at Bucknell. Thus, we recommend that the system be kept in place largely as it is, with improvements based on the changes recommended above.