



Fendall Campus, Louisiana

Montserrado County, Liberia

**POLICY ON
FACULTY PROMOTION AND TENURE**

Approved on 3rd September 2019

UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA

POLICY ON FACULTY PROMOTION AND TENURE

I. BACKGROUND

For some time now faculty promotion at the University of Liberia has not been regular. Several factors have contributed to this irregularity, among which are the lack of an updated policy on faculty tenure and promotion. The other obstacles have to do with the institutional instruments or requirements for determining promotion, such as, faculty and student evaluations and a systematic approach to support faculty research. Over the last several years, however, the University has gradually either addressed these problems or instituted measures to do so. For instance, the new Teaching-Learning Center (TLC) and the recently established Institute for Policy Studies and Research can now handle evaluations and regulate faculty research respectively. It is in this new light that this faculty promotion and tenure policy is being presented.

The document itself has a long genesis, as it has evolved over a period of about five years. In 2014 Dr. Momolu Gateweh, then Vice President for Academic Affairs, appointed a committee to review the policy on faculty promotion and tenure. The committee, headed by Professor T. Debey Sayndee, submitted its report to the Academic Coordination Committee (ACC). During the review of the report in 2016 some members of the ACC raised a number of questions. For instance, there was a call for greater transparency, decentralization of the procedures for promotion, and a clear definition of the various academic ranks. Accordingly, for example, a key change in this proposal is that the application for promotion and tenure begins in the applicant's college—first in the department and later in the dean's office—and then the recommendation is forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and finally to the President's office. In this process, the ACC still plays a critical role in that it becomes the arbiter or ombudsman to evaluate protests from aggrieved faculty members who are dissatisfied with the result of their application for promotion.

Afterward Dr. Emmet A. Dennis, President of the University of Liberia, set up a subcommittee to review the comments and recommendations and revise the document; the subcommittee was headed by Dr. William Ezra Allen, Vice President for Academic Affairs. In 2017 an electronic copy of the original report was forwarded to the subcommittee. Following an initial revision, the document was then turned over to the newly-established TLC for its evaluation and recommendation. In addition, others likewise appraised the document and contributed to this final draft. These latter contributors include, for instance, the proposed College of Health Sciences and a number of individuals. The names of the original committee members (and those of the subcommittee) are affixed at the end of the document.

II. DEFINITION OF FACULTY RANKS

A full-time faculty generally holds a tenure-track position, and hence, is expected to qualify for promotion through the ranks. The University employs the following customary designations for full-time academic rank: Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, and Instructor;

Senior Laboratory Assistant (formerly laboratory demonstrator), Research Assistant, and Teaching Assistant. **Part-time or Adjunct Faculty status does not follow these designations.**

1) Full-Time Faculty and Ranks

- **Professor**: This is the terminal academic rank for an instructional staff. The minimum qualifications for the rank of professor are listed below:
 - a) An earned academic Ph.D. degree or appropriate terminal degree, or master's degree with extensive experience in teaching, research, and publication; at least four years' experience at the rank of associate professor;
 - b) Documented teaching effectiveness determined through department's and monitoring evaluations (e.g., TLC);
 - c) Documented participation in college life and governance, serving on committees, etc.
 - d) Documented participation in communities outside the university; this could be participation in community programs, researching communities, government, etc.
 - e) Evidence of continuing professional development, especially through TLC;
 - f) Evidence of a continuing record of scholarship including but not limited to publication of at least five peer-reviewed scholarly articles, or one peer-reviewed scholarly book, appropriate to the discipline since appointment to the rank of Associate Professor and possible membership in a professional or scholarly organization.

- **Associate Professor**: An instructional staff member whose work and performance meet satisfactory appraisal and satisfy other conditions laid down may be employed with this rank. The minimum qualifications for the rank of associate professor are listed below:
 - a) An earned academic Ph.D. degree or appropriate terminal degree, or master's degree with extensive experience in teaching, research, and publication; at least three years' experience at the rank of Assistant Professor;
 - b) Recognized teaching effectiveness as determined through departments and monitoring evaluations, e.g., TLC
 - c) Recognized participation in college life and governance, serving on committees, etc.
 - d) Evidence of continual professional development, especially through the TLC; and
 - e) Evidence of continual record of scholarship including but not limited to publication of at least three peer-reviewed scholarly articles, dissemination of two other peer-reviewed scholarly products, or one peer-reviewed scholarly book, appropriate to the discipline since appointment to the rank of Assistant Professor.

- **Assistant Professor**: This is the entry point for all tenure-track instructional employees with a terminal degree or those with a master's degree who have had extensive experience in teaching at the college level. The minimum qualifications for the rank of assistant professor are as follow:

- a) Teaching effectiveness;
 - b) Documented participation in College life and governance;
 - c) Evidence of continual professional development, especially through the TLC;
 - d) Evidence of continual record of scholarship; and
 - e) Terminal degree or master's degree with extensive teaching experience.
- **Instructor**: Instructional staff with a master's degree, with (or without) limited experience in teaching. The minimum qualifications for the rank of instructor are:
 - a) Documented evidence of potential teaching ability and effectiveness;
 - b) Recognized potential for participation in college/university life and governance;
 - c) Evidence of continual professional development, especially through the Teaching and Learning Center; and
 - d) Evidence of continual record of scholarship.
 - **Laboratory/ Technology Assistant** (formerly Laboratory Demonstrator) is a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) college graduate who is employed to assist with teaching in the laboratory for the purpose of helping students to understand principles previously acquired in the classroom. There is no in-rank promotion in this category.
 - **Research Assistant** (RA) is solely for research purposes and the person could be associated with any academic unit for a specific funded research. He or she may be a faculty, or a student with an exceptional project, who has been awarded a research grant. RA is a non-tenured position and is renewable depending upon the availability of funds.
 - **Teaching Assistant** (TA) is a bachelor- or graduate degree-holder that demonstrates teaching potential (and GPA above 3.0), and has expressed the desire to eventually become a faculty of the University. Accordingly, among other things, TAs will work under the mentorship of seasoned faculty. Each will be required to prepare topics for presentation in class under the watchful supervision of the seasoned faculty. TAs, like the rest of the faculty, will be evaluated annually by the department chair/TLC and the position renewed or dropped depending on the result. After five (5) years without the requisite graduate degree for transition to a tenure-track position, the TA will lose his or her position. There are, however, some limitations for the TA. For one, teaching assistantship is a non-tenure track position. And the University cannot guarantee funds for faculty development for TAs, although it will assert efforts in this regard.
- 2) **Adjunct Faculty**: An Adjunct Faculty is a part-time faculty employed periodically as a contract worker when the University desires to temporarily fill a vacancy. Adjunct faculty members usually teach on a part-time or per course basis pursuant to semester term contract. They usually have no other faculty duties outside of teaching. Adjunct faculty members do not accrue time toward tenure, promotion, or sabbatical leave.

- 3) **Visiting Professor, visiting associate professor, visiting assistant professor, and visiting instructor:** The visiting ranks are usually temporary appointments and service in these ranks does not necessarily count toward the probationary period for tenure. This is because a visiting rank refers to somebody who already has or recently had a position elsewhere, and is temporarily associated with the faculty, e.g., while on sabbatical or as a courtesy appointment for a person from the public or private sector who is teaching a course. A visiting professor might or might not draw any salary from the university, depending on the particulars of their appointment. Their status and degree of respect generally depend on their main position.
- 4) **Senior Research Fellow:** This is an academic research position reserved for an individual with an advanced postgraduate degree, often a doctorate, and with considerable experience in his or her specialty.
- 5) **Initial Academic Ranks:** The qualifications and academic experience of the applicant generally govern the academic rank designated on the initial contract. Normally, persons without a doctorate degree but hold a master's degree are hired as instructors on the initial appointment. Persons with a doctorate degree are appointed as assistant professors when the college is their first appointment in rank. Instructors receiving a doctorate are eligible to be advanced to assistant professor rank on subsequent appointments. Persons from another reputedly accredited higher education institution are usually appointed to the same rank held at the former institution.

III. **CRITERIA AND STRUCTURE FOR ACADEMIC PROMOTION**

1) **Procedures for Academic Promotion**

The Procedure for promotion envisions here calls for decentralizing the current process to enhance fairness and effectiveness. In this new procedure, applications for promotions will begin in the Departments, and go through the Deans, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and then the President of the University. **The Academic Coordination Committee (ACC) will serve as final arbiter or ombudsman in case, for instance, an aggrieved faculty is dissatisfied with the final recommendation.** An outline of the process is included below. In short, Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will issue an annual call for applications for academic promotion. Applications for Academic Promotion shall be made in accordance with the "Guidelines for Submission of Application" (see appendix) available in each department or electronically via email from the Office of Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will make all of the documents available to the departments and faculty.

2) **Procedures for Promotion and Tenure**

- A. To ensure that the integrity of advancements in our institution is transparent and fair, all academic promotions must be based on the policy outlined in this document. Thus, for example, except in the case of special appointment by the President of the University of Liberia, a faculty member appointed to an office must have previously earned the requisite academic rank for holding that office. Put differently, no appointee

should “automatically assume the rank of an office”. However, the University may occasionally assign academic titles to individuals with commanding experience or specialized skills including erstwhile individuals from either the public or private sectors.

- B.** To become a department chair, one must be at least an Assistant Professor; Dean and Associate Dean (Associate Professor and above), Associate Vice President (Associate Professor), Vice President (Professor). The University will continue to accept the existing ranks of new faculty members from recognized or accredited schools who are hired by the institution.

- C.** All Applications for promotion should begin in the applicant’s department. First, chairs are required to evaluate their respective faculty every academic year. The evaluation will be based on the assessments conducted by the TLC, which will include those conducted by students in classes taught by the instructor. A duplicate of the evaluation will be prepared by the Chair, signed by both the Chair and the Instructor. One copy will be given to the instructor, while the other placed in his or her file in the department. Annual evaluations serve as a benchmark, an indicator of the faculty’s progress toward tenure and promotion.

- D.** Second, each department will establish a Department Promotion and Tenure Committee (DPTC) chaired by someone other than the chair of the department. (Smaller departments in the same college can combine to form a single DPTC: e.g., History, Philosophy, and Geography; and Physics and Mathematics. The DPTC will accept all applications based on the “Guidelines for Submission of Application” from the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. After the review, the DPTC submits a letter of recommendation (along with the application package or portfolio) to the Chair of the department. Following an evaluation, the Chair forwards his letter of recommendation (accompanied by the portfolio) to the Dean. The Dean does the final appraisal in the college and submits his letter of recommendation, and the portfolio, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs who submits same to the Faculty Senate committee on Faculty Promotion and Tenure. **The Vice President for Academic Affairs will write his or her recommendation to the President of the University of Liberia who will make the ultimate approval.**

3) Eligibility for Promotion

All applicants holding appointments at the University of Liberia who have acquired the master’s or doctorate degree or its equivalence from a recognized university (or in exceptional circumstances someone with equivalent evidence of higher-level research and/or teaching and scholarship achievement) are eligible to apply for promotion.

4) General Benchmark

All applicants seeking academic promotion to various ranks shall be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- **Scholarship** – verified appropriate academic degree from a reputable university recognized by the University of Liberia;
- **Teaching** – evaluation (student/peer, college, department and university);
- **Research and Publication** – undertake and publish research in a recognized medium (determine by respective college/ Institute for Policy Studies and Research);
- **Service** – Service here includes membership on a UL committee; those appointments by the UL authority, participation in department’s curriculum reviews, assignments on behalf of the University, and contribution to the community and the nation. Each document for the above services will constitute proof and will be enclosed in the faculty’s portfolio for promotion.

5) Failure to achieve promotion

A faculty who is not promoted within the period specified for his or her rank forfeits tenure and promotion and must leave the University or remain in that rank.

6) Categories of Academic Rank for Promotion

A. First Category of Academic Rank for Promotion:

Academic Promotion to the Rank of Instructor

- The applicant should be a holder of a master’s degree or its equivalence;
- A minimum of three (3) years of teaching (evaluated by college/TLC) and research;
- A minimum of two (2) articles in one’s area of discipline in a recognized peer-review journal (publications may increase as per specific disciplinary or collegiate requirements);
- Documented evidence of service to the University of Liberia, the nation, or one’s community; and
- Maximum period for promotion: 3 years

B. Second Category of Academic Rank for Promotion:

Academic Promotion to the Rank of Assistant Professor

- The applicant should have an earned doctorate or master’s degree or its equivalence;
- A minimum of three (3) years of teaching (evaluated by college/TLC) and research;
- A minimum of four (4) peer-review articles in the applicant’s area of discipline (publications may increase as per specific disciplinary or collegiate requirements);

- Documented evidence of service to the University of Liberia, the nation, or one's community; and
- Maximum period for promotion: 4 years

C. Third Category of Academic Rank for Promotion:

Academic Promotion to the Rank of Associate Professor

- The applicant should have an earned relevant doctorate or its equivalent in his/her area of specialization;
- A minimum of four (4) years of teaching (evaluated by college/TLC) and research;
- A minimum of six (6) new peer-review articles/book in one's area of discipline since the last promotion or appointment (publications may increase as per specific disciplinary or collegiate requirements);
- Must show evidence of having supervised two (3) students at the graduate or post graduate level; and
- Documented evidence of service to the University of Liberia, the nation, or one's community; and
- Maximum period for promotion: 5 years

D. Fourth and Final Category of Academic Rank for Promotion:

Academic Promotion to the Rank of Professor

- The applicant should have an earned relevant doctorate or its equivalent in his/her area of specialization;
- A minimum of six (6) years of teaching (evaluated by college/TLC) and research;
- A minimum of six (6) peer-review articles/book in one's area of discipline since the last promotion or appointment (publications may increase as per specific disciplinary or collegiate requirements);
- Must show evidence of having supervised at least six (6) graduate/postgraduate students;
- Documented evidence of service to the University of Liberia, the nation, or one's community;
- Maximum period for promotion: 7 years.

IV. SABBATICAL LEAVE REGULATIONS

*As Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the University of Liberia in 1975
(And modified by the Faculty Senate on September 3, 2019)*

- A.** After a period of six continuous years of service in the University, a Faculty or senior staff member shall be entitled to sabbatical leave of one calendar year for the purpose

- of engaging in research, teaching, and improvement of professional knowledge of travel outside the country.
- B.** Those entitled to sabbatical leave shall be senior Administrators and all tenured Professors and Associate Professors.
 - C.** A person eligible for and desiring sabbatical leave shall apply in writing to the Office of the President not less than six months and not more than one calendar year before date of eligibility.
 - D.** A person eligible for and desiring sabbatical leave shall in his/her letter of request cite justification for same, among which are:
 - a) publication of a book or research paper(s);
 - b) visiting professorship elsewhere;
 - c) refresher courses at another institution;
 - d) on-the-job exposure at another University;
 - e) services in a government, national, or local body;
 - f) services in an international body, e.g., UNESCO, AAU, WHO, IDEF, UNDP, etc.;
 - or,
 - g) a mutually agreed-on academic exercise.
 - E.** Not more than 3% of the total staff (including administrators) may go on a leave in any one academic year.
 - F.** During the period of such leave, the grantee shall be entitled to full salary plus actual cost of travel not exceeding a total of \$1,500 during the entire period of leave.
 - G.** During the period of such leave, the acting incumbent performing the duties of the grantee shall be entitled to the equivalent of the difference between his salary and the salary of the grantee.

APPENDIX: GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR PROMOTION AND TENURE

1. Upon the call of application, the qualified candidate shall submit a portfolio or a three-ring binder containing the letter of application and all supporting documents. The portfolio shall be submitted to the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee (DPTC). Photocopy the contents for your record.
2. The supporting documents in the portfolio shall comprise the evidence for promotion, including copies of results of teaching evaluation, published articles or copies of title page, records of service, etc.
3. After evaluation (by the DPTC, the dean, and the office of the VPAA), each unit shall make two copies of its recommendation; one shall be enclosed in the applicant's portfolio and forwarded to the next level for evaluation. The second copy shall be given to the applicant.