

Revision Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Responsible Executive Officer: President

Source/Reference: [TBR Policy 5:02:02:30](#)
[TBR Policy 5:02:03:30](#)
[TBR Policy 5:02:03:70](#)
[TBR Policy 5:02:07:00](#)
[TBR Policy 7:01:00:00](#)
[Columbia State Policy 05:12:00](#)
[Columbia State Policy 05:19:00](#)

PURPOSE

To establish requirements and conditions relative to the awarding of tenure.

INTRODUCTION

Tenure is awarded only by positive action by the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), pursuant to the requirements and procedures of [TBR Policy 5:02:03:70](#). Tenure is awarded only to those faculty members who have exhibited professional excellence and outstanding abilities sufficient to demonstrate that their future services and performances justify the degree of permanence afforded by academic tenure.

The quality of the faculty of any community college is maintained primarily through the appraisal by faculty and administrative officers of each candidate for tenure. Tenure at Columbia State provides eligible full-time faculty with the assurance of continued employment during the academic year until retirement or dismissal for adequate cause, financial exigency, or curricular reasons. Columbia State does not award tenure in non-faculty positions.

POLICY

I. Definition. Academic tenure is a personnel status pursuant to which full-time faculty appointments for the academic year in a Department/Discipline or Program at Columbia State Community College are continued until expiration or relinquishment of that status, subject to termination for adequate cause, financial exigency, or curricular reasons.

Definitions relative to tenure appointments, conditions of employment, and termination of tenure can be found in [Columbia State Policy 05:19:00](#) or [TBR Policy 5:02:03:70](#).

II. Tenure Appointments. Recommendations for or against tenure shall originate from the Division in which the faculty member is assigned. The process for internal review of tenure applications is described in the procedures section of this policy. The recommendation for tenure is made by the President to the Chancellor and by the Chancellor to the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR). In the event that tenure is awarded by the TBR, the President shall

furnish to the faculty member written confirmation of the award. No other person shall have any authority to make any representation concerning tenure to any faculty member. The locus of tenure is awarded as appropriate in the Department of the faculty member.

III. Minimum Eligibility Requirements for Tenure

- A. To be eligible for consideration for tenure, a faculty member must meet the following minimum requirements:
1. Hold a full-time faculty tenure-track appointment.
 2. Hold, as a minimum, academic rank as an Assistant Professor and meet the minimum rank criteria for the rank held under [TBR Policy 5:02:02:30](#) and [Columbia State Policy 05:12:00](#).
 3. Have been employed in a tenure-track appointment and completed a probationary period of not less than five (5) years, or as agreed upon in writing and signed by the President at the time of the initial appointment.
 4. Have completed all advisor training and maintained current advising skills.
 5. Have completed [Columbia State Policy 05:14:00 Form A Intent to Apply for Promotion/Tenure](#) and submitted required documentation.
 6. Have been determined by the College to meet the criteria to apply for tenure and have been so recommended.
- B. Faculty holding temporary or term appointments are not eligible for tenure.
- C. Faculty supported in whole, or in part, by funds available to Columbia State on a short-term basis, such as grants, contracts, or foundation-sponsored projects, may be eligible for tenure, provided continuing support for such members can be clearly identified in the regular budget.

No faculty member shall be eligible for tenure in a non-faculty position, provided that where a faculty member with tenure is appointed to an administrative position, he or she may retain tenure in his or her former faculty position only, and provided further that a faculty member otherwise eligible for tenure who also holds an administrative position may be awarded tenure in the faculty position only, subject to requirements of this policy.

IV. Probationary Employment

Faculty may be employed on an annual tenure-track appointment for a maximum probationary period not to exceed six (6) years. Application for tenure will be made following completion

of five (5) years of full-time continuous service at Columbia State with exceptions only as indicated below in A – H:

- A. The minimum probationary period of five (5) years may include credit for prior service, when agreed to by the President in writing upon initial employment, and subject to the maximum permissible credit for prior service pursuant to Section V of this policy.
- B. Employment during summer terms, in part-time positions, or during periods of leaves of absence shall not be credited toward satisfying the probationary period.
- C. The period of approved leave of absence shall be excluded from the required probationary period. A faculty member may apply for a maximum of two, non-consecutive one-year leave increments. Exceptions may be granted by the President of the College in writing prior to the leave of absence. Exceptions may include: (a) crediting the leave periods to the probationary period and/or (b) granting more than two, non-consecutive one-year increments. Exception (b), per TBR policy, requires approval of the Chancellor.
- D. A faculty member may request to “stop the tenure clock” during his or her probationary period when circumstances exist that interrupt the faculty member’s normal progress toward qualifying for tenure. In such case, the faculty member may request to “stop the tenure clock” for one year, if he or she demonstrates that circumstances reasonably warrant the interruption. Reasons will typically be related to a personal or family situation requiring attention and commitment that consumes the time and energy normally addressed to faculty duties and professional development. Examples may include childbirth or adoption, care of dependents, medical conditions or obligations, physical disasters or disruptions, military deployment, or similar circumstances.
- E. If a faculty member eligible for tenure is appointed to an administrative position prior to being awarded tenure at Columbia State, and if he or she maintains a significant involvement in academic pursuits such as teaching and scholarship, the time or a prorated portion of the time spent in the administrative position may be credited toward completion of the probationary period.
- F. Where a faculty member is serving a probationary period in a Department/Discipline or Program, and is subsequently transferred to another Department/Discipline or Program, the faculty member may, with the President’s approval, elect to begin a new probationary period with the transfer. If the faculty member confirms in writing to the President that he or she does not elect to begin a new probationary period, time spent in the first appointment shall count toward establishing the minimum and maximum probationary period.
- G. Application for tenure can be made prior to completion of the fifth (5th) year only under special circumstances, and as an exception to the probationary period of not less than five (5) years upon recommendation by the President and approval by the Chancellor. Upon

approval of such an exception by the Chancellor, the faculty member's recommendation for tenure will go forward to the Board of Regents as meeting the requirements of the probationary period.

- H. The College may request tenure upon appointment for candidates with extraordinary credentials. The exception shall be requested upon initial employment of the faculty member.

V. Credit for Prior Service

Any credit for prior service, which is recognized and agreed to by the faculty member and the President, must be confirmed in writing at the time of the initial appointment to a tenure-track position. Credit toward completion of the probationary period may, at the discretion of the President, be given for up to three (3) years for previous full-time service:

- A. At other colleges or universities, provided that the prior service is relevant to Columbia State's needs and criteria;
- B. In a temporary faculty appointment or term appointment at Columbia State (see "Types of Appointments" listed in [TBR Policy 5:02:07:00](#)), and/or;
- C. In an earlier tenure-track appointment at Columbia State that has been followed by a break in service.

VI. Criteria and Relative Weights to be considered in Tenure Recommendations

The awarding of tenure is recognition of the merit of a faculty member and the assumption that he or she meets the long-term staffing needs of the Department and the College. The continued professional growth and development of faculty is necessary for institutions of higher education to continue to provide educational programs in accordance with the College's mission, goals, and changing needs of the Institution. Tenure is awarded to those members of the faculty who have exhibited professional excellence and outstanding abilities sufficient to demonstrate that their future services and performance justify the degree of permanence afforded by academic tenure. Faculty wishing to be considered for tenure will be judged against the following criteria:

- A. Criteria relevant to assessing the merit of the faculty member include the following, which are explained in more detail in the *Tenure Guidelines Document* that is a part of this policy.
 - 1. **Teaching (70%)** – Effective teaching is an essential qualification for tenure, and tenure will be granted only with clear and documented evidence of a candidate's teaching ability and potential for continued development. Teaching applies to the level of effectiveness within the classroom and may include, but is not limited to, the

mastery and currency of discipline content, instructional and student assessment methodologies, classroom management techniques, the development, evaluation, and improvement of curriculum and courseware, and the development of innovation approaches to teaching.

- A. Teaching Effectiveness:** Effectiveness within the classroom as demonstrated by mastery and currency of discipline content, instructional and student assessment methodologies, and classroom management techniques. (60%)
- B. Curriculum and Program Development:** Contributions to enhancement of curricula as demonstrated by involvement in curriculum development, evaluation, and improvement of curriculum and articulation, and efforts to increase overall effectiveness of instruction at course/program level. (10%)
2. **Service/Outreach (15%)** – Service and/or outreach encompasses a faculty member’s activities in College service, outreach or public service, and professional service.
- ***A. Service to Students:** Effectiveness with students outside the classroom as demonstrated by involvement in advising, student assistance, and/or involvement in student extracurricular or class-related activities. (5-10%)
- ***B. College, Profession, and Community Service:** Contributions to the College, profession/discipline, and community initiatives. (5-10%)
- (*2.A. and 2.B. combined cannot exceed 15%)
3. **Scholarship/Creative Activities/Research (5%)** – Research applied to actions taken to enhance the mastery of the subject/discipline and increased effectiveness and innovation in teaching. Scholarship/creative activities/research may include, but is not limited to, typical professional growth and development activities, disciplinary and interdisciplinary activities that focus on the boundaries of knowledge, community-based scholarship, creative activities (e.g., performances or other artistic creations), and the development of cutting-edge teaching approaches.
4. **Collegiality and Contribution to Goals (10%)** – Collegiality applies to the manner in which the faculty member exhibits evidence of good character, mature attitude, professional integrity, and willingness to work effectively with colleagues to support the mission of the Institution and the common goals of both the Institution and the academic area. A review of the Dean’s evaluation and overall portfolio review provide evidence for this criterion.

B. Criteria relevant to assessing the long-term staffing needs of the Institution include:

1. Long-term enrollment trends and enrollment projections for the future.
2. Number of tenured faculty in the Department/Discipline in relation to enrollment.
3. Vitality of, and projected long-term, need for the Discipline/Program.
4. Versatility of the faculty member relative to staffing needs of the Department/Division.

VII. Role of Faculty Evaluation in Measuring Criteria for Assessing Merit

The faculty evaluation process at Columbia State provides tenure-track probationary faculty with an annual evaluation of their effectiveness as faculty members, and the extent to which they are perceived to be meeting the expectations of the Institution. Student and Division Dean Evaluations conducted as part of the faculty evaluation process during the probationary period will be considered during the tenure review. Procedures related to the use of evaluations are detailed in the *Tenure Guidelines Document*, which is a part of this policy and also in [Columbia State Policy 05:07:00 Faculty Evaluation](#).

PROCEDURES

- I. Timetable for the Tenure Review Process.** A meeting will be conducted each Fall for tenure-track faculty and faculty applying for promotion in rank to review the criteria and procedures. Additionally, during the third (3rd) year of service, a faculty member may request an optional preliminary review by the Division Promotion/Tenure Committee and the faculty member's Division Dean. The same calendar and procedures utilized for the tenure review process must be followed. An application for promotion during the third or fourth year of service may also serve as the optional pre-tenure review. Faculty should apply for tenure after completion of their fifth (5th) full year of service. Exceptions are listed in this policy under Section IV: Probationary Employment. The calendar for the review process is outlined in the *Tenure Guidelines Document*.
- II. Internal Review.** Applications for tenure undergo a multi-level review involving a Division Promotion and Tenure Committee, composed of three (3) tenured faculty, including two (2) from the Division in which the faculty is employed; the Division Dean; and, the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Recommendations from these three levels are forwarded to the President for his or her consideration in making the final recommendation to the TBR. The review process is initiated prior to the first (1st) Tuesday in September by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, or his or her designee, through a Memorandum to all faculty, and is conducted according to the procedures and calendar outlined in the *Tenure Guidelines Document*.
- III. Confidentiality of Individual Faculty Tenure Votes.** Tenure and Promotion Committees will have qualified academic confidentiality against disclosure of individual tenure votes,

unless there is evidence that casts doubt upon the integrity of the peer committee. This policy provision shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the Tennessee Public Records Act, codified in Tennessee Code Annotated §10-7-503 and 504.

IV. No employee, even if permitted through [TBR Policy 7:01:00:00](#), is permitted to carry a handgun to any scheduled meeting related to promotion and/or tenure.

V. Appeals. A faculty member wishing to appeal the President's recommendation relative to his or her tenure request must do so in writing within five (5) calendar days of receipt of written notice of the decision. The appeal must follow the appeal guidelines outlined in the *Tenure Guidelines Document*.

VI. External Review. The TBR Chancellor, and his or her staff, review the President's recommendations and submit recommendations for tenure to the Personnel Committee of the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR). Recommendations from this Committee are then forwarded to the full Board for consideration.

VII. Approval/Disapproval. The TBR will approve or disapprove awarding of tenure to the faculty recommended by the Personnel Committee. Upon receiving notification of the Board of Regents' decision from the Chancellor, the President will notify each faculty member of the decision relative to his or her request for tenure.

VIII. Records Retention and Disposition. Once the review process is complete and TBR approves the promotion decision, each assembled portfolio goes to the Division Dean to return to its faculty owner. Documents related to the review process are maintained in the Academic Affairs Office. The Human Resources Office receives a letter of notification when the promotion is official in approval from TBR; this official letter becomes part of the faculty member's personnel file.

Revised: August 15, 1995; May 10, 2001 and approved by TBR staff on September 4, 2001 (policy revision and new policy format); April 17, 2006 and approved by TBR staff on February 21, 2007 (to bring policy into compliance with TBR policy and procedures); September 26, 2011 (TBR policy 5:02:03:00 deleted and replaced with new policies, new policy format and updated titles); April 20, 2017 and approved by TBR staff on June 12, 2017 (updated titles; revised to align with TBR policy and met accessibility standards); October 2021 reviewed, accepted by Cabinet; Approved and signed by the President upon approval of TBR, September 2021.