



MRFA
MOUNT ROYAL
FACULTY ASSOCIATION

Tenure Process and Dossier Information Session

Hosted by the MRFA PD Committee on January 6, 2023

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Slides from this presentation are available [here](#) and detailed notes are below.

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General Information about Tenure

At MRU, promotion to Associate Professor comes with tenure (this is not the same at all universities). The tenure process is governed by Articles 9-11 in the Collective Agreement, and the Appendix in the Collective Agreement. Appendix A lists the kinds of things that count as Teaching, Scholarship, and Service at MRU. In addition, the criteria are VERY important as the institutional criteria expand on the details outlined in the CA. The criteria for teaching and service are the same across the university, and research criteria differ across Faculties.

You can find links to all the forms and to the [Tenure and Promotion Handbook](#) in the tenure portal in MyMRU (login/go to the Faculty section in the upper nav bar/see the top right section of the page).

- The [handbook](#) is over 100 pages but you are not meant to read it from cover to cover; you are meant to refer to it as needed when you have questions about the process or the point where you are at in the tenurable period.
- The [timeline](#) document should be printed and kept handy. This is a year-by-year timeline of who does what when. It is very important to meet deadlines as extensions will not be granted unless there is illness, etc.

Established Criteria for Tenure

The established criteria for tenure is the only thing on which you are to be evaluated. In the handbook there are multiple pages for this. Page 8 of the handbook outlines the performance expectations for an assistant professor. The next section after this is the criteria for an associate professor – this is the benchmark you need to meet to be promoted to the rank of associate professor. You have until the end of year 5 to meet the criteria for associate professor.

- *Faculty-Based Criteria for Scholarship in a Teaching focused Undergraduate University*
 - We have a higher teaching workload than many universities and thus we do not have the same level of scholarship expectations here as at other universities.
 - Each Faculty has a separate scholarship criteria document which outlines the specific criteria for scholarship for each Faculty.
- *Institutional Criteria for Service*
 - See appendix C of the handbook for the different types of service and what the different levels of contribution mean
- Meeting the Criteria for Tenure
 - **Note** Being exceptional in one area does not minimize or reduce the criteria for the other areas. You need to meet the criteria for all three categories (or for both categories if you are on TS)
 - For tenure recommendations, you either meet the criteria or you do not meet the criteria. It is straightforward and it applies to each category of teaching, service, and scholarship. It is all laid out for you in the documents.
 - Your committee is not, and should not, be comparing you to other candidates. Everyone is going to fulfill the requirements in different ways and the committee will only be looking at you and what you are doing.
 - When you are in your first year your committee will not be expecting you to meet all the criteria at this point – you have five years to meet all the criteria.

Annual Reports

As a tenure track faculty member, you have to do an annual report *and* a tenure dossier. The annual report goes into your tenure dossier. We use the F-180 system for annual reports and there are [notes](#) from a previous training session held on how to complete annual reports. These annual reports are covering the July 1 – June 30 period and these are due in September.

Double check that whatever you pull out of F-180 that it copies over properly as data in the text boxes, etc often does not carry over properly. It is best practice to do everything in a Word document and attach it to the submission so that there are not formatting issues. You should always provide comments (and or Word docs) to provide context for progress, etc.

Tenure Timeline Notes

Your Tenure Committee, your Dean, and the University Tenure and Promotion Committee (UTPC)

You meet with your tenure committee nearly annually, your Dean has significant feedback in year 3, and your final dossier is evaluated by the UTPC in year 5.

- When you are going through this process you will need to meet with your tenure committee nearly annually throughout the process. This committee is usually comprised of your department colleagues or it may be a mix of colleagues from other departments if you are in GNED or a small department. These people will be looking at your tenure dossiers and evaluating it. The people on this committee will change throughout your tenure period.
- The Dean will weigh in throughout the process. The dean provides more extensive feedback in years 3 and 5. Note: the first two years are formative and supportive. In year three there are forms you should look at and these will provide feedback on how you are advancing and progressing toward meeting the criteria. You can opt in the third year to take an additional year in your probationary period. It is much better to opt for this extra year than to not get tenure at the end of the process. The third year is integral to the tenure process.
- At the end of the process your application will go to the UTPC – these are colleagues from across the institution and they will be reviewing your final dossier in the final application. There will be people outside your discipline and outside your faculty who will be reviewing your dossier.

Annual Evaluations

- Annual evaluations and meetings with your Tenure Committee are about progress – these are intended to be check-ins where you report on and get feedback on your progress. These meetings will help you know if you are on the right track and how you are doing.
- **Note** do not be disappointed when you get constructive feedback: It is much better to get constructive feedback throughout the process than in the fifth year when you hear this feedback from UTPC and it is too late to make changes. This is formative feedback – *take it this way*.
- Years 1-2
 - Meet with your Tenure Committee for annual review
- Year 3
 - Mid-Term Eval – this is a big deal

- Longer form, meeting with Tenure Committee, and meet with dean who writes a review
- Details are in the Collective Agreement ([article 10.5](#))
- Year 4
 - There is no review for this year because you are at the beginning of year 5 and you will have your year 5 review at the end of the year
- Year 5
 - Final review at the end of year 5 in the Spring
 - Your Dossier goes to UTPC. You do not meet with UTPC.

Question: If you start in July your first year goes from July to June: the first tenure meeting is in Fall?

Answer: Yes, your year 1 review will be at the beginning of your second year.

- Note - November 15 is the deadline for applying to have up to two years credit applied to the tenurable period if you were not granted credit at the time of hire
- Exceptions – in your 5th or final year your final tenure meeting is in the Spring instead of Fall.

Length of Process

You can have a tenure process as short as 3 years and as long as 7. It will be 3 if you had 2 years credited, and up to 7 if you opted for an extra year and UTPC granted an additional extra year. During the pandemic there was also the option to pause the tenure clock for a year (in other words, repeat a year).

When considering what steps are needed in each year, do not think of how many years you have been at MRU: **think of the year you are at in your tenure process**. For instance, if you had two years credited, even though you are in your first year at MRU, you are in year 3 of the tenure process.

Decision Making for Granting Tenure

1. Tenure Committee recommends,
2. Dean Recommends,
3. UTPC Decides, and
4. President Approves.

The Tenure Process is transparent at MRU, and there are many formative checkpoints built in: by the time you get to UTPC there should be no surprises.

There is an appeal and arbitration process if you are denied tenure. Throughout this process, people may not agree and you could still be granted tenure. For instance, the TC could say no and the dean could say yes. Ultimately, UTPC decides.

The tenure process here is very transparent and there are a lot of check-ins along the way. By the time you get to UTPC it should not be a surprise to you that you are or are not doing enough of anything.

Question: Can faculty meet with UTPC if needed?

Answer: No. **Dossiers need to stand on their own with the UTPC – faculty need to make the case in their documents to ensure that people outside of your discipline can understand it.**

- If we think that faculty should meet with UTPC this is a recommendation that should go to Negotiations
- There is an appeal process and arbitration as well before a tenure is rejected.

Tenure Dossiers

On the D2L Site

- The dossier template is created for you by MRU. You will get a D2L site that has content buttons for each year of the tenure process. It is very clear in this system how the information is laid out and organized and what you need to do is upload the applicable pdfs to the right sections
- The dossier for tenure and the dossier for promotion to full professor are very different. Those applying for full professor are going to use Google Drive. Also, tenure dossiers look very similar whereas promotion dossiers vary a great deal from person to person.

Tips and Restrictions:

- The CA is very clear that you are not permitted to add missing items: once you send off the tenure dossier you are not allowed to go back in and add documents you missed.
 - **Before you submit your dossier, make sure that you have included all the documents.**
 - When you meet with the TC and you have the opportunity to respond, you can only respond: you cannot add in missing documents at this point either.
- **DO NOT wait to the last minute – always have the dossier done a couple days in advance so that you have time to add what is missing.** You cannot go back to prior years and move anything or change anything – it has already been evaluated and reviewed.

Moving Dossiers to D2L (2022-2023 specific notes)

- If you have an existing dossier in Blackboard it is being moved over for you to D2L. The exception for this year (2023) only—if you are in year 5 right now you will stay in Blackboard.
- The dossier looks very similar in Blackboard and D2L. In D2L all you need to worry about is the Content section.

Question: Should the CV in D2L be updated annually?

Answer: **In the profile section you should upload a new CV each year and remove the old ones** (the old ones will still exist in the year sections)

Question: How frequently should a teaching philosophy be updated?

Answer: **You should add a new teaching philosophy each year. Tip: keep a local copy of your teaching philosophies every year so that you can look back and reflect on those as well.**

UTPC is only going to look at the teaching philosophy from the last year; so, if you want them to see how you have developed this over the years, it will help to keep these copies from previous years and reflect on this. The TC is only going to look at the philosophy from the current year.

Question: What happens to people whose dossiers are in Blackboard when they get tenure?

Answer: The university's secretariate is to copy these all to a flash drive and send it to you. Another process they are doing is to move it all to Google Drive and give you access to it. If you are interested in retaining it in the way it currently looks – **you can ask ADC to create a shell copy for you into D2L** – this is a quick process and it copies it exactly. At ALL times keep a backup of your documents.

There will be sessions on D2L through ADC in the months ahead.

Dossier Best Practices

- **Keep hard copies or other file locations of everything.** Systems can crash and it is good to not have to redo everything
 - Always have extra copies – these documents are what your career at MRU is based on
- **Work ahead – do not leave things to the last minute**
 - You can upload documents to D2L as they are completed (this will help you not scramble in September when you are trying to do annual reports, and tenure dossiers, and prepare for teaching, and doing service)
- **Make sure all your forms are properly signed and dated by all individuals required.** This is important to ensure all forms are official and accepted
- **Pay attention to and plan for extra time in the years when you need to update your scholarship plan** and reflection documents. The reflections will take some time to complete.
- **Track your service on an ongoing basis (In your calendar, use #service – then you can search for this at the end of the year and it makes it easier to find things at the end of the year to report on it.)**
- **Share and compare:** you know those who are going through the process with you. Meet with them and share dossiers and compare and copy best practices
- **Use charts and timelines and keep them somewhere visible** to provide you with reminders.
- Peer Evaluations:
 - **Pick your Peer evaluators in the first month of the semester you are having it done and get it signed off on by your Chair**
 - Check the list on [MRU site for peer evaluators who have taken the training](#)
 - Look at the forms on MyMRU that will be filled out by your peer evaluator and in other stages of the process.
 - See the [notes from the peer evaluation session](#) which was held to help you make the most out of the Peer Evaluation Process
- Chair Evaluations
 - In some years Chairs do a peer eval and in some years they do an activities document.
 - **You will need to remind Chairs to do this activities document.**
 - In year three you need a chair review of your teaching activities – this is completely separate than when they come and do an evaluation.

Question: should we be okay with Chairs delegating the Chair evaluations?

Answer: Yes, it is perfectly acceptable for Chairs to delegate these.

Question: is there benefit to having the same peer evaluators in different stages of the process?

Answer: No, you should **get different people to serve as peer evaluators and get them to evaluate different classes** (also, do not have them evaluate the same lecture) – try to get a variety of perspectives and feedback points so that you can develop your teaching as much as possible.

Same with student evals – try to **get a variety of student evals if possible.**

SPoTs

It is very good to refer to the [handbook](#) when you are doing peer evals and student evals and you can **use the criteria to help formulate questions for SPoTs.**

- **Use the Form 300 to contextualize bad SPoT evaluations**
 - i.e. provide context on pandemic impacts
 - The form 300 needs to be filled out within 10 days of receiving your SPoT evaluations. (this is within 10 days of seeing your SPoTs for the first time)
- **If you get discriminatory comments you can ask that these be removed.**

Question: what is the ideal number of spots?

Answer: It is best to **have all your classes evaluated with SPoTs**, depending on circumstances. The students like it, and this way you can pick which responses you use. You can use the responses where you have a better response rate and you can also pick the critical evaluations and then demonstrate what you have done to address and improve based on the feedback you received.

You have to have a minimum number of SPoTs – 3 per year but you can include more than that if you choose to do so. It may depend on department culture as well but there is no right or wrong as long as you meet the minimum

Question: Can you incent students to response to SPoTs?

Answer: No. But you can encourage students to respond by:

- **sending reminders through Blackboard,**
- **remind students of the value and purpose of SPoTs, and**
- **inform students that you read your SPoTs and that Chairs read them and their comments are taken seriously**

Question: What is considered a good response rate for SPoTs?

Answer: 40% response rate is reasonable for SPoTs given the current process for administering them.

There is a threshold – if you have less than 5 students in a class or if less than 5 complete it then you will not see the SPoTs. Some classes have close to 100% response rates, so it is possible.

- If you ever have concerns – talk to your Chair about your SPoTs and they will sort it out

Question: in what situation should we fill out this Form 300 rather than only writing a reflection?

Answer: Student evals are kept in the Dean's office and the Form 300 will be attached to this copy of the SPoT. The Form 300 should be used to make an official record. Also, tenured faculty can fill out a Form 300. o

Teaching and Scholarship Reflections

- These should not reiterate your CV.
- **Think of who is reading it—people outside of your discipline. We are looking for a reflection on your teaching and where applicable, scholarship. Have you been successful, what has worked and what has not worked?**
- Your teaching reflection – think of how you have grown as a teacher and as a scholar – keep in mind that there are people out of your disciplines. How have you changed assessments, etc.? Why?
- Ask you Dean for an example of what is considered a good reflection on teaching or scholarship
- There is a template for the scholarship plan in the annual report system.
 - This plan is different than the reflection on the plan.

Question: For the research plan that you enter and update every year, is this something that is allowed?

Answer: No, your scholarship plan should stay the same for three years. In your annual report you use the comment box to add comments on how it is going (or attach it as a word doc). You need to **ensure that you are only changing your scholarship plan every three years and commenting on it annually.**

Service

- If you are not getting elected to committees and are wanting to get on a committee – you should talk to your Chair or to your Associate Dean to strategize about how to get onto a committee. Also, service can take many forms. You can do external service, service to the profession, etc. Or, create you own service activity by doing things like organizing a student club, bringing in a speaker, etc.
- Ideally, you want **different levels of committees: department, Faculty and institutional** but this is not required Concentrate on the institutional service criteria document and ensure you are doing the right kind of service, and the correct amount.
- Consider your service and what you want to accomplish—**focus your efforts in areas that matter to you.** For instance, do you love teaching and curriculum and want to develop things in that direction?
- **Do not do too much service during tenure.** You need to balance things. Do not go on GFC in your first year: serving on GFC in years 3-5 may be better in terms of workload and your ability to fully engage with the service required at this level.
- You can create service by bringing in speakers or supporting student groups. You can also do external service to the profession which also counts.

Years Credited to your probationary period

- If you have years credited, you need to **add the letter which says you have years credited to your profile section** in the dossier in D2L
 - You need to **add all the documents** that you had included to get the credit
 - You can upload a pdf of what you used to get the years credited.
- **When you have years credited – the criteria does not change** If you are feeling overwhelmed after getting years credited and are worried you may not meet the criteria, then you can opt for that additional year at the end of year 3
- If you have years credited, they cannot be taken away and years credited dossiers will look different

Extra Materials

- Do not add extra materials unless absolutely necessary
 - If your book is about to be published or something like that you can upload an extra letter for that
 - If you are a president of a society or something like that you can get a letter from someone else involved to provide additional information on what this means in terms of service commitment
 - Do not put letters/notes from students / do not put posters from sessions etc.

Principles of Due Process and Natural Justice

- You have reasonable notice – you get the draft review from your committee 3 working days before you meet with them
 - If they are not providing this then you need to talk to the Chair of your committee or your Dean: you need time to review and reflect on this before going into the meeting
 - Days in the CA is business days it does not include weekends or holidays
- Your annual evaluations need to provide the details if you did not meet the criteria
 - It needs to indicate the specific areas of the criteria that are not being met – if this specificity is not included you can challenge that
- You have the right to have a support person present in your meetings
 - They can accompany you to the meeting. They observe and they can chat with you afterward but they are not permitted to speak. If you bring a support person let your Chair know so it can be scheduled
- Right to a thorough, unbiased and deliberative process
- Decision made only on information presented
 - People on the tenure committee can not raise new information that has not already been discussed with you by the Chair. There should be no surprises to you in the process
- Decisions are based on evidence

- Ensure that your reflections are echoing the wording from the criteria to show how you met those
- Right to appeal on substantive or procedural grounds
 - This could be done based on process/ structure not being followed
 - i.e. there needs to be quorum for there to be a valid tenure meeting
- Related Principles:
 - When you sign the form you are not agreeing with it or liking it – you can fill in comments or attach another document providing your feedback. The signature is proof that you saw and reviewed the form.
 - All documents need to be signed to be official
 - There could be dissenting opinions attached to the TC decisions

Who to talk to for direction, guidance, and/or support:

- Your Chair
 - If you have questions about this process go to your Chair.
 - If your Chair is new or seems unfamiliar with the process/ CA then go to your Dean. Your Dean is there to support you as well.
- Your Dean
- Your [Association](#)
 - This is important. You want to ensure this is a fair equitable and proper process that is followed, and the Association can support you in this.
 - There can be mistakes in the process and there is no harm to check in for support and/or provide reminders or touchpoints to people.