

Results of a Tenure and Promotion Survey

in Georgia

by

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Conference Abstract: Panelists will discuss promotion and tenure issues such as mentoring, the dual system environment, writing promotion and tenure guidelines, file preparation tips, the AAUP perspective on librarians as faculty, and survey/task force results regarding faculty status for librarians and scholarship/service activities.

This brief article represents Fred Smith's presentation of his findings at the TLA/SELA meeting. For a more complete report, see: Smith, Fred. Tenure and Promotion: How University System of Georgia Librarians Rate What We Do. *Georgia Library Quarterly* . Vol. 43, no 1, Spring 2006, p. 11-16.

At Georgia Southern University, librarians are eligible for tenure and promotion and use almost the same criteria as the rest of campus: the three-legged stool of teaching, scholarship and service. The only difference is that they substitute librarianship for teaching. The library staff is small enough that all tenured librarians serve on tenure committees, and similarly, all those of appropriate rank serve on promotion committees.

A couple of years ago, Georgia Southern's provost appointed a campus committee to consider a new way to evaluate promotion and tenure. That committee administered a survey to determine the value faculty and administrators placed on the various research and service activities, such as serving on campus committees, holding office in professional associations, and giving presentations at meetings. One finding was that administrators placed a much higher value on scholarship activities than

service activities. This was a concern for those who had done much in the service category through the years. Most academic librarians have their own ideas on how much credit a person should get for each of these activities. In situations where colleagues make tenure and promotion decisions based on their individual values, what happens when values differ?

To see how much library colleagues value portions of the tenure/promotion criteria, a survey was developed, listing 57 service and scholarship activities and asking library faculty to rate them on a scale of one to ten. It was administered first to Georgia Southern librarians then to all the University System of Georgia librarians who are eligible for promotion and tenure. A total of 20 institutions chose to participate, with 60 participants, a number which is high enough high enough to be statistically valid. The main facets to be measured were the value librarians placed on the various activities by using the means and the amount of agreement or disagreement using the standard deviation. In order to decide which colleges would participate it was necessary to know which had tenure and promotion. Those totals were tallied.

Participation rates varied among the five classifications of institutions within the University System of Georgia.

- Research Universities: Of the four research universities, two participated.
- Regional Universities: Both of the regional universities participated.
- Two Year Colleges: Of the twelve two-year colleges, five participated.
- State Colleges: No participation from the two schools.
- State Universities: The state universities had the highest participation rate, with eleven out of thirteen institutions taking part in the study.

The reasons why librarians at some institutions didn't fill out the surveys varied. For most, they simply said that the librarians were not evaluated on those activities and their input would not be meaningful. At one school, the librarians were evaluated on such activities but only the members of the tenure and promotion committee voted. In another instance, the department that the librarian worked in was taken into account in deciding how these activities were weighted. Two institutions already had a numeric value assigned to these types of activities. From the 20 institutions which chose to participate, a total of 60 people filled out the survey in a usable

fashion, a low but statistically valid number. The 2004-2005 ALA Directory identifies a total of 366 MLS librarians at all the University System libraries combined. The current number is probably somewhat lower than that, since some libraries have lost positions in the last few years. Therefore, approximately one out of every six University System of Georgia librarians participated.

The following page contains various tables taken from the results. Tables I and II show the highest rated and lowest rated activities; Table III shows a breakdown by category of activity; Table IV offers a chart showing differences in how the different categories of institutions rated the activities; and Tables V and VI show the highest and lowest standard deviations.

Table I. Highest Rated Activities by All Survey Participants

Holding a major office in ALA	8.73
Having a major grant funded	8.70
Presenting at a national conference	8.60
Being an editor of a journal in librarianship	8.49
Chairing an ALA division	8.28
Earning a doctorate	8.20

Table II. Lowest Five Means of All Survey Participants

Taking a continuing education course	4.07
Taking minutes at an internal meeting regularly	4.27
Having a short news or feature article published	4.96
Having a short book review published	5.02
Writing a computer program that is not directly job related	5.02

Table III. Overall Means of the Mean Scores by Category of Activity

Scholarship	6.69
Service	7.1
Continuing education	5.88
Grant writing	7.84
Community Service	5.62

Table IV. Differences in Highest Rated Means by Category of Institution

	Research	Regional	State Univ.	Two Year
Scholarship	7.22	7.08	6.13	5.54
Service	6.16	7.18	7.38	7.06
Continuing education	5.71	5.16	6.10	7.89
Grant writing	8.33	7.14	8.06	6.67
Community Service	4.90	5.28	6.19	5.62

Table V. Results for Standard Deviation: Highest Overall

Research article in a refereed journal	3.07
Earning a doctorate	2.67
Having a scholarly article in librarianship published	2.61
Earning a second masters	2.58
Taking minutes at internal meetings regularly	2.55

Table VI. Results for Standard Deviation: Lowest Overall

Serving on a ALA committee, division, etc	1.65
Being a member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee	1.71
Presenting at a national conference	1.77
Having a major grant funded	1.78
Organizing or planning a workshop	1.79

Summary of Key Findings

Librarians at only ten of the 34 institutions are eligible for tenure, but at 20 institutions, they are eligible for promotion. At one institution the director is eligible for tenure but none of the other librarians are, and at two the director is eligible for promotion but none of the other librarians are.

One of the most surprising findings was that “having a research article published in a refereed journal” had the highest standard deviation among state universities and two year colleges, and the highest overall.

Concerning the value of service versus scholarship, some of the highest rated activities were service and some were scholarship. The overall means for service was 7.1 and for scholarship 6.69. It seems accurate to say both are highly valued. Grant writing was the highest rated category of all and was highly valued at all types of institutions.

Based on the standard deviations, there are big differences in how much University System of Georgia librarians value the various activities. In particular, there is much disagreement in how important earning additional advanced degrees and publishing are perceived to be.

The means for scholarship activities reflect somewhat the missions of the type of institutions involved, as universities place a higher emphasis on publishing than the other categories of institutions.

Concluding Statement

The initial findings of this survey sparked an interesting and much needed discussion among the library faculty at Georgia Southern. Perhaps the information in this article will spark a similar dialogue at other academic libraries around the region.