**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Message to the MCLA Faculty</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio Security</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility for Service on the COT</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. General Rules</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Rules of Disqualification</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the COP</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility for Promotion and Review Period</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional Clause</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Committee’s Evaluation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates Right to Respond</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Timelines</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerations of Fairness</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Considerations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Thanks</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Message to MCLA Faculty

This is the first edition of the COP (Committee on Promotion) Handbook. A concerted effort was made to develop a comprehensive guide but some sections may need to be improved in future editions. We hope you will find this handbook helpful.

The COP handbook is both a guide and a summary of the applicable provisions found in the collective bargaining agreement. The agreement is posted on the MSCA website at www.mscaunion.org. This document was prepared by Michele Ethier, with Dana Rapp and Deb Foss providing editorial assistance. While we believe that the statements in this handbook are accurate, we welcome questions, comments, and clarifications for future editions.

Relevant documents can be found in the appendices of this handbook.

All sections and page references contained in this handbook refer to the 2009-2012 Agreement.
**Portfolio Security**

Portfolios are secured in or near the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) office in Eldridge Hall. Documents within the portfolio may not be removed or photocopied by the COP. Portfolio materials are confidential documents. Arrangements to review materials are made with the VP or her/his Administrative Assistant. Efforts should be made by the Administration to provide a quiet location for reviewing documents.
Eligibility for Service on the Committee on Promotions

General Rules
- Elections to the COP are held during the spring semester under the auspices of the Faculty Association.
- 5 members are elected (2 one year and 3 the next)
- Members must be tenured
- Members must be at the rank of
  a. Professor or Associate Professor
  b. Senior Librarian, Librarian, Associate Librarian
- Members serve for two years

Rules of Disqualification
- Department chairs cannot serve
- Candidates for promotion cannot serve
- Members of the Committee on Tenure cannot serve
- Only 1 member from a department or the Library can serve
- A person undergoing post-tenure review cannot serve when his or her Department Chair is a candidate for promotion
- Members cannot serve if they are on sabbatical during the work of the committee

Role of the COP
- The Vice President (VPAA) confirms eligibility of candidates for consideration or promotion in rank and transmits this information to the COP. The Vice President (VPAA) and the Faculty Association President meet briefly with the COP to convene the work of the committee. The COP elects a chair or co-chairs. The Committee on Promotions reviews and considers, the candidate’s portfolio, all related materials, and the evaluations by the candidate’s Department Chair and the Peer Evaluation Committee (PEC). **The COP may request that the Vice President make available any evaluations of the candidate completed during the applicable review period.** (See page 115 of the Agreement). The COP deliberates and makes a written recommendation either supporting or declining to support the promotion. If the Vice President disagrees with the COP’s recommendation, she/he notifies the committee. Within contractual timelines, the VP and the COP then meet and consult. Promptly thereafter, the COP submits to the VP a statement of its final recommendation. **The VP and the COP may meet any time during deliberations or after a recommendation has been submitted.**
Eligibility for Promotion and Review Period

Faculty

a. If there has been no prior promotion, the review period includes the time since the faculty member’s initial appointment to a tenure track position.
b. If there has been a prior promotion, the review period includes the entire time since the last promotion, including the year prior to when the promotion became effective.

- Faculty members who, when hired, possess a terminal degree effective on or before the date of appointment, must be appointed above the rank of Instructor.
- Associate Professor – 6 years of full time teaching and 3 years of full time employment at the rank of Assistant Professor at an accredited four year college or university and meritorious performance as demonstrated by the candidate’s evaluations (see Article VIII of the Agreement).
- Professor – 8 years of full time experience in teaching (5 of which must have been at an accredited two year or four year college or university), at least 4 years of full time employment at the rank of Associate Professor at an accredited four year college or university, and meritorious performance as demonstrated by the candidate’s evaluations (see Article VIII of the Agreement).
- Promotion of Certain Instructors – Faculty who hold an appointment at the rank of Instructor and who earn a terminal degree, notify the College and are automatically promoted to Assistant Professor without required evaluation, effective September 1 after notification.

Librarians

- Librarians may initially be appointed at any rank except Library Assistant.
- All Librarians must meet the following:
  - Fulfillment of the minimum requirements set forth by rank.
  - Meritorious performance as demonstrated by the candidates evaluations (see Article VIII of the Agreement).

  Assistant Librarian – M.L.S. or M.L.S.I.S., 3 years of full time experience in an academic or research library.

  Associate Librarian – M.L.S. or M.L.S.I.S., 7 years experience as a librarian, 3 years at an academic or research library, for promotion 3 years at the rank of Assistant Librarian

  Librarian – M.L.S. or M.L.S.I.S. and a second subject Master’s Degree.
Senior Librarian – D.L.S. or D.L.S.I.S. or appropriate doctorate and the M.L.S. or M.L.S.I.S., or M.L.S. or M.L.S.I.S. and a second subject Master’s degree, 12 years of full-time experience as a librarian (at least 6 at an academic or research library), 5 years at the rank of Librarian.

M.L.S. = Master of Library Science
M.L.S.I.S. = Master of Library Science and Information Science
D.L.S. = Doctorate of Library Science
D.L.S.I.S. = Doctorate of Library Science and Information Science

In all cases degrees must be granted from institutions accredited by the American Library Association.

**Exceptional Clause:**

**Faculty**

If the candidate does not meet the stated criteria for promotion (degree, experience, years in rank), the Board of Trustees (BOT) or the President may promote an individual of “exceptional talent or accomplishment” who demonstrates:

a. Evidence to render a unique academic contribution to the College.

b. Evidence of extraordinary competence in the area of his/her discipline or specialty or
c. Evidence that the discipline or specialty does not customarily demand fulfillment of those academic degree requirements set forth by the Board as minimum criteria for appointment or promotion to each rank. (see page 241 of the Agreement).

**Librarians**

“For sound academic reasons” exceptions to the requirements for promotions may be made “in certain specialized areas and under rare and extraordinary circumstances by the Board of Trustees” (see page 247 of the Agreement).
The Committee’s Evaluation

Each committee member should read and review the entire dossier of each candidate. Comments are required in each of the following areas of responsibility:

- Teaching effectiveness (for faculty).
- Academic advising (for faculty). If a faculty member has more than 30 advisees, she/he can elect to have those considered under category II of Continuing Scholarship (p. 99).
- Effectiveness in performing assigned responsibilities (for librarians).
- Effectiveness in rendering assistance to students, faculty, and the academic community (for librarians).
- Continuing scholarship.
- Professional activities.
- Alternative Assignments (if any).

For Professional Activities and Responsibilities the COP conducts its evaluation according to the criteria selected by the candidate on Appendix A-1 or A-2. These are as follows:

Continuing Scholarship

Candidates are required to select one criterion for continuing scholarship but may choose to select more. The evaluation of the candidate’s scholarship must be confined to the criterion/a selected and must not critique the candidate’s choice of criterion/a.

- Contribution to the content of the discipline (for faculty); contribution to the content and pedagogy of the discipline through the development of library programs or library services (for librarians).
- Participation in or contribution to professional organizations and societies.
- Research as demonstrated by published or unpublished work.
- Artistic or other creative activities.
- Work toward the terminal degree or relevant post graduate study.
• Other, as explained by the candidate.

Example: If the faculty member has done credible in-house research for the college that meets a need, it cannot be critiqued for not being published.

**Professional Activities**
Candidates are required to select one criterion for professional activities but may choose to select more. *The evaluation of the candidate’s professional activities must be confined to the criterion/a selected and must not critique the candidate’s choice of criterion/a.*

• Public Service.

• Contributions to the professional growth and development of the College Community. (For faculty, this may include academic advising of students in excess of 30 as assigned at the beginning of the semester).

• Other, as explained by the candidate.

Example: If the faculty member only selects “public service,” s/he cannot be negatively judged if there is no evidence of contributions to the professional growth and development of the college community.

**Alternative Assignments**
This is only considered if the candidate has an alternative assignment and, if so, the individual must be evaluated in the role of:

• Chair.

• Alternative Professional Responsibilities.

• Professional development program.

• Other, as explained by the candidate.

**Evaluation Standards**
The basis of the evaluation is “professional quality demonstrated with reference to each of the applicable criteria.” The current Agreement states, “it being the understanding of the parties that for promotion to each higher rank a higher order of quality may properly be demanded” (Article VIII, A4 p. 91). *The comments in the COP evaluation memo must be confined to the opinions of the majority of the committee,* and they must be based on the official record represented by the
classroom visits and/or the materials submitted by the candidate. **Comments reflecting minority opinions and minority reports are not permitted.** The written COP recommendation is signed by the COP Chair, but must represent the collective deliberations of all members of the COP.

When recommending in favor of promotion, the COP has an obligation to provide **clear and convincing** arguments in favor of the action. When recommending against promotion, the COP has an obligation to provide **full and complete** reasons for its recommendation.

In its report, the COP should include
- The recommendation.
- The names of the committee members.
- The numerical vote, but not the vote associated with each member.
- A statement that the evaluation was conducted in compliance with the Agreement
- Completed Evaluations are transmitted to the VP (VPAA).
Candidate’s Right to Respond

The faculty member has the right to respond to any written evaluation conducted by any evaluative body.

- The PEC’s evaluation: 10 calendar days to respond
- Chair’s evaluation: 10 calendar days to respond
- Vice President’s evaluation: 7 calendar days to respond

For promotion and tenure, COP and COT evaluations are transmitted to the faculty member through the Vice President: 7 calendar days to respond.

“Days” begin with the date the candidate receives the evaluation (the candidate signs it, indicating it has been received and read.)

The Faculty Association recommends that the candidate respond to a negative evaluation.
Evaluation Time Lines for 2010-2011

If the deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, the action is due on the next business day. Actions should be taken no later than the dates indicated. (Please see notes).

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<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Materials Submitted</td>
<td>9/15/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEC members selected</td>
<td>9/30/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom visit by Chair/Library Director</td>
<td>Previous semester or by 10/01/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC conducts classroom visits</td>
<td>10/22/10 (see 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC submits evaluation to candidate</td>
<td>10/29/10 (see 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC submits to Chair/Library Director</td>
<td>11/12/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation by Chair/Library Director</td>
<td>11/29/10 (see 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair submits to COP via VPAA</td>
<td>12/10/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP submits recommendation to VPAA</td>
<td>2/11/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation by VPAA</td>
<td>2/25/11 (see 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP submits to President</td>
<td>3/07/11</td>
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<tr>
<td>President Recommends to trustees</td>
<td>03/21/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Any request to extend deadlines must be communicated to the VPAA and be agreed to by both parties.
Notes  
1. Peer Evaluation Committees must be formed no later than 09/30/10. Candidates select the third member of the committee.

2. For Librarians, the Library Director conducts direct observation.

3. The Committee on Promotions must be formed no later than 09/30/10.

4. Candidate has 10 calendar days from receipt to respond.

5. Candidate has 7 calendar days from receipt to respond.
Considerations of Fairness

Both candidates and evaluators have a responsibility to be fair to each other. It is important that both share an understanding of the Agreement, the criteria of evaluation, and the evaluation process. A culture of shared expectations at MCLA will enhance the probability that personnel actions will be productive, respectful, and collegial.

A. Scholarship

Evaluation by the COP requires the exercise of academic judgment. Scholarship or pedagogy can vary across departments or even within a single department, so effort is needed to understand disciplines that are different from one’s own. On page 89 the Agreement states that:

“In evaluating each member of the faculty, it shall be the responsibility of those charged with doing so to assess the quality, significance and relevance of that faculty member’s continuing scholarship”.

Please note that quantity is not an evaluative measure. What constitutes scholarship is open to interpretation and may involve both traditional, nontraditional and unconventional “products.”

B. Contractual Criteria Only

Be objective and open-minded. Although it may seem obvious, remember to address only the contractual criteria and not extraneous matters such as personal interactions or department issues. Use only documentation provided in the portfolio. Evidence obtained or provided from other sources cannot be used in the evaluation, unless the candidate agrees to have such documentation included in her/his file. Evaluations should not include incidental observations (see page 93 of the Agreement).

C. Organization

A candidate’s file should be clearly organized and include one or more of the following: a table of contents, tabs, sections, dividers, numbered pages. The Agreement does not address how to organize a portfolio. There is no one right way.

D. Missing Documents

A candidate should provide a full and complete portfolio. It is understood that evaluators may request missing documents (via the Vice President of Academic Affairs) in order to make a clear and convincing, or full and complete,
recommendation. Evaluators may not arbitrarily decide to request one or two missing documents from one candidate but not from another candidate. There is no limit on the number of appropriate documents that can be requested. **The COP may request that the Vice President make available any evaluations of the candidate completed during the applicable review period** (see page 115 of the Agreement).

E. **Categories**

   It shall be the responsibility of any member of the bargaining unit who is a candidate for promotion to verify and demonstrate that he/she has fulfilled the criteria that pertain to the personnel action for which he/she is a candidate. In applying these criteria, it should be understood that the Massachusetts State Universities are primarily teaching institutions.

F. **Definitions and Standards**

   In Article VIII, A4, p. 91 of the Agreement, it states, “it being the understanding of the parties that for promotion to each higher rank, a higher order of quality may properly be demanded.” What is the higher standard? What is the standard? What is the lower standard? These are questions that the contract does not answer.

G. **Professional Quality** (Article VIII, A4, 91): Professional quality is **not** defined in the contract.

H. **Meritorious Performance** (Article VIII, Article xx): is **not** defined in the contract.

**Additional Considerations:**

1. The narrative is an optional document (but highly recommended).

2. Candidates cannot be compared to the other candidates.

3. Quotas are not allowed. Quotas by rank are not allowed.

4. No Faculty member should serve on an evaluation committee or participate in the conduct of an evaluation if to do so would constitute a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest (see page 88 of the Agreement).

5. All evaluators are bound to **keep confidential** all aspects of an evaluation (see page 88 of the Agreement).
6. The absence of student evaluations from the record of the following semesters shall not be considered either positively or negatively when evaluating a faculty member’s teaching effectiveness (see pages 95-96, 101 of the Agreement.) Fall 1999, Spring 2000, Fall 2000, Fall 2003, Spring 2004, Fall 2004, Spring 2005, Fall 2005.

7. **For Positive Recommendation – Clear and convincing reasons** *(Article VIII, I2)*

8. **For Negative Recommendation – Full and complete reasons** *(Article VIII, I3)*
This document was prepared by Michele Ethier.

**Special Thanks**

Special Thanks to Dana Rapp and Deb Foss for editorial assistance and Maria LaValley for typing this document.