Presidential Statement on the Conferral of Tenure and on the Promotion to Tenured Full Professor
May 2005

The following statement outlines the expectations of the President of Wesleyan University regarding appointments and promotions.

Wesleyan has a strong and enduring commitment to outstanding achievement in scholarship, teaching and collegial dedication to the university as a community of scholar-teachers. Demonstrated excellence in scholarship, encompassing scholarly and/or artistic achievements, is essential because it is the foundation for the research mission of the university. Demonstrated excellence in teaching, both in and beyond the classroom, is essential because it is the basis of the small and interactive residential learning community we have established and seek to strengthen. Excellent scholarship and teaching are closely intertwined because the most effective guides for students in their quest for knowledge are teachers whose ongoing research continues to engage them as learners at the frontiers of their own fields and who thereby bring the excitement of discovery to the classroom. Dedication to the collegial life of the university as a community of scholars is important because all of us, as members of a residential learning community, are responsible for the intellectual caliber and the general well-being of the university and for helping all community members develop a strong sense of responsibility for the university and its contributions to higher education and society. High achievement in all of these areas – scholarship, teaching, and colleagueship – is the surest indication of the continued success of the university and all of its faculty members.

Clearly demonstrated excellence is expected for the conferral of tenure and promotion. When making decisions on appointments and promotions conferring tenure, the president will recommend favorable action to the Board of Trustees on candidates whose promise of excellence at the time of appointment, in his or her judgment, has been fulfilled and whose accomplishments show evidence of distinction in all three areas. Scholarly accomplishments must show that the candidate is among the best compared to other scholars or artists in the field at a comparable career stage and that he or she is on a promising trajectory that will likely lead to continued excellence. The candidate’s teaching record, defined primarily, but not exclusively, as accomplishment and promise in the classroom, but extending as well to all aspects of teaching, must also demonstrate excellence and promise. And colleagueship should reveal constructive participation and accomplishments in meeting the collegial
responsibilities shared by the faculty, positive contributions to the intellectual and
cultural life of the faculty member’s department, program, the university, and the
academic profession, and the likelihood that such colleagueship will continue in the
future. No precise weight can be given to any one of these three areas, but the first two
are most important.

When considering promotions to a full professorship, the president’s decision will be
based on the candidate’s performance since receiving tenure. Candidates must show
significant additional scholarly and/or artistic achievements, teaching that maintains or
improves upon the accomplishments attained prior to the conferral of tenure, and
continued contributions to the collegial and intellectual life of the university. In
scholarship or artistic achievement, teaching, and colleagueship, there must be
evidence that the promise of future accomplishments that was exhibited at the time of
the conferral of tenure has been fulfilled.

Before making decisions on the conferral of tenure and promotion, the president will
seek the advice of the faculty, as stipulated by the Academic Council, and will be
guided by the university’s Statement on Academic Freedom and the Academic
Council’s Statement on the Obligation of Collegiality. As noted in the University and
the Academic Council by-laws, the Board of Trustees require the president to make an
independent judgment concerning each faculty appointment and promotion and the
president is not bound by the evaluations of candidates made by the faculty or outside
reviewers, or by representations made by faculty members to candidates. The president
will exercise this responsibility with the utmost regard for the recommendations made
by the faculty and will explain presidential promotion and tenure decisions to
Academic Council in a timely manner if and when they do not agree with those of the
faculty.