

Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment

**Faculty Tenure Rates: 2014-15 Annual Report**

Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and

Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment

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**Introduction[[1]](#footnote-2)**

For the past eighteen years, Penn State has analyzed the rates at which its provisionally appointed faculty members achieve tenure. Tabulations are shared annually with Penn State’s deans and with the University Faculty Senate. This report and an archive of prior years’ reports are available at <http://www.opia.psu.edu/planning_research/reports/facultyexitsurvey>.

**Distribution of Penn State Faculty**

Penn State employs 6,000 full-time faculty members, including lecturers, librarians and research faculty. Of these, almost 2,900 are either tenured or on the tenure track. The following data are University-wide counts for full-time faculty in fall 2014.[[2]](#footnote-3)

Tenured 2,239 ( 37.3%)

Tenure track-not tenured 640 ( 10.7%)

Other 3,121 ( 52.0%)

Total 6,000 (100.0%)

**Tenure-Track Progression of Assistant Professors**

In any given year, about 145 faculty members enter provisional status at Penn State. Table 1 shows the tenure achievement rates for entering cohorts for whom sufficient time has passed to allow outcomes to be observed. Specifically, tenure rates in Table 1 are calculated from the time of appointment through the seventh year (which allows for the handful of individuals who “stop the clock” during the provisional period). For the last eighteen entering cohorts – that is, from those beginning in 1990 through those beginning in 2007 – 58% of new entrants had received tenure by the end of their seventh year. This does not mean that 42% were denied tenure, since assistant professors leave the tenure track for many reasons.

Table 1 also shows tenure rates by gender and minority status. For the eighteen cohorts combined, tenure rates for minority faculty are lower than for non-minority faculty (55% compared to 59%). Overall, tenure rates for females are lower than for males (52% compared to 61%). The total number of entrants over the eighteen years tracked in this report is 611 minority faculty members, 2,021 non-minority faculty members, 1,009 females, and 1,623 males.

As noted, Table 1 only indicates the percentage of those who began on the tenure track and received tenure. Table 2 provides information about subsequent Penn State employment status at the end of that seven-year period. As shown in Table 2, very small numbers (eight in 2007) of individuals not receiving tenure remain employed at the University in some full-time capacity; they are typically former faculty members who applied for and were hired into full-time staff positions at the University. The University does not, as a matter of general practice, retain an individual who has been denied tenure in a subsequent academic appointment.

National higher education databases do not normally include tenure achievement rates comparable to the Penn State data shown in Tables 1 and 2. Table 3 summarizes information collected in 2004-05 for the 1997-98 cohort, through a special one-time data exchange among ten peer universities that participate in the American Association of Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE). The institutions were Northwestern, Penn State, Rutgers, Michigan, and the universities of Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Pittsburgh, and Wisconsin. In all cases except for Penn State, the data are for a single (main) campus. As Table 3 shows, Penn State’s tenure rate of 54% (N=160) for the AAUDE cohort study was typical for this group of universities, for which the average rate was 53% (N=1,382). It is anticipated that AAUDE comparison data will again be collected in 2014-15 for inclusion in next year’s report.

The different male-to-female and minority-to-non-minority patterns at Penn State were similar to the patterns reported by peer institutions in the AAUDE study (Table 3). Comparative data on this topic are very limited, but apparent disparities in tenure rates by gender and race/ethnicity probably reflect substantive differences across academic fields as much as or more than differences by demographic groups, for two reasons. First, demographic groups are distributed differently across academic units, and second, tenure rates are substantially different by discipline. The 2008 version of this annual report to the University Faculty Senate placed Penn State’s data in the context of a 2007 survey of over 1,300 modern language departments in 734 colleges and universities conducted by the Modern Language Association (MLA). In brief, tenure rates were quite low, around 35%, in fields represented by the MLA – fields which include relatively large numbers of female faculty members. However, national data at the discipline-level are not available for comparison.

**Approval Percentages of Upper-Level Reviews**

Table 4 demonstrates that the large majority of upper-level reviews at Penn State are consistent with recommendations coming from departments and campuses. Final outcomes have, likewise, historically been consistent with the recommendations that the University committee and the President receive. In fact, in six out of the last seven years the President approved 100% of the cases that came with positive recommendations from the University committee.

As noted in Table 4, in 2013-14, 91 cases made it to the Dean/Vice President of Research level of review.  Five of those cases were denied at that level and 86 cases (including 9 early-tenure cases) continued to the University-level of review, although one faculty member resigned prior to the committee’s review.  Of the 85 cases presented to the University-level of review, all carried positive recommendation from the respective dean. At the University-level of review 85 cases were reviewed positively and all were approved by the President. This pattern is typical. Prior annual versions of this report have shown that the University-level approval percentage has almost always been over 90%.

This report indicates whether faculty members received tenure; it does not explain why some faculty members do not receive tenure. Many individuals leave voluntarily, not necessarily because they were denied tenure. Penn State has been exploring some of those matters via an annual faculty exit survey and interview process, conducted since 1997. The most recent Faculty Study, as well as an archive of prior exit studies is available online at [http://www.opia.psu.edu/  
planning\_research/reports/facultyexitsurvey](http://www.opia.psu.edu/planning_research/reports/facultyexitsurvey).

**Table 1 & 2 definitions.**

* Each cohort includes new entrants into provisional status. So, for example, ABDs who may have been hired initially into a fixed-term position are included in a tenure cohort for the year in which they formally entered the tenure track. The cohorts also include library faculty of equivalent rank. As explained in the narrative, Tables 1 & 2 track cohorts *through* the seventh year – that is, one year past the normal tenure-decision point. Therefore, in Table 1, tenure rates include individuals who "stopped the clock" for one year. Typically, there are about 20 or so such cases, University-wide, in any year's cohort. Likewise, Table 2 shows Penn State employment status at the end of that seven-year period (in other words, representing a frozen snapshot at a point in time, not the individuals’ current status as of the semester this report is generated).
* Prior to 1997, the cohorts included University Park, Behrend, Capital, and Hershey and excluded other locations. Beginning with the 1997 cohort, the table summarizes data for all of Penn State except for Penn College of Technology and Dickinson School of Law.
* Minority faculty include all faculty members whose race/ethnicity is not White. This category includes all faculty whose race/ethnicity is reported as international.

**Table 1. Tracking Cohorts Entering the Tenure-Track through Seven Years at Penn State.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **All Entrants** | | | **Female** | | | **Male** | | | **Minority** | | | **Non-Minority** | | |
| **Cohort Year** | Entrants | Tenured | Rate | Entrants | Tenured | Rate | Entrants | Tenured | Rate | Entrants | Tenured | Rate | Entrants | Tenured | Rate |
| 1990 | 121 | 70 | 58% | 40 | 19 | 48% | 81 | 51 | 63% | 18 | 9 | 50% | 103 | 61 | 59% |
| 1991 | 93 | 55 | 59% | 30 | 15 | 50% | 63 | 40 | 63% | 8 | 5 | 63% | 85 | 50 | 59% |
| 1992 | 151 | 89 | 59% | 55 | 28 | 51% | 96 | 61 | 64% | 29 | 15 | 52% | 122 | 74 | 61% |
| 1993 | 103 | 55 | 53% | 31 | 12 | 39% | 72 | 43 | 60% | 17 | 8 | 47% | 86 | 47 | 55% |
| 1994 | 134 | 63 | 47% | 50 | 17 | 34% | 84 | 46 | 55% | 21 | 6 | 29% | 113 | 57 | 50% |
| 1995 | 127 | 70 | 55% | 53 | 30 | 57% | 74 | 40 | 54% | 23 | 17 | 74% | 104 | 53 | 51% |
| 1996 | 91 | 45 | 49% | 29 | 12 | 41% | 62 | 33 | 53% | 22 | 12 | 55% | 69 | 33 | 48% |
| 1997 | 160 | 87 | 54% | 52 | 25 | 48% | 108 | 62 | 57% | 28 | 15 | 54% | 132 | 72 | 55% |
| 1998 | 183 | 107 | 58% | 75 | 38 | 51% | 108 | 69 | 64% | 44 | 21 | 49% | 139 | 86 | 62% |
| 1999 | 178 | 113 | 63% | 63 | 38 | 60% | 115 | 75 | 65% | 34 | 19 | 56% | 144 | 94 | 65% |
| 2000 | 190 | 114 | 60% | 72 | 36 | 50% | 118 | 78 | 66% | 31 | 16 | 52% | 159 | 98 | 62% |
| 2001 | 183 | 106 | 58% | 77 | 46 | 60% | 106 | 60 | 57% | 41 | 26 | 63% | 142 | 80 | 56% |
| 2002 | 189 | 117 | 62% | 76 | 44 | 58% | 113 | 73 | 65% | 56 | 30 | 54% | 133 | 87 | 65% |
| 2003 | 158 | 95 | 60% | 68 | 44 | 58% | 90 | 51 | 57% | 45 | 23 | 51% | 113 | 72 | 64% |
| 2004 | 130 | 76 | 59% | 42 | 21 | 50% | 87 | 55 | 63% | 30 | 19 | 63% | 99 | 57 | 58% |
| 2005 | 147 | 83 | 56% | 64 | 31 | 48% | 83 | 52 | 63% | 56 | 29 | 52% | 91 | 54 | 59% |
| 2006 | 134 | 73 | 54% | 64 | 31 | 48% | 70 | 42 | 60% | 46 | 27 | 59% | 88 | 46 | 52% |
| 2007 | 160 | 101 | 63% | 67 | 35 | 52% | 93 | 66 | 71% | 61 | 36 | 59% | 99 | 65 | 66% |
| 1990-2007 Cohorts | 2,632 | 1,519 | 58% | 1,009 | 522 | 52% | 1,623 | 997 | 61% | 611 | 333 | 55% | 2,021 | 1,186 | 59% |
| 1998-2007 Cohorts | 1,652 | 985 | 60% | 669 | 364 | 54% | 983 | 621 | 63% | 445 | 246 | 55% | 1,207 | 739 | 61% |

**Table 2. Tenure Outcome and Subsequent Penn State Employment Status for the Past Five Cohorts.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cohort Year** | **Entrants** | **Tenured, employed** | **Rate** | **Not tenured, employed** | **Rate** | **Not tenured, not employed** | **Rate** | **Tenured, not employed** | **Rate** |
| **Total** | | | | | | | | | |
| 2003 | 158 | 89 | 56% | 6 | 4% | 57 | 36% | 6 | 4% |
| 2004 | 129 | 74 | 57% | 8 | 6% | 45 | 35% | 2 | 2% |
| 2005 | 147 | 79 | 54% | 8 | 5% | 56 | 38% | 4 | 3% |
| 2006 | 134 | 71 | 53% | 8 | 6% | 53 | 40% | 2 | 1% |
| 2007 | 160 | 98 | 61% | 8 | 5% | 51 | 32% | 3 | 2% |
| **Female** | | | | | | | | | |
| 2003 | 68 | 42 | 62% | 3 | 4% | 21 | 31% | 2 | 3% |
| 2004 | 42 | 21 | 50% | 5 | 12% | 16 | 38% | 0 | 0% |
| 2005 | 64 | 30 | 47% | 6 | 9% | 27 | 42% | 1 | 2% |
| 2006 | 64 | 29 | 45% | 5 | 8% | 28 | 44% | 2 | 3% |
| 2007 | 67 | 34 | 51% | 6 | 9% | 26 | 39% | 1 | 1% |
| **Male** | | | | | | | | | |
| 2003 | 90 | 47 | 52% | 3 | 3% | 36 | 40% | 4 | 4% |
| 2004 | 87 | 53 | 61% | 3 | 3% | 29 | 33% | 2 | 2% |
| 2005 | 83 | 49 | 59% | 2 | 2% | 29 | 35% | 3 | 4% |
| 2006 | 70 | 42 | 60% | 3 | 4% | 25 | 36% | 0 | 0% |
| 2007 | 93 | 64 | 69% | 2 | 2% | 25 | 27% | 2 | 2% |
| **Minority** | | | | | | | | | |
| 2003 | 45 | 23 | 51% | 2 | 4% | 20 | 44% | 0 | 0% |
| 2004 | 30 | 18 | 60% | 0 | 0% | 11 | 37% | 1 | 3% |
| 2005 | 56 | 26 | 46% | 2 | 4% | 25 | 45% | 3 | 5% |
| 2006 | 46 | 27 | 59% | 2 | 4% | 17 | 37% | 0 | 0% |
| 2007 | 61 | 36 | 59% | 2 | 3% | 23 | 38% | 0 | 0% |
| **Non-Minority** | | | | | | | | | |
| 2003 | 113 | 66 | 58% | 4 | 4% | 37 | 33% | 6 | 5% |
| 2004 | 99 | 56 | 57% | 8 | 8% | 34 | 34% | 1 | 1% |
| 2005 | 91 | 53 | 58% | 6 | 7% | 31 | 34% | 1 | 1% |
| 2006 | 88 | 44 | 50% | 6 | 7% | 36 | 41% | 2 | 2% |
| 2007 | 99 | 62 | 63% | 6 | 6% | 28 | 28% | 3 | 3% |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 3. Tenure Achievement Rates from Participating Association of American Universities Data Exchange Institutions 1997-98 Tenure Track Entrants Achievement of Tenure by 2004-05 (except for Penn State, these are main campuses only and exclusive of medical schools)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **All Entrants** | | | **Female Entrants** | | | **Male Entrants** | | | **Minority** | | | **Non-Minority** | | |
|  | **Entrants** | **Tenured** | **Rate** | **Entrants** | **Tenured** | **Rate** | **Entrants** | **Tenured** | **Rate** | **Entrants** | **Tenured** | **Rate** | **Entrants** | **Tenured** | **Rate** |
| **Penn State** | 160 | 87 | 54% | 52 | 25 | 48% | 108 | 62 | 57% | 28 | 15 | 54% | 132 | 72 | 55% |
| **10 AAUDE1** | 1,382 | 737 | 53% | 510 | 247 | 48% | 829 | 465 | 56% | 138 | 67 | 49% | 573 | 293 | 51% |

1Counts and averages for 10 AAUDE universities are inclusive of Penn State data.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 4. Second, Fourth and Sixth-Year Tenure Cases, 2013-14; Reviews and Recommendations at Selected Levels** | | | | |
|  | **Campus Chancellor** | **Dept/Div/School Head** | **College Dean/Sr VP Research** | **University Final Decision** |
| **Year 2** |  |  |  |  |
| # of cases reviewed | 10 | 70 | 82 |  |
| # of positive recs | 9 | 70 | 81 |  |
| % positive recs | 90% | 100% | 99% |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Year 4** |  |  |  |  |
| # of cases reviewed | 17 | 85 | 102 |  |
| # of positive recs | 17 | 79 | 99 |  |
| % positive recs | 100% | 93% | 97% |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Year 6 and early tenure** |  |  |  |  |
| # of cases reviewed | 9 | 82 | 91 | 85 |
| # of positive recs | 9 | 78 | 86[[3]](#footnote-4) | 85 |
| % positive recs | 100% | 95% | 95% | 100% |

Table 4 summarizes data for Penn State including Hershey, but excluding the Pennsylvania College of Technology. This table presents data for the normally sequenced (second-, fourth-, and sixth-year) reviews. Usually only an additional 5-10 cases per year are dealt with out of the normal sequence (for example, as third- or fifth-year reviews). There are many possible paths through the review process (with campus committees, department, division, and school committees, college committees, and the University committee). Table 4 presents the most common decision points in the tenure review process. In brief, for Abington, Altoona, Berks, Erie, and Harrisburg, the respective chancellors sign off at the dean/VP level – that is, they are *not* tallied in the campus chancellor column. For the other 14 campuses comprising the University College, there is a sign-off in *both* the campus chancellor and the dean/VP column. Great Valley and the Applied Research Lab are special situations; for those small numbers of cases, the VP for Research signs off.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The Pennsylvania State University. (2014). *Fact Book: Faculty Distribution by Tenure.* Retrieved from <http://www.budget.psu.edu/factbook/HrDynamic/FacultyDistributionBytenure.aspx?ReportCode=Tenure&YearCode=2014humors&FBPlusIndc=N>

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3. In 2013-14 one tenure candidate resigned prior to the University-level review. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)