



Faculty Tenure Rates Annual Report

April 2018

Executive Summary

In fall 2010, 52% of Penn State full-time faculty with academic classification were tenured or provisional (tenure track) status. Of the 786 full-time faculty with provisional status in fall 2010, 138 (18%) entered provisional status for the first time.

Fifty-nine percent of the 138 Penn State faculty who entered provisional status in fall 2010 achieved tenure by the end of the seventh academic year (2016-2017). Male and female tenure achievement rates were equally distributed with 59% of each group achieving tenure in this time frame. Among minority faculty, 51% achieved tenure within seven years, in comparison to 65% of non-minority faculty achieving tenure in the same period of time.

Approval percentages of upper-level reviews of the 2010-2011 cohort, through academic year 2016-2017, demonstrated consistency with previous years with 93% of reviewed cases receiving a final positive recommendation at the University level. Ninety-six percent of females received positive tenure recommendations in contrast to 90% of male faculty. Eighty-nine percent of minority faculty received positive recommendations in comparison to 95% of non-minority faculty reviewed at the University level.

Introduction

For the past twenty years, Penn State has analyzed the rates at which its provisionally appointed faculty members achieve tenure. Tabulations are shared annually with Penn State's administrative and academic leadership and with the University Faculty Senate. This report and an archive of prior years' reports are available on the Office of Planning and Assessment web page (<http://www.opa.psu.edu/institutional-research/publications-and-reports/research-and-data-analyses/tenure/>).

This report is conducted at the request of and provided to the Faculty Affairs Committee of the University Faculty Senate.

Distribution of Penn State Faculty

In fall 2017, Penn State employed 6,184 full-time faculty members, including lecturers, librarians, and research faculty (Table 1). Of these, 2,871 were either tenured or on the tenure track. Fall 2010 is provided for comparison.

Table 1. Full-Time Faculty by Tenure Status, Fall 2017¹ to Fall 2010²

Faculty type	Fall 2017		Fall 2010	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Tenured	2,130	34.4%	2,197	38.4%
Tenure track (Provisional)	741	12.0%	786	13.8%
Other	3,313	53.6%	2,727	47.8%
Total	6,184	100.0%	5,710	100.0%

Tenure-Track Progression of Assistant Professors

Over the past decade, an average of 153 faculty members have entered provisional status annually at Penn State. Table 2 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 2 are calculated from the time of appointment through the seventh year (which allows for the handful of individuals who “stop the clock” for one year during the provisional period). It is extremely rare for a faculty member to stop the tenure clock more than once, although it is permitted under University policy. For the last ten entering cohorts – that is, from those beginning in 2001-02 through those beginning in 2010-11 – 58% of new entrants received tenure by the end of their seventh year. This does not mean that the corresponding 42% were denied tenure; assistant professors leave the tenure track for many reasons.

¹ Retrieved from *Penn State Fact Book*, <https://budget.psu.edu/factbook/HrDynamic/FacultyDistributionBytenurePSULaw.aspx?ReportCode=Tenure&YearCode=2017humors&FBPlusIndc=N>

² Retrieved from *Penn State Fact Book*, <https://budget.psu.edu/factbook/HrDynamic/FacultyDistributionByTenure.aspx?ReportCode=Tenure&YearCode=2010humors&FBPlusIndc=N>

Table 2. Tenure Rates over the Past Decade by Gender and Minority Status

Cohort Year	Number of Entrants - All	Percent Tenured - All	Number of Female Entrants	Percent Females Tenured	Number of Male Entrants	Percent Males Tenured	Number of Minority Entrants	Percent Minorities Tenured	Number of Non-minority Entrants	Percent Non-minority Tenured
2001-02	183	58%	77	60%	106	57%	41	63%	142	56%
2002-03	189	62%	76	58%	113	65%	56	54%	133	65%
2003-04	158	60%	68	58%	90	57%	45	51%	113	64%
2004-05	130	59%	43	49%	87	63%	31	61%	99	58%
2005-06	147	56%	64	48%	83	63%	56	52%	91	59%
2006-07	134	54%	64	48%	70	60%	46	59%	88	52%
2007-08	160	63%	67	52%	93	71%	61	59%	99	66%
2008-09	162	55%	58	52%	104	56%	59	49%	103	57%
2009-10	130	55%	57	47%	73	62%	54	56%	76	55%
2010-11	138	59%	59	59%	79	59%	55	51%	83	65%
Ten-Year Total	1,531	58%	633	54%	898	61%	504	55%	1,027	60%

Tables 1 & 2 Notes

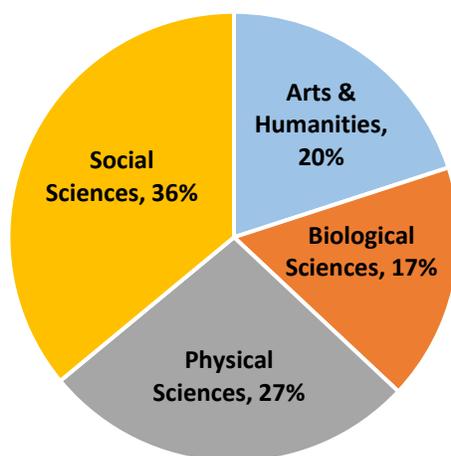
- Each cohort includes new entrants into provisional status. So, for example, faculty members who have not completed dissertations and who may have been hired initially into a fixed-term position are included in a tenure cohort for the year in which they formally entered the tenure track. The cohorts 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 2, 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.
- These cohorts include all Penn State locations. They do not include the Pennsylvania College of Technology. Cohorts prior to 2008-09 do not include the 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 2 also provides tenure rates by gender and minority status. In aggregate over the past decade, 61% of males achieved tenure while only 54% of females did so. Similarly, the ten-year average tenure rate for minority faculty (defined as Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, multiracial, and international) were lower than that of non-minority (White) faculty (55% compared to 60%). On average the minority tenure gap appears to have slowly narrowed over the last decade. The difference between five-year rolling averages for tenure achievement for minority versus non-minority faculty over the past decade peaked for the 1999-2003 cohorts at 7% and has declined to 4% in aggregate over the past five cohorts (data not shown). The five-year rolling average for the gender gap, however, was lowest for the 1999-2003 cohorts (5%) but was on the rise through the 2009 cohort (13%). The current five-year rolling average gender gap in tenure achievement for the 2006-2010 cohorts is 10%, which may represent some measure of improvement. Caution should be exercised in the interpretation of these numbers, however, due to the relatively small populations.

Comparative data on this topic are very limited, but apparent disparities in tenure rates by gender and race/ethnicity may be related to differences across academic fields. Demographic groups are distributed disproportionately across academic units and aggregate tenure rates differ substantially by discipline. For example, a 2007 report of the Modern Language Association² found tenure rates in the fields it represents—which include relatively large numbers of female faculty members—to be around 35%. This is in stark contrast to Penn State’s overall tenure rate of 58% over the last decade.

In order to explore this issue, faculty in the 2010-11 cohort were divided into four broad discipline areas for comparison: arts and humanities, biological sciences, physical sciences, and social sciences.³ Over one third of the cohort (36%) are in disciplines categorized as social sciences, 27% are in the physical sciences, 17% are in the biological sciences, and 20% are in the arts and humanities (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Cohort Distribution by Discipline Category



² The Modern Language Association of America. (2007). *Report of the MLA Task Force on Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion*. MLA Task Force on Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion. New York.

³ A list of University department assignments to the discipline areas is available from Penn State’s Office of Planning and Assessment.

Within the 2010-11 cohort, women are 57% of the biological sciences, 44% of the social sciences, 67% of the arts and humanities, and 16% of the physical sciences faculty (Table 3). Minorities make up 38% of the faculty in the social sciences, 35% in the biological sciences, 42% in the physical sciences, and 56% in the arts and humanities. These proportions can vary widely from cohort to cohort. For this cohort, aggregate tenure rates were higher for males than females in the arts and humanities and physical sciences (Table 4). Non-minority tenure rates were lower than minority rates only in the physical sciences.

Due to the large variation between cohorts, the small number of women and minorities in some disciplinary areas, and the lack of key tenure predictors such as research productivity, it is inadvisable to draw conclusions from such data. These findings suggest, however, that this is an area worth further exploration. National data at the discipline-level are not available for comparison.

Table 3. Disciplinary Category by Gender and Minority Status, 2010-11 Cohort (N=138)

Discipline Category	Percentage Female	Percentage Male	Percentage Minority	Percentage Non-minority
Arts and Humanities	66.7%	33.3%	55.6%	44.4%
Biological Sciences	56.5%	43.5%	34.8%	65.2%
Physical Sciences	15.8%	84.2%	42.1%	57.9%
Social Sciences	44.0%	56.0%	38.0%	62.0%

Table 4. Tenure Rates by Group and by Disciplinary Category, 2010-11 Cohort (N=138)

Review History	Arts and Humanities	Biological Sciences	Physical Sciences	Social Sciences
Number of tenure cases reviewed	27	23	38	50
Number of female cases reviewed	18	13	6	22
Number of male cases reviewed	9	10	32	28
Number of minority cases reviewed	12	8	16	19
Number of non-minority cases reviewed	15	15	22	31
Percentage of cases granted tenure	63%	61%	61%	56%
Percentage of female cases granted tenure	61%	62%	33%	64%
Percentage of male cases granted tenure	67%	60%	66%	50%
Percentage of minority cases granted tenure	42%	50%	63%	47%
Percentage of non-minority cases granted tenure	80%	67%	38%	53%

As noted, Table 2 only indicates the percentage of those who began on the tenure track and received tenure. Table 5 provides information about subsequent Penn State employment status at the end of that seven-year period. As shown in Table 5, small numbers (5% of the 2010-11 cohort) of individuals not receiving tenure remain employed at the University in some full-time capacity at the end of the seven-year window. Of these, six remain in provisional status due to tenure stays and one remains in a non-tenure-track academic position. Historically, the University has not, as a matter of general practice, retained individuals who have been denied tenure in a subsequent academic appointment.

Table 5. Tenure Outcome and Subsequent Penn State Employment Status at the End of Year Seven for the Past Five Cohorts

Cohort Year	Number of Entrants	Percentage Tenured and Still Employed	Percentage Not Tenured but Still Employed	Percentage Not Tenured and Not Employed	Percentage Tenured and Not Employed
2006-07 Total	134	53%	6%	40%	1%
2007-08 Total	160	61%	5%	32%	2%
2008-09 Total	161	50%	10%	37%	4%
2009-10 Total	130	52%	5%	40%	3%
2010-11 Total	138	59%	5%	36%	1%
2006-07 Female	64	45%	8%	44%	3%
2007-08 Female	67	51%	9%	39%	1%
2008-09 Female	58	45%	14%	34%	7%
2009-10 Female	57	44%	5%	47%	4%
2010-11 Female	59	58%	7%	34%	2%
2006-07 Male	70	60%	4%	36%	0%
2007-08 Male	93	69%	2%	27%	2%
2008-09 Male	104	53%	8%	38%	2%
2009-10 Male	73	59%	4%	34%	3%
2010-11 Male	79	59%	4%	37%	0%
2006-07 Minority	46	59%	4%	37%	0%
2007-08 Minority	61	59%	3%	38%	0%
2008-09 Minority	59	44%	10%	41%	5%
2009-10 Minority	54	54%	6%	39%	2%
2010-11 Minority	55	51%	5%	44%	0%
2006-07 Non-minority	88	50%	7%	41%	2%
2007-08 Non-minority	99	63%	6%	28%	3%
2008-09 Non-minority	103	53%	10%	34%	3%
2009-10 Non-minority	76	51%	4%	41%	4%
2010-11 Non-minority	83	64%	5%	30%	1%

National higher education databases do not normally include tenure achievement rates comparable to the Penn State data in this report. Table 6 summarizes information collected in 2015 for the 2007-08 cohort, through a special one-time data exchange among twelve peer universities that participate in the American Association of Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE). Data was provided by Boston University, Cornell, Michigan State, Purdue, Rutgers University, and the Universities of Arizona, California – Davis, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota – Twin Cities, Nebraska – Lincoln, and Wisconsin – Madison. In all cases except for Penn State, the data are for a single (main) campus. As Table 6 shows, Penn State’s tenure rate of 63% (N=160) for the AAUDE cohort study was typical for this group of universities, for which the average rate was 66% (N=1,166).

Male-to-female patterns at Penn State varied somewhat with 52% of females achieving tenure – a rate lower than the median rate of females at AAUDE institutions (61%). Minority-to-non-minority patterns at Penn State reflected a 59% minority tenure achievement rate, which was greater than the median tenure achievement rate (54%) reported by peer institutions in the AAUDE study (Table 6).

Table 6. 2007-08 Cohort Seven-Year Tenure Achievement Rates from Participating AAUDE Institutions

Cohort	Number of Entrants – Penn State	Percent Tenured – Penn State	Number of Entrants – 13 AAUDE	Percent Tenured – 13 AAUDE	Median Percent Tenured – 13 AAUDE
All	160	63%	1,166	66%	64%
Female	67	52%	439	60%	61%
Male	93	71%	727	66%	64%
Minority	61	59%	372	62%	54%
Non-minority	99	66%	794	66%	67%

Except for Penn State, these are main campuses only and exclusive of medical schools. Counts, averages, and median values for 13 AAUDE universities are exclusive of Penn State.

Approval Percentages of Upper-Level Reviews

Tables 7 through 9 summarize data for Penn State including Hershey and Dickinson, but excluding the Pennsylvania College of Technology, for each typical tenure review year. The tables present data for the normally sequenced (second-, fourth-, and sixth-year) reviews. Not all units report the information for second- and fourth-year reviews in a timely manner, so Tables 8 and 9 are incomplete. Usually only 6-10 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). These tables present 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/vice president level – that is, they are *not* tallied in the campus chancellor column. For the other 14 campuses comprising the University College, *both* the campus chancellor and the vice president for commonwealth campuses and executive chancellor (who serves as dean of the University College) sign off. Great Valley faculty fall under the purview of the vice president for commonwealth campuses and executive chancellor. Faculty in the Applied Research Lab are eligible for promotion only, not tenure, and are not reflected in these data. Appendix A of this report provides a general guide to the tenure review levels at Penn State.

Tables 7 through 9 demonstrate that the 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, Provost, and President receive.

As noted in Table 9, in 2016-17, 60 cases made it to the dean level of six-year review. Two of those cases were denied at that level and 58 cases (including four early-tenure cases) received positive recommendations. Fifty-seven of the 58 dean-level of review cases continued to the University-level of review, with one case from the College of Medicine not proceeding due to the College’s longer period of provisional review. Of the 57 cases presented to the University-level of review, 57 carried a positive

recommendation from the cognizant dean. At the University-level of review, 54 cases were reviewed positively and 53 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 because they were denied tenure or anticipated denial of 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 Exit Study, as well as an archive of prior exit studies is available online on the Office of Planning and Assessment web page (<http://www.opa.psu.edu/institutional-research/publications-and-reports/research-and-data-analyses/faculty-exit/>).

Table 7. Year Two Tenure Reviews, 2010-11 Cohort

Review History	Campus Chancellor	Dept/Div/ School Head	College Dean
Number of cases reviewed	18	122	143
Female cases reviewed	12	49	63
Male cases reviewed	6	73	80
Minority cases reviewed	10	58	69
Non-minority cases reviewed	8	64	74
Positive recommendations	17 (94%)	121 (99%)	142 (99%)
Female positive recommendations	11 (92%)	49 (100%)	63 (100%)
Male positive recommendations	6 (100%)	72 (99%)	79 (99%)
Minority positive recommendations	9 (90%)	57 (98%)	68 (99%)
Non-minority positive recommendations	8 (100%)	64 (100%)	74 (100%)

Table 8. Year Four Tenure Reviews, 2010-11 Cohort

Review History	Campus Chancellor	Dept/Div/ School Head	College Dean
Number of cases reviewed	20	95	117
Female cases reviewed	8	34	43
Male cases reviewed	12	61	74
Minority cases reviewed	11	39	50
Non-minority cases reviewed	9	56	67
Positive recommendations	20 (100%)	93 (98%)	114 (97%)
Female positive recommendations	8 (100%)	33 (97%)	42 (98%)
Male positive recommendations	12 (100%)	60 (98%)	72 (97%)
Minority positive recommendations	11 (100%)	39 (100%)	49 (98%)
Non-minority positive recommendations	9 (100%)	54 (96%)	65 (97%)

Table 9. Year Six and Early Tenure Reviews, 2010-11 Cohort

Review History	Campus Chancellor	Dept/Div/ School Head	College Dean	University Final Decision
Number of cases reviewed	4	53	60	57
Female cases reviewed	1	24	28	26
Male cases reviewed	3	29	32	31
Minority cases reviewed	0	18	19	18
Non-minority cases reviewed	4	35	41	39
Positive recommendations	4 (100%)	50 (94%)	58 (97%)	53 (93%)
Female positive recommendations	1 (100%)	23 (96%)	27 (96%)	25 (96%)
Male positive recommendations	3 (100%)	27 (93%)	31 (97%)	28 (90%)
Minority positive recommendations	0	17 (94%)	18 (95%)	16 (89%)
Non-minority positive recommendations	4 (100%)	33 (94%)	40 (98%)	37 (95%)

Appendix A

Administrative guidelines to support the implementation of the University's policy on promotion and tenure, HR-23, are available in the document entitled, "Promotion and Tenure Guidelines" (http://vpfa.psu.edu/files/2016/09/p_and_t_-_guidelines-2i76gdt.pdf). Appendix D outlines the levels of review for promotion and tenure at Penn State.

APPENDIX D LEVELS OF REVIEW FOR PROMOTION AND TENURE

