

2023 COACHE Tenure Policies and Expectations Summary Report

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ISSUE ADDRESSED AND WHY

Faculty concerns around tenure policies and expectations were identified by the COACHE steering committee as one of six main themes that emerged from the COACHE 2023 survey. Dissatisfaction with tenure policies and expectations remains a consistent concern of UMKC faculty, as it was identified as such in the 2017 COACHE Survey. The results of the 2023 COACHE survey should be interpreted within the context of campus-wide initiatives that were taking place prior to and during the survey period in which UMKC realigned its academic units and closed some programs. The realignment created three new schools: the School of Education, Social Work and Psychological Sciences; the School of Humanities and Social Sciences; and the School of Science and Engineering. Additionally, all schools on campus took part in a benchmarking activity to assess tenure guidelines for clarity and rigor.

DATA USED TO INFORM DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results from the 2023 COACHE survey led to guided interviews providing additional insight. As a result, the findings in this report were informed by the COACHE Survey, an interview with the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and the Faculty Affairs Specialist, data reported by the Data and Visual Analytics Specialist in Institutional Effectiveness and Institutional Research, and a focus group of recently tenured faculty.

The COACHE survey included eight items about tenure policies, including clarity of the process, criteria, standards, evidence needed, likelihood of obtaining tenure, grievance procedures, consistency of messaging and whether tenure decisions are performance-based. Further, there were six items inquiring about clarity of expectations as scholar, teacher, advisor, colleague, campus citizen and community member. The tenure policy sub-committee of the COACHE steering committee analyzed the COACHE Survey responses from tenure-track faculty university-wide representing 7 of 12 schools. There were 56 full-time tenure track faculty in the initial COACHE survey cohort. Of these, there were 37 valid respondents, for an overall response rate of 66.1%. Of the valid respondents, 75.7% (n=28) responded to the tenure policies items. The discipline-level responses varied widely, spanning from 0 to 100%. Analyses compared survey responses by faculty demographic characteristics and academic discipline groupings. Unfortunately, due to small sample sizes discipline grouping analyses were only estimated for Visual and Performing Arts and Medicine.

For 7 of the tenure policy items, UMKC performed worse than UMKC COACHE survey responses from 2017, our peer (N=5) and cohort (N=86) institutions. Further, this low performance was reported by female faculty and faculty of color. Male faculty reported experiences comparable to peers and cohort members for tenure policies overall. While over 90% of faculty reported formal feedback on progress toward tenure (better than peer and cohort schools), feedback on promotion to full professor was reported by approximately 25% of faculty.

Findings relating to clarity of tenure expectations were mixed. Overall, UMKC performed lower than UMKC COACHE survey responses from 2017, peer and cohort schools. UMKC's performance was similar to peer schools for expectations for teaching and similar to both peer and

cohort schools’ campus citizenship. Again, female faculty reported lower clarity than male faculty. Faculty of color reported comparable or higher rates of clarity than reported at peer or cohort schools for all domains, but these differences were small when compared to white faculty.

In April 2024, a focus group of 4 recently tenured faculty members (75% male; race/ethnicity not known) was conducted. Topics for the discussion included challenges and successes experienced in the promotion process, existing and needed supports, and unit-level experiences of the tenure and promotion process. While the sample size for the focus groups was too small to generate meaningful inferences across the campus, the faculty reported satisfaction with the overall process and the clear and proactive communication at the university level. Experiences at the unit level are more variable; units are not consistent in terms of communication, transparency, support, and mentoring. Further, the results of the recent benchmarking review of tenure policies have not been consistently communicated to faculty.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WOULD LIKELY STRENGTHEN FACULTY SATISFACTION

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION ITEMS
<p>Tenure and promotion processes vary across academic units. Communication about tenure processes and expectations, adherence to Chancellor’s Memorandum #35.05, and administrative support are inconsistent across units, faculty levels, and demographic characteristics. We recommend university-wide administration-led initiatives that promote consistency of communication, transparency, and administrative support across all units and a review to identify academic units not adhering to Memorandum #35.05 (e.g. adherence to P & T coordinator requirements).</p>	<p>The P&T Criteria benchmarking and CRR alignment project (very near completion as of Fall 2024) will address some of the concerns that prompted this recommendation. Better aligning each unit’s criteria with the CRRs should create more consistency in procedures and likewise offer administrative support.</p> <p>The office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs will continue to work on strengthening lines of communication with all units (particularly the promotion and tenure coordinators and administrative support personnel).</p> <p>The VPFA will continue to notify all promotion and tenure coordinators of various deadlines and needed actions as the promotion and tenure cycle runs its course; adherence to the CRRs will be monitored as they relate to the promotion and tenure criteria and procedures.</p>
<p>Use of myVITA is cumbersome for many users. We recommend initiatives to support its use to ensure faculty are including and highlighting their work appropriately (e.g., yearly training sessions on myVITA, optimizing myVITA entry for categorization of activities such as Research, Teaching, Service, Clinical or Other) - especially since this tool is used for unit and campus-level committee review.</p>	<p>CAFE has been and remains available to support faculty that are having difficulty utilizing myVITA.</p> <p>The Faculty Affairs Specialist will continue to support faculty in their use of myVITA, and will likewise assist Unit Administrative Assistants in their efforts to support faculty with myVITA.</p>

<p>We recommend units use trained faculty mentors to provide assistance and guidance for faculty navigating the tenure process. A consistent mentorship program across all units will ensure all faculty members receive equal support.</p>	<p>UMKC CAFE Faculty Mentorship Program provides faculty from all ranks with a support system focused on both personal and professional development.</p> <p>UMKC Faculty Scholars (UMKCFS) program is designed to support the efforts of the university to acclimate and retain new faculty members. In this unique program, scholars participate in campus-specific activities designed to create avenues for communication and collaboration across the UMKC campuses. The UMKCFS program offers new ideas for thinking about research, teaching, scholarship and engagement. Will be available Fall 2025.</p> <p>CAFE's January 2025 Conference (the 2nd annual) will be all about Mentoring. In addition to many panels that will address various aspects of mentoring, including how to navigate the promotion and tenure process, the January Conference will feature a keynote presentation from CIMER, the Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research.</p> <p>In 2025 CAFE will send a group of select faculty (~32) to a CIMER workshop in Madison, WI. Those faculty will serve to initiate and support mentoring throughout the University and will be charged with working toward the creation of a culture of Mentoring at UMKC.</p>
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HOW RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD IMPROVE FACULTY LIVES/JOB SATISFACTION

Improvements to the promotion process across all units will increase access to tenured leaders familiar with the tenure process and equitable access to myVITA will streamline an often-onerous task of entering data into the promotion package and prepare faculty to create packets ready for review. Individual faculty mentors will guide faculty members through the process, promote facilitation with unit and school-level resources and support faculty as they prepare their overall narrative