



Faculty Tenure Rates Annual Report

January 2017

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 deans and with the University Faculty Senate. This report and an archive of prior years’ reports are available on the Department of Planning and Institutional Research web page (www.opa.psu.edu/planning_research/reports/tenureflow.html).

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 2016, Penn State employed 6,178 full-time faculty members, including lecturers, librarians, and research faculty (Table 1). Of these, 2,930 were either tenured or on the tenure track.

Table 1. Full-Time Faculty by Tenure Status, Fall 2016¹

Faculty type	Number	Percentage
Tenured	2,258	36.5%
Tenure track	672	10.9%
Other	3,248	52.6%
Total	6,178	100.0%

Tenure-Track Progression of Assistant Professors

Over the past decade, an average of 158 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 2000-01 through those beginning in 2009-10 – 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=2016humors&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
2000-01	190	60%	72	50%	118	66%	31	52%	159	62%
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%	42	50%	87	63%	30	63%	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%
Ten-Year Total	1,583	58%	646	53%	937	62%	480	55%	1,103	60%

Tables 1 & 2 Notes

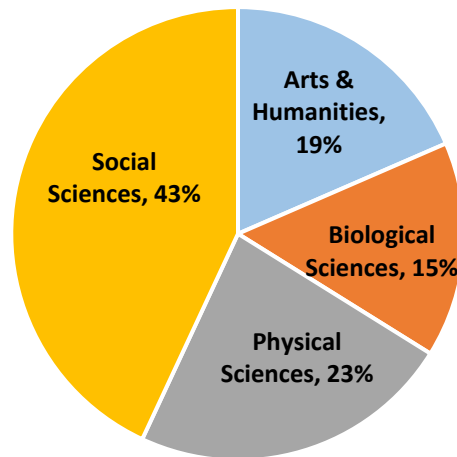
- Each cohort includes new entrants into provisional status. So, for example, faculty members who have not completed dissertations and who may have been hired initially into a fixed-term position are included in a tenure cohort for the year in which they formally entered the tenure track. The cohorts 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 except for 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. As in prior years, there remains a noticeable gender gap. In aggregate over the past decade, 62% of males achieved tenure while only 53% 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%). Overall, the aggregate tenure rate for females over the past decade is lower than for males (55% compared to 59%). On average the minority tenure gap does seem to be slowly narrowing. 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 3% 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, but has been on the rise in the years since. The current five-year average gap in tenure achievement is 13%.

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 2009-10 cohort were divided into four broad discipline areas for comparison: arts and humanities, biological sciences, physical sciences, and social sciences.³ Almost half of the cohort (43%) are in disciplines categorized as social sciences, 23% are in the physical sciences, 15% are in the biological sciences, and 19% 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 Department of Planning and Institutional Research.

Within the 2009-10 cohort, women are 40% of the biological sciences, 45% of the social sciences, 63% of the arts and humanities, and 30% in the physical sciences faculty (Table 3). Minorities make up 46% of the faculty in the social sciences, 20% in the biological sciences, 60% in the physical sciences, and 25% 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 biological sciences, physical sciences and social sciences (Table 4). Non-minority tenure rates were lower than minority rates in the arts and humanities, physical sciences, and social 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, 2009-10 Cohort (N=130)

Discipline Category	Percentage Female	Percentage Male	Percentage Minority	Percentage Non-Minority
Arts and Humanities	62.5%	37.5%	25.0%	75%
Biological Sciences	40.0%	60.0%	20.0%	80.0%
Physical Sciences	30.0%	70.0%	60.0%	40.0%
Social Sciences	44.6%	55.4%	46.4%	53.6%

Table 4. Tenure Rates by Group and by Disciplinary Category, 2009-10 Cohort

Review History	Arts and Humanities	Biological Sciences	Physical Sciences	Social Sciences
Number of tenure cases reviewed	24	20	30	56
Number of female cases reviewed	15	8	14	31
Number of male cases reviewed	9	12	21	31
Number of minority cases reviewed	6	--	18	26
Number of non-minority cases reviewed	18	--	12	30
Percentage of cases granted tenure	67%	75%	53%	45%
Percentage of female cases granted tenure	67%	63%	44%	32%
Percentage of male cases granted tenure	67%	83%	57%	55%
Percentage of minority cases granted tenure	100%	--	56%	46%
Percentage of non-minority cases granted tenure	56%	--	50%	43%

Note: Blank cells indicate small numbers of faculty in these categories (N<=5), whose confidentiality would be compromised by inclusion in this table.

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 2009-10 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, five remain in provisional status due to tenure stays, and the remaining three are

in non-tenure-track academic positions. 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
2005-06 Total	147	54%	5%	42%	3%
2006-07 Total	134	53%	6%	33%	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%
2005-06 Female	64	47%	9%	42%	2%
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%
2005-06 Male	83	59%	2%	35%	4%
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%
2005-06 Minority	56	46%	4%	45%	5%
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%
2005-06 Non-minority	91	58%	7%	34%	1%
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%

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, Cornell, Michigan State, Purdue, and Rutgers Universities, 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 65% (N=1,326). The different male-to-female and minority-to-non-minority patterns at Penn State

were also similar, but slightly more extreme than those 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
All	160	63%	1,326	65%
Female	67	52%	506	59%
Male	93	71%	820	67%
Minority	61	59%	433	61%
Non-minority	99	66%	893	66%

Except for Penn State, these are main campuses only and exclusive of medical schools.

Counts and averages for 13 AAUDE universities are inclusive of Penn State.

Approval Percentages of Upper-Level Reviews

Tables 7 through 9 summarize data for Penn State including Hershey, 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 year 2 and year 4 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/VP 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.

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

As noted in Table 9, in 2015-16, 88 cases made it to the dean level of six-year review. Six of those cases were denied at that level and 82 cases (including five early-tenure cases) continued to the University-level of review. Of the 82 cases presented to the University-level of review, 81 carried a positive recommendation from the respective dean. At the University-level of review, 81 cases were reviewed positively and 80 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 the Department of Planning and Institutional Research web page (https://www.opa.psu.edu/planning_research/reports/facultyexitsurvey).

Table 7. Year Two Tenure Reviews, 2009-10 Cohort

Review History	Campus Chancellor	Dept/Div/ School Head	College Dean
Number of cases reviewed	19	101	117
Female cases reviewed	13	44	55
Male cases reviewed	6	57	62
Minority cases reviewed	10	48	57
Non-minority cases reviewed	9	53	60
Positive recommendations	19 (100%)	100 (99%)	116 (99%)
Female positive recommendations	13 (100%)	44 (100%)	55 (100%)
Male positive recommendations	6 (100%)	56 (98%)	61 (98%)
Minority positive recommendations	9 (90%)	48 (100%)	57 (100%)
Non-minority positive recommendations	10 (111%)	52 (98%)	59 (98%)

Table 8. Year Four Tenure Reviews, 2009-10 Cohort

Review History	Campus Chancellor	Dept/Div/ School Head	College Dean
Number of cases reviewed	8	60	70
Female cases reviewed	3	20	24
Male cases reviewed	5	40	46
Minority cases reviewed	2	24	27
Non-minority cases reviewed	6	36	43
Positive recommendations	8 (100%)	59 (98%)	68 (97%)
Female positive recommendations	3 (100%)	20 (100%)	24 (100%)
Male positive recommendations	5 (100%)	39 (98%)	44 (96%)
Minority positive recommendations	2 (100%)	23 (96%)	26 (96%)
Non-minority positive recommendations	6 (100%)	36 (100%)	42 (98%)

Table 9. Year Six and Early Tenure Reviews, 2009-10 Cohort

Review History	Campus Chancellor	Dept/Div/ School Head	College Dean	University Final Decision
Number of cases reviewed	15	74	89	82
Female cases reviewed	7	28	35	34
Male cases reviewed	8	46	54	48
Minority cases reviewed	2	29	31	29
Non-minority cases reviewed	13	45	58	53
Positive recommendations	14 (93%)	66 (89%)	82 (92%)	80 (98%)
Female positive recommendations	6 (86%)	28 (100%)	34 (97%)	32 (94%)
Male positive recommendations	8 (100%)	38 (83%)	48 (89%)	48 (100%)
Minority positive recommendations	2 (100%)	27 (93%)	29 (94%)	29 (100%)
Non-minority positive recommendations	12 (92%)	39 (87%)	53 (91%)	51 (96%)