

2014 – 2015 APSA
DEPARTMENTAL SURVEY
TENURE POLICIES

October 18, 2016

Foreword

Enclosed are the findings from the 2014-2015 APSA Departmental Survey concerning the policies and guidelines for promotions to tenure among responding departments. Departments were asked to provide information about the tenure policies of their departments and/or institution. These included questions on how tenure policies are communicated to tenure-track faculty, whether there are additional guidelines for tenure beyond the department or institution's policy, and the relative importance of various professional activities in decisions of tenure promotion. Professional activities were ranked from "Essential" to "Not Important" to capture the relative importance of each among like institutions.

The 2014-15 APSA Departmental Survey was administered to 1,302 departments at 4-year colleges and universities offering degrees and courses in Political Science and Government in the United States. 334 departments responded to the survey for an overall response rate of 25.7%. Departments of social science had a response rate of 5.5% (n = 12); BA departments combining political science with at least one other field had a response rate of 15.2% (n = 42); BA departments of political science or government had a response rate of 30.0% (n = 150); MA-granting departments had a response rate of 33.5% (n = 56); and PhD granting departments had a response rate of 52.9% (n = 74).

We encourage you to carefully review these findings and contact us with any questions, thoughts, or suggestions you may have. Additional APSA data reports and other research materials can be found on the American Political Science Association website, www.apsanet.org. You can also contact us at surveys@apsanet.org, or by calling the main APSA office at 202-483-2512.

Sincerely,

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Washington, DC
October 18, 2016

Key Findings

Communicating Tenure Policies & Guidelines

- Nearly every responding department reported that their department had a tenure system. 98.9% of reporting departments reported that their institution used a formal tenure system. 93.8% of all departments reported that they had a written policy to communicate requirements and expectations for promotion to tenure.
- The most common places tenure policies were made available to faculty was on the college or university website, or in the faculty handbook. 58.8% of departments reported that their tenure policies were located in the faculty handbook. 43.6% made their tenure policy available through the college or university website.
 - 52.7% of departments reported that their tenure policies were communicated or made available to faculty in two or more ways. 22.6% reported that they communicated their formal tenure policies in only one way.
 - Among those who reported that their tenure policies were communicated to faculty in only one way, 23.4% reported that this was communicated in the faculty handbook, 11.6% on the college or university website, and 8.8% on the department website.
- Most departments communicated tenure expectations at time of hire, and a majority through subsequent meetings with the chair. 71.4% of departments reported that tenure expectations were communicated at hire, 67.6% reported this was done through meetings with the department chair. Slightly more than half (51.5%) communicated additional tenure expectations through faculty mentorships, and 44.6% by word of mouth. 75.3% of all departments reported that their tenure expectations were communicated in at least two or more ways.
- 54% of departments reported that there were additional expectations or guidelines for tenure that were not described in the formal tenure policies of their department and/or institution.
 - 11% of all responding departments reported that these expectations were not written down, but these departments were as likely to communicate additional expectations to faculty in two or more ways as departments whose additional tenure expectations were written down.

Tenure Requirements

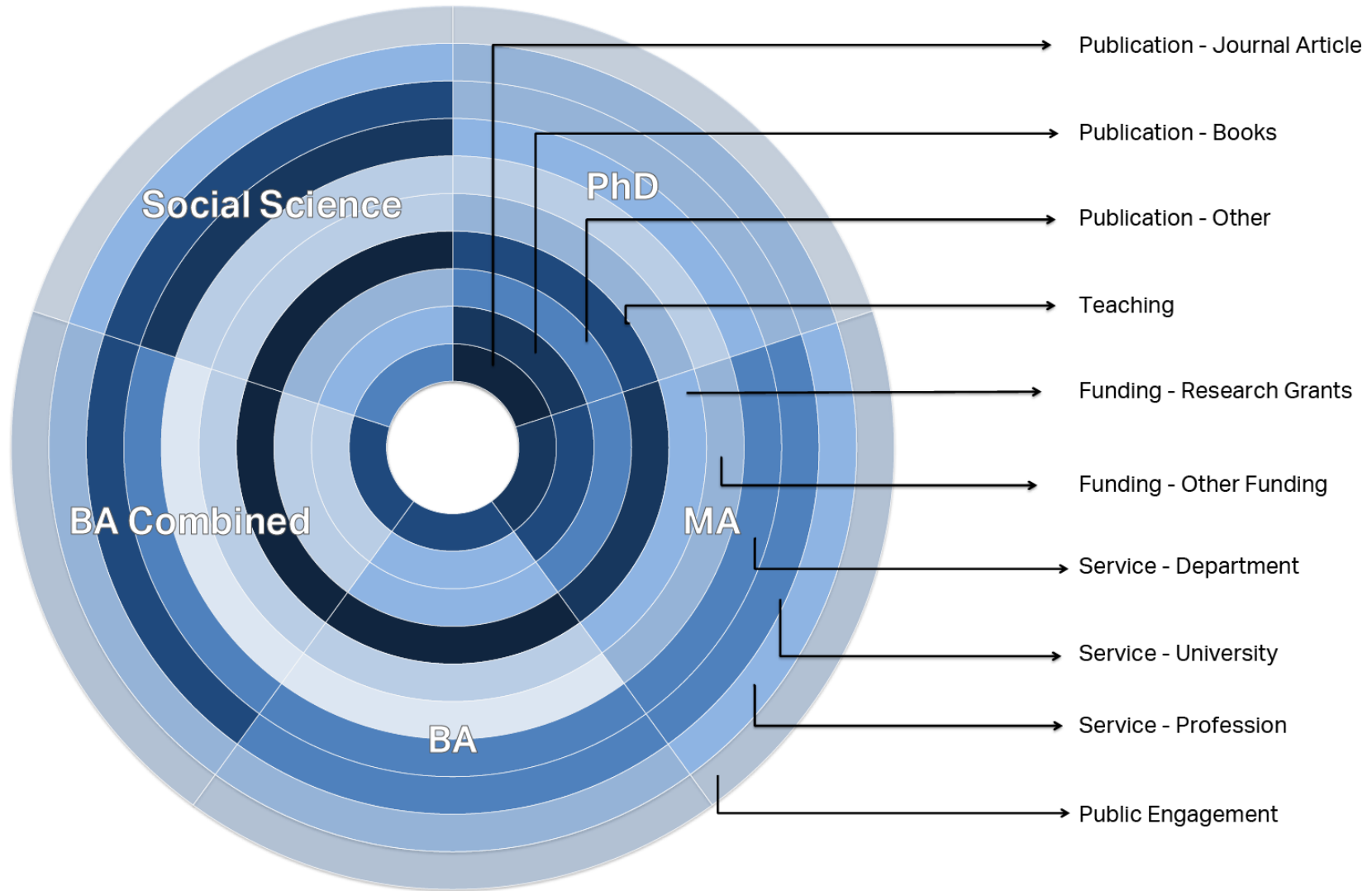
- Departments of all types generally agreed on the relative importance of professional activities for tenure, if not their absolute rank in decisions of tenure promotion. Journal publications and teaching were most consistently ranked as “Essential” or “Very Important” among all department types.
- PhD- and MA-granting departments rated journal publications the highest for promotion to tenure in the department, between “Essential” and “Very Important”. While journal publications were rated highly for importance at BA-granting institutions, they were not typically the highest-ranked of the professional activities listed.

- Teaching was rated highest among BA-granting institutions, consistently rated as “Essential” for promotion to tenure, and was among the top-three rated professional activities considered for tenure at PhD- and MA- granting institutions.
- Service to the university and to the department were ranked highly at BA-granting departments that combined political science with another major, and departments of social science. In these departments, service was ranked as more important to tenure decisions than journal publications. However, given the low response rate among BA-combined and BA social science departments, these results should be interpreted with caution.
- Public engagement was consistently ranked as the least important factor in cases of tenure promotion, on average ranked as “Considered” to “Not Important”.

Table 1. Tenure Policies by Highest Degree Offered

Tenure System													
	PhD		MA		BA		BA comb		Social Science		Total		
Yes	61	100%	44	97.8%	128	98.5%	33	100%	7	100%	273	98.9%	
No	0	0.0%	1	2.2%	2	1.5%	0	0.0%	0	0%	3	1.1%	
College/University-wide Tenure Policy													
	PhD		MA		BA		BA comb		Social Science		Total		
Yes	58	95.1%	42	95.5%	119	93%	30	90.9%	7	100%	256	93.8%	
No	3	4.9%	2	4.5%	9	7%	3	9.1%	0	0%	17	6.2%	
Additional Department Expectations/Guidelines													
	PhD		MA		BA		BA comb		Social Science		Total		
Yes, written down	29	50%	24	55.8%	49	38.9%	9	28.1%	2	33.3%	113	42.6%	
Yes, but not written down	8	13.8%	4	9.3%	13	10.3%	5	15.6%	0	0%	30	11.3%	
No, neither written nor unwritten	21	36.2%	15	34.9%	64	50.8%	18	56.2%	4	66.7%	122	46.0%	

Figure 1. Importance of Professional Activities in Tenure Decisions by Highest Degree Offered by Department



Most Important  Least Important