

February 25, 2008

Frequently Asked Questions

Library Policies on Corresponding Rank, Evaluation and Promotion

1. “I did not realize that librarians are faculty. Why is this the case?”

Librarians help advance the University’s mission of teaching, research and service. We support the curriculum and meet the research and information needs of students, faculty and staff by building, managing and preserving relevant physical and virtual collections through evaluation, selection and acquisition of educational and scholarly materials. We organize and describe these materials, providing access for the university community. We assist students, faculty, and other patrons in the effective, efficient and ethical use of information through course-integrated information fluency classes and reference interactions.

We collaborate with other faculty at Furman and at peer institutions on authoring and administrating grants. We teach faculty development and other workshops. We are working closely with faculty on the information fluency component of the First Year Writing Seminars. We serve on faculty committees, strategic planning groups and task forces. We contribute to search committees for positions external to the library. We serve formally as academic advisors, mentors, supervisors, and instructors for students (including Furman Advantage students) and interns. We partner with other faculty to bring speakers, programs, and exhibits to campus and garner CLP status for these events. We also publish and make presentations in the classroom and at conferences.

For more detailed information regarding librarians at Furman, please see *Faculty Status of Librarians at Furman: A History and Proposal*.

2. Why have library faculty chosen to have non-tenure track positions?

The library faculty were, at one time, tenured. However, this status was taken away in 1985. The current library faculty have chosen not to pursue tenure track positions for a number of reasons. First, library faculty are on 12-month contracts. Tenure-track faculty teach nine months of the year and have the summers to do research. Meeting the

criteria for tenure without similar research leave would put library faculty at a disadvantage. On the other hand, providing librarians with three months off to do research would mean significant cost to the university in terms of having to hire more librarians. Second, the survey of peer and cross-applicant institutions indicated that while librarians at most of these institutions had faculty status, only 31% are eligible for tenure. Third, while tenure would enable the library faculty to have parity with tenured faculty colleagues within the present system, library faculty are able to participate actively in governance issues and to effectively communicate and collaborate with faculty colleagues to further the mission of the library, the university and the education of students.

3. If you aren't tenured then you don't have the intellectual freedom protections of tenured faculty. Aren't you concerned about this?

Librarians and archivists are committed to providing access to information representing all points of view, resisting the abridgment of free expression and free access to information, and protecting the privacy of others. The American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights" and ALA's "Freedom to Read Statement" says that materials with a range of perspectives and expressions should be collected by librarians regardless of their controversial nature. In order to protect the intellectual freedom of others, librarians and archivists must be assured the right to intellectual freedom themselves. Our proposal includes the recommendation that librarians and archivists receive the same protection that is accorded teaching faculty. And, that they are entitled to the protection of academic freedom as set forth in the American Association of University Professors 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*. Librarians can be included in Policies 137.8, 100 and 100.1 if they are given a contract. In fall of 2007, with the support of Dean/Provost Kazee, President Shi approved giving contracts to library faculty.

4. Why is the MLS the terminal degree? In our world the Ph.D. is the terminal degree.

Just as the Ph.D. is the required degree for a faculty tenure-track position, the MLS is the required degree for a librarian. Most employers require an ALA-accredited Master's for professional/faculty positions. The American Library Association is the appropriate accrediting agency for library education and it states (in the ALA Policy Manual, 54.2.1) that the MLS is the terminal degree. In addition, there are other faculty members for whom the Master's is the terminal degree (Art, Theatre Arts).

5. In the document “Faculty Status of Librarians at Furman: A History and Proposal” you ask for the same benefits as untenured faculty. Don’t you have the same benefits?

We are lacking the same benefits in the areas of maternity/paternity leave (815.1) and survivor death benefits (148.1). Policy 155.5 originally included the statement “Library faculty are eligible for the same benefits and protections as pre-tenure faculty.” The Policies and Procedures Committee did not believe this statement should be included in 155.5 and encouraged us to identify the specific policies involved and to make changes in them. We are working to make changes in those policies now.

6. Why won’t you be going through the Faculty Status Committee for promotions?

Since library faculty cannot serve on the Status Committee we felt it was not reasonable or fair to go through this committee as part of the promotion process. “No promotion without representation.” We propose a system that is based on Policy 157.3 (Promotion) that follows the departmental process in dealing with promotions (through a *Library Promotion Committee*) and then, instead of the departmental recommendation going to the Faculty Status Committee, it goes to the *Promotion Review Panel* which consists of the Director, the Chair of the Library Committee and an additional member of the Library Committee.