Department of Comparative Religion
Personnel Standards to Complement UPS 210.000

DATE OF APPROVAL: May 20, 2004
Corrected 6-13-04

I. Departmental Self-Definition

The Department of Comparative Religion has a unique mission in a state-supported university: to present the world views and practices of the major religious traditions in a non-sectarian, academic manner for the enlightenment of students, of faculty from other fields, and of the greater Orange County community. It does so by offering classes in the world’s major religions within the General Education framework and for a core group of majors and minors. The field is by nature interdisciplinary and draws on the work of historians, philosophers, literary scholars, and social scientists. However, it has its own approach—the study of religion on its own terms as an important aspect of existence that has affected humanity for good and ill since the dawn of civilization. Faculty in the Department are expected to conform to this vision through teaching that is objective yet empathetic and research that contributes to an understanding of the varieties of religious thought and experience, and its impact on contemporary society.

II. Department Personnel Standards and UPS 210.000

These Department Personnel Standards shall be consistent with UPS 210.000 and shall be understood as incorporating the requirements of that document. These Personnel Standards and UPS 210.000 establish the range of activities and levels of performance necessary to meet requirements for positive retention, promotion, and tenure decisions.

III. The Developmental Narrative

During the first year of employment in a tenure-track position, each probationary faculty member shall write a prospective Developmental Narrative for teaching, scholarly and creative activities, and service, not to exceed 500 words each. This narrative shall describe the faculty member’s professional goals, areas of interest, resources required, and the accomplishments (s)he expects to achieve in each of the three areas in order to meet the requirements of these Department Personnel Standards and UPS 210.000 for retention, tenure, and promotion.

The Developmental Narrative will be reviewed by the department chair and the dean, who will each provide feedback on a timetable to be determined by the college dean, with a final draft to be completed prior to May 1. The Narrative shall be included in the faculty member’s Portfolio that is submitted for retention review during the second year in the tenure-track position.
During subsequent years, the Developmental Narrative may be revised to reflect changes and professional growth that will normally occur during the probationary period.

IV. Mentors

Before the end of the first two weeks of the fall semester, the department chair shall consult with each newly appointed probationary faculty member concerning appropriate faculty mentors and shall designate one or more tenured faculty members as mentors. In the event that the chair serves as a mentor, at least one additional mentor shall be designated. At any time thereafter, either the probationary faculty member or mentor may request the department chair to make a change of assignment.

The primary responsibility of the mentor(s) is to provide guidance, advice, and support to the probationary faculty member during the preparation of the Developmental Narrative.

V. Election of DPC, and Responsibilities of DPC and Department Chair

The committee shall consist of three tenured faculty members and an alternate. Committee elections will take place at the first fall faculty meeting. The department chair shall list all eligible faculty members and supervise a vote by secret ballot among the full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty. If, because of leaves or other commitments, the department needs to select members from related disciplines, the chair shall add to the list the names of eligible and willing candidates. The committee shall select its chair. The alternate shall serve when a regular committee member cannot. Members serve for two years.

Each committee member shall be familiar with this document as well as UPS 210.000, and any other official documents that have a bearing on personnel actions. Committee members shall be ready to answer questions for faculty members going through a personnel action.

In assessing the Portfolio of a faculty member being evaluated as part of the Retention, Tenure and Promotion (RTP) process, committee members shall adhere to the responsibilities described in UPS 210.000.

The department chair shall also write an evaluation of the faculty member and adhere to the responsibilities described in UPS 210.000. (S)he shall also be responsible for the initial assigning of a mentor(s) to the new faculty member and for assigning a replacement should the initial match not prove beneficial.

VI. Evidence of Performance

A. The Portfolio (NOTE: Probationary faculty hired prior to August 17, 2001, who have approved Developmental Plans, will include such plans in their Portfolio in lieu of a Developmental Narrative. For faculty with approved Development
Plans, progress towards retention, tenure and promotion will be measured against expectations in UPS 210.000 and the Department Standards).

1. The Portfolio is the sole basis for RTP evaluations, recommendations, and actions. It shall be cumulative and representative of performance, covering the period of review. In cases where prior service credit was granted, that time interval shall also be documented in the Portfolio.

2. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to ensure the completeness of his or her Portfolio.

3. The Portfolio shall include the following items:

   a. table of contents of the Portfolio (available from OFAR);

   b. a table of contents of the appendix to the Portfolio, (available from Office of Faculty Affairs and Records);

   c. a copy of these approved Department Personnel Standards;

   d. the approved Development Plan (DP) [applies only to faculty who have a Development Plan approved prior to fall semester 2002];

   or

   developmental narratives in each of the three areas of performance in relation to these department personnel standards (each narrative shall not exceed 500 words) [applies only to faculty who began their probationary period in fall semester 2002 or later];

   e. the faculty member's current curriculum vitae (CV) that covers the entire academic and professional employment history;

   f. narrative summaries which are concise self-assessments of accomplishments in each of the three areas of performance (teaching, scholarly and creative activity, and service) in relation to the applicable personnel standards (self-assessment narratives shall not exceed 1000 words for each area);

   g. reports of peer observations of classroom performance;

   h. a copy of the student opinion form(s) used by the department in evaluating the faculty member;

   i. statistical summaries by class of answers to all multiple choice questions on departmental student opinion forms;

   j. statistical summaries of grade distributions from all classes that the faculty member taught during the period under review for which students received University credit, as well as any material which may help interpret these statistical summaries;
k. for probationary faculty, all evaluations, recommendations, responses and rebuttals (if any), and decisions reached for all previous full performance reviews.

4. In addition to the portfolio the faculty member shall assemble an appendix containing supporting materials that are directly relevant to the presentation in the Portfolio.

5. The Appendix shall include the following items:
   
a. Student opinion forms for all of the courses that the faculty member taught at California State University, Fullerton, during the period under review, for which students received credit. These shall be identified clearly by course number, title, semester and year;
   
b. A syllabus for each course taught during the review period (multi-section courses need be represented only once) and a sampling of handouts;
   
c. Other supporting material such as reviewers’ comments on manuscripts and grants, details about co-authorship of published material, published material, copies of papers and books, conference papers, documentations of conferences, and documentation of service duties.

B. Evidence of Teaching Performance

The department shall consider the following kinds of evidence as indicators of the quality of the faculty member’s performance as a teacher:

1. A narrative self-assessment of teaching goals and performance consistent with UPS 210.000 and these Guidelines. The faculty member shall write a narrative of no more than 1,000 words describing his/her particular approach to teaching and learning, how well it has worked and what changes he/she might make to improve teaching effectiveness. The narrative shall also include a brief statement about the faculty member’s grading practices in relation to the grade distribution reports from classes taught during the review period. The narrative should also include a discussion of student responses on the opinion questionnaire.

2. Reports of classroom visits by the department chair or members of the Department Personnel Committee. The chair of the department, or the chair or another member of the DPC, shall attend one of the probationary faculty member’s classes at least once each semester on a prearranged basis. It shall be the responsibility of the department chair, in consultation with the DPC chair, to coordinate these visits.
3. Original student opinion questionnaires from all classes taught at CSUF during the period of review. (These forms become part of the appendix to the Portfolio.) Student opinion data, including the statistical summaries for all years for which service credit is given, shall be included.

4. Representative course materials prepared by the faculty member. These should include course syllabuses, examinations and a representative sample of other material distributed to students. Privately published ("professor publishing") classroom material suitable for eventual publication as a textbook would also be included here.

5. A list of teaching assignments for each semester of the review period. The listing should include the course department and number (including independent study/499 courses), and the weighted teaching units for each. Assigned time should also be listed along with its rationale.

6. Other indicators may be submitted to attest to the teaching effectiveness of the candidate. They are not required for promotion/tenure, but may serve to strengthen a candidate’s case. The following are examples:
   a. Video or audio tapes or CD-ROMs of courses or individual lectures/discussions/seminars taught;
   b. Service as an MA thesis or project committee member;
   c. Direction of independent study projects;
   d. New course proposals;
   e. Design of a course website;
   f. Preparation of an on-line course;
   g. Academic advising;
   h. Student mentoring;
   i. Peer mentoring (in the case of tenured associate professors);
   j. Leadership or participation in teaching workshops, such as those sponsored by the Faculty Development Center or the CSU Institute for Teaching and Learning;
   k. Additional training (e.g., a NEH Summer Seminar).

C. Evidence of Scholarly and Creative Accomplishments

Faculty members at every level shall engage in ongoing scholarly and creative activity. It is the university's and this department's view that such activity enhances the growth of the faculty member and contributes to better teaching and to the overall quality of the institution. Candidates must write a narrative of no more than 1,000 words, as part of the Portfolio, to discuss their past and present scholarship, showing evidence of a coherent research agenda.

Given the nature of the discipline, both independent and collaborative work shall count in this category, though evidence of independent scholarship is required. Co-authorship and the degree of responsibility for a particular work by the faculty member under review shall be clearly delineated in the Portfolio.
We define scholarly and creative activities to be in the form of quality peer-reviewed publications. For the purposes of this document, they shall be called “Category A.” An item formally accepted for publication will, with proper documentation, be counted in this category.

Category A:
- Scholarly books and monographs that are peer-reviewed
- Chapters in scholarly books that are peer-reviewed
- Scholarly articles in professional (refereed) journals
- Critical, peer-reviewed article-length, reviews of several books on a common topic in a peer-reviewed journal

We shall also consider under this rubric the following types of scholarly work, but they shall not be sufficient by themselves in evaluations for promotion or tenure. For the purposes of this document they shall be called Category B.

Category B:
- Work submitted, but not yet accepted for publication. (The economics of publishing may delay the acceptance of superior work. Editors’ or reviewers’ comments can indicate merit.)
- Textbooks
- Entries in scholarly reference works or encyclopedias
- Published conference papers
- Book reviews appearing in professional journals
- Papers read at professional meetings
- Books, book chapters, articles, or book reviews of a popular nature that display underlying scholarship
- Translations of scholarly material

D. Evidence of Professional, University, and Community Service

The faculty member shall write a narrative of no more than 1,000 words to discuss his/her past and present professional, university and community service. The department shall consider the following kinds of evidence as indicators of the quality of the faculty member’s contributions to the profession, to the University, and to the community through professional and service activities:

1. For the purpose of professional maintenance and growth, each faculty member shall be active in the affairs of one or more professional societies in religious studies or related fields. Examples of such activity include serving as editor or associate editor of a professional journal, serving as an officer in a professional organization or assisting in other ways in the work of such an organization, peer reviewing for journals, reviewing manuscripts for publishers, and participating in national or regional conventions as a respondent to a paper or chair/presenter of a session.
2. Members of the Comparative Religion Department shall also be of
service by attending to the needs and interests of the university
community. Consistent service on college or university committees is
expected. Because of the size of the Department, full-time faculty
conduct Department business as a committee of the whole.

3. Participation in philanthropic and other community-based organizations
in ways related to one's professional expertise, though not required, is
also valuable and will be taken into consideration.

VII. Evaluation of Evidence of Performance

A. The Department shall evaluate faculty performance in teaching,
   scholarly/creative activity, and service according to the principles stated in the
   sections to come and using the following rating scale:
   1) exceeds expectations, 2) meets expectations, 3) does not meet expectations.

B. Evaluation of Teaching Performance

1. Reports of Classroom Visits.

   The individual making the visit shall write an assessment of the
   instruction presented and make an overall judgment of its quality using
   the “exceeds, meets, does not meet” rating scale. In so doing, the
   evaluator shall take account—and comment on—each of the following
criteria:

   a. Clarity of presentation (was the subject matter easy to follow,
      did the instructor stay on track?);
   b. Effective use of class handouts, Power Point, videos, slides or
      similar teaching aids;
   c. Engagement with students (were students attentive and
      responsive, did they ask and answer questions?);
   d. Comments on other aspects of the class may also be appropriate.

   The evaluation shall be read by, and discussed with, the faculty member
   and then added to the Portfolio. All levels of review shall judge the
   cumulative set of evaluations for the period under review as part of its
   overall assessment of the candidate’s teaching effectiveness, along with
   nos. 2-4, below.

2. Student Opinion Forms. All levels of review will examine (a) the
   average numerical ratings from all classes taught; (b) the written
   comments of students; and (c) the range of courses taught and number of
   preparations (especially new preparations). They will factor these data
   into their overall evaluation as follows:
a. Exceeds expectations: The candidate under review must have a combined "A" and "B" rating of at least 80% and ordinarily must not exceed a combined "D" or "E" rating of 10%.

b. Meets expectations: The candidate under review must have a combined "A" and "B" rating between 70 and 79% and ordinarily must not exceed a combined "D" and "E" rating of 15%.

c. Does not meet expectations: If the candidate under review does not meet the expectations established in a. and b.

The Department recognizes that there may be circumstances, e.g., teaching a class for the first time or teaching a G.E. versus a class intended for majors, that help to explain low ratings in a given course or semester. Patterns of student ratings and written comments in different courses over several semesters shall be considered more informative than isolated, individual comments.

3. Syllabuses and Other Material Provided to Students. All levels of review will also assess these items for overall quality as exceeding, meeting or not meeting expectations.

4. Other indicators of teaching performance if submitted. All levels of review will also assess these items for overall quality as exceeding, meeting or not meeting expectations.

5. Narrative Self-Assessment of Teaching Goals and Performance. All levels of review will judge the overall quality of the narrative as exceeding, meeting or not meeting expectations.

In light of the data provided in items 1-4 above, and the separate evaluations thereof, all levels of review will arrive at a holistic judgment as to whether the candidate's teaching performance exceeds, meets or does not meet expectations for promotion and/or tenure.

C. Evaluation of Scholarship and Creative Activity

Evaluation of the candidate's scholarship and creative activity will be based on both the quality and quantity of items under consideration. Of the two, all levels of review should be mindful that quantity does not substitute for quality.

In arriving at a judgment regarding the quality of a candidate's scholarly work ("exceeds," "meets," or "does not meet expectations"), evaluators should take account of the following criteria: clarity of conceptualization, thoroughness of research, originality of scholarship, contribution to the field of comparative religion/religious studies, quality of the forum in which the work appears, and outside reviews of the work. Apropos quantity, the candidate's research agenda
should result in at least four items, at least two of which are from Category A
during the period under review.

As with the evaluation of teaching, all levels of review shall determine
whether the candidate’s scholarship “exceeds,” “meets,” or “does not meet
expectations” for promotion and/or tenure based on the following data:

  a. Exceeds expectations: Scholarly activity includes at least six
quality items, four of which are from Category A.

  b. Meets expectations: Scholarly activity includes at least four
quality items, two of which are from Category A.

  c. Does not meet expectations: If the candidate does not meet the
expectations in a. or b.

As in the area of teaching, the Department recognizes that there may be
mitigating circumstances in the area of scholarly and creative activity that result
in an evaluation based on accomplishments that depart from the specific criteria
set. Any such mitigating circumstances shall be described and documented fully
in the Portfolio and Appendix, but in no case shall these circumstances be
construed to require lower substantive levels of performance than required by
this document or UPS 210.000.

D. Evaluation of Professional, University, and Community Service

In arriving at a judgment of “exceeds,” “meets,” or “does not meet expectations”
in the service area, all levels of review will take account of the following criteria:

1. The extent, nature and impact of the committee work done on campus
   and in professional organizations;
2. Duties and responsibilities performed for the sake of the department that
   are equivalent to that performed within a department committee;
3. Any leadership positions held;
4. The significance of the organizations in which a candidate is active that
   is equivalent to that performed within a department committee;
5. The significance of the role performed, e.g., officer or conference
   participant in the organization;
6. The importance for the study and teaching of religion of any scholarly
   manuscripts reviewed;
7. The impact on community organizations to which the candidate
   contributes his/her expertise.

Here, too, all levels of review will make an overall judgment as to whether a
candidate’s level of service “exceeds,” “meets” or “does not meet
expectations.”
VIII. Standards for Retention, Tenure, and Promotion

A. Requirements for Retention

1. The goal of the RTP process is to produce faculty members who qualify for tenure after their probationary employment. To be retained during the probationary period, a faculty member is required to demonstrate progress toward tenure such that a positive tenure decision is likely. A probationary faculty member is required to show appropriate accomplishments, growth, and promise in each of the three areas of assessment. Moreover, when weaknesses have been identified in earlier review cycles, a probationary faculty member is expected to address these weaknesses explicitly and show appropriate improvement. The decision to retain (reappoint) a probationary faculty member is an affirmation that satisfactory progress is being made toward tenure; therefore, a probationary faculty member shall not be retained if the cumulative progress toward tenure is insufficient to indicate that requirements for tenure appear likely to be met.

B. Requirements for Tenure

1. The granting of tenure is the most significant personnel action that the University takes, because it represents an affirmation that the probationary faculty member will be an asset to the University over his or her entire career. Therefore, a positive tenure decision requires that the probationary faculty member has displayed accomplishments, growth and future potential that meet the expectations stated in UPS 210.000 and these Department Personnel Standards.

2. To be recommended for tenure, the faculty member’s performance in each of the three areas of performance (teaching, scholarship/creative activity, and service) must receive an evaluation of “exceeds” or “meets expectations.”

C. Requirements for Promotion to Associate Professor

Promotion to Associate Professor is automatic with the granting of tenure.

D. Requirements for Promotion to Professor

1. Because the professoriate entails continual growth and reassessment, the University expects that tenured faculty will continue to strive for excellence in all three areas of performance, and that successful faculty members will display accomplishments, growth, and future potential throughout their careers. Therefore, the decision to grant promotion to the rank of Professor shall be based on a record that indicates sustained vitality and commitment to the standards described in UPS 210.000 and these Department Personnel Standards.
2. To be recommended for promotion to Professor, the faculty member's performance in teaching must receive an evaluation of "meets" or "exceeds expectations" based on the criteria described in VII.B, above.

3. The faculty member's performance in scholarship/creative activity and service must receive an evaluation of "exceeds expectations" or "meets expectations" based on (a) the criteria in VII.C, above, and (b) the performance must include the publication of at least two additional items from Category A above, beyond those required for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor.

E. Requirements for Early Tenure

Early tenure requires that all expectations for the entire probationary period have been met, that performance in teaching and scholarly/creative activity receive an evaluation of "exceeds expectations," and that performance in the service area receive an evaluation of "exceeds expectations" or "meets expectations."

F. Requirements for Early Promotion to Associate Professor

Early promotion to Associate Professor requires that the probationary faculty member has displayed accomplishments, growth, and future potential that strongly indicate that (s)he will, by the completion of the probationary period, meet the expectations for tenure stated in UPS 210.000 and these Departmental Personnel Standards. In addition, performance in teaching and scholarly/creative activity must "exceed expectations" and in service either "exceed expectations" or "meet expectations."

G. Requirements for Early Promotion to Professor

Early promotion to Professor requires that performance meet the general requirements for promotion to Professor as stated in section VIII.D.1 above, and that, in addition, performance in each of the three areas (teaching, scholarship/creative activity, and service) receive an evaluation of "exceeds expectations." In addition, the candidate for early promotion must have published two Category A publications beyond those normally required for promotion to full professor (see VIII.D.3, above).