

Boston University School of Theology

PREAMBLE

Community Principles

1. **Love.** As a community with roots in a Christian tradition, we affirm that love for our neighbor, as an expression of God's infinite love for humankind, is a compelling command to work towards the well-being of every single member of our community. An offense against one is therefore an offense against all.
2. **Justice.** As a community with an historic and sometimes prophetic commitment to justice, we must commit ourselves to working for justice and exposing injustice, not only for ourselves, but for every member of the community. That involves positively resisting the evils of violence, racism, hate, discrimination, and silencing.
3. **Safety.** We all must commit to making our community a safe learning environment where no student, staff, or faculty, regardless of age, sex, color, ethnicity, physical disability, sexual orientation, or religious opinion, is harassed, bullied, or intimidated for any reason. We must commit to support policies that prohibit the mistreatment of any individual or group and provide appropriate avenues for redressing grievances.
4. **Rights.** Religious liberty and freedom of expression are inalienable rights for all guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution and by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. The purpose of these statements is to safeguard individual rights from the actions of majorities and institutions. Every effort should be made in the School of Theology community to protect these rights for all students, staff, faculty, and administrators.
5. **Responsibilities.** As members of the School of Theology community, we have a solemn responsibility to respect these rights for others, including those with whom we deeply disagree. Rights are best guarded and responsibilities best exercised when each person and group guards for all others those rights they wish for themselves. As fallible beings we acknowledge our failures, past and present, and agree to hold ourselves accountable to one another and to the values we wish to live by.
6. **Respect.** Frank and open discussions are vital to the health of any educational institution. Every individual within the School of Theology community, whatever the issue under discussion, and wherever the discussion takes place, has a responsibility to treat others with civility and respect, both in speech and in action.

These principles, as approved by the Faculty of the Boston University School of Theology, are not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive, but we hope they will at least provide a common denominator of civil discourse, along with mutual love and respect, that will govern our words and behavior in the School community. These are the principles we believe should govern our collective work as a professional/graduate faculty within a large, private urban research university.

Boston University School of Theology

Faculty Expectations

1. Introduction

The Boston University School of Theology is an academic community of students, faculty, staff, and administrators involved in educating the clergy and lay religious leaders of tomorrow and in advancing creative theological research and pedagogy. By participating responsibly and creatively in the task of professional/graduate theological education, the School of Theology serves humanity while assisting its students in becoming moral, responsible, and effective members of society. The mission statement of the School of Theology is:

The purpose of the Boston University School of Theology is to pursue knowledge of God, to cultivate leaders for communities of faith, to enrich the academy, and to seek peace with justice in a diverse and interconnected world.

As the founding school of Boston University and the oldest United Methodist seminary in North America, we are a professional school within a cosmopolitan research university that is itself committed to “learning, virtue, and piety.” Rooted in the Wesleyan traditions and drawing from the Christian traditions of the world, we strive to equip ministries and vocations whose aim is both personal and social transformation, whose orientation is diverse and global, and whose vision expands the prophetic legacy of this historic School of Theology.

Toward this end, faculty members are expected to demonstrate excellence in teaching, research, and service to the Christian movement, in mentoring students both academically and spiritually as they prepare for their varied ministries, and in fulfilling their service responsibilities to Boston University and to the churches that help to sustain these activities.

2. Research

Faculty members are expected to contribute to the knowledge base of our society and their respective disciplines, and to educate graduate students in the processes of cultivating and fostering effective religious leadership and sound scholarship for diverse roles in formal and informal settings. In addition, senior faculty are expected to mentor younger colleagues.

All faculty are expected to engage in independent research programs. We also encourage all faculty to seek grants and awards that will support their own research and the educational and pedagogical goals of the School. The overall criterion by which research success will be judged is scientific impact, i.e., opening up new directions of research, advancing the state of the art, or altering the direction of ongoing research of others in the field. Among the indicators of impact are: i) publications and citations; ii) doctoral theses supervision; iii) honors and awards; iv) editorial, advisory, and leadership positions; v) externally funded research; and vi) transfer of technology to the commercial sector.

2.1 Publications and Citations

Peer-reviewed publications in archival research journals are the most important testimony to the significance of any research activity. Since the most prestigious journals tend to have the greatest impact, faculty are strongly encouraged to publish in the best journals in their disciplines. Given the diversity of fields in the School, the variety and range of such journals is quite large. Conference proceedings, book chapters, scholarly books, including textbooks and general publications for the larger church world, and submissions to databases and other digital publications are also taken into account. Because STH is a professional school, publications written or produced for a large, general audience are very important aspects of the faculty's scholarly work. Furthermore, significant public performances or recitals in the areas of religion and the arts count as significant publications.

Related indicators of impact are citation frequency, invitations to speak at or chair national and international conferences and symposia, and invitations to contribute papers. In general, impact will be increased by both the quality and number of publications. Therefore, although quantity is not by itself a measure of productivity, it is important to the extent that influence generally accrues from a strong and sustained publication record. Collaborative research and teaching are encouraged. In order to receive full credit for papers with multiple authors, the faculty member shall have made a substantial contribution. This need not mean first authorship, however. Responsibility lies with the Area Chairs to investigate the involvement of each author in order to determine if a given publication is worthy of full credit to the individual.

2.2 Doctoral Theses Supervised

The successful completions of doctoral theses by graduate students supervised by a faculty member provide significant indicators of research and teaching excellence. Further, the ability to place doctoral students in appropriate positions after graduation reflects favorably on a faculty member's overall reputation and impact in his/her field.

2.3 Honors and Awards

Items in this category include election to senior status (e.g., "Fellow") in professional societies, awards bestowed by professional societies, and competitive national or international prizes, as well as honors and awards bestowed by Boston University. Certain research grant awards, foundation awards, and similar awards from other government and philanthropic agencies attained through rigorous peer review systems also represent significant honors.

2.4 Editorial, Advisory, and Leadership Positions

This category includes invitations to serve on editorial boards, advisory boards, study sections, international committees, boards of directors, as an officer of a scholarly, academic or religious society, or in any other service activity that would signal recognition of accomplishment by the wider research and church communities.

2.5 Externally Funded Research

While the ability to attract and retain financial support is not always required to maintain outstanding research programs, it is encouraged where possible. The School is mindful that different fields have different levels of access to significant research funding. Success in attracting such funding not only supports the work on individual faculty members, but also supports graduate students.

3. Teaching

Dissemination of knowledge, and the training of religious professionals and scholars who apply such knowledge for the general welfare of the church, the academy, the community, and the world is central to the School's mission. Faculty are expected to take teaching seriously, to do it well, and to seek to improve their teaching through examination of their methodologies, student feedback, mentoring from more experienced faculty members, and accessing School, University, and, when possible, additional resources for improving instruction.

3.1 Student Evaluations

Student evaluations, when adequate statistics are available, can be an important measure of classroom teaching performance. Teachers are expected to have good evaluations in both undergraduate and graduate courses. As a general guideline, on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being the best), the top teachers in the College consistently score in the 4-5 range on general questions (such as "I recommend the instructor" or "My evaluation of this instructor's effectiveness is. . ."). Scores in the 1-2 range are indicators of poor teaching.

3.2 Supervision of Graduate Students

Because training the next generation of researchers and teachers is an important part of the mission of the School, doctoral and/or master's thesis supervision is expected of all full-time faculty, and can also be part of the roles of selected part-time faculty as well.

3.3 Academic Advising

Academic advising is another form of teaching, and it is an effective and critical component of our efforts to help students complete a challenging curricula in a variety of degree programs. All faculty members, including Chairs, Deans, and Center Directors, are expected to advise students where appropriate.

3.4 Course Development

Where appropriate, faculty members (particularly tenured faculty) are expected to develop courses in their fields. For all courses, faculty members are expected to review the syllabi and texts for relevance and to incorporate new materials and innovative methods for improving teaching on a continual basis. Textbook writing is considered a valuable contribution to the teaching mission of the School of Theology.

3.5 Minimum Teaching Load For All Faculty

All faculty members (both tenured and untenured) are expected to teach four courses per year and to play positive and significant roles in the committee work of the School. Participation in outside, church-related activity is also encouraged and recognized as a most significant contribution to the School's mission.

3.6 Small Group Mentoring

For two out of every six years, in rotation, all faculty members are expected to give leadership to small groups required of M.Div. students in their first and second years of that degree program (also see below 4. Service). Some faculty members choose to facilitate "pastoral spiritual formation" (PSF) groups for first-year divinity students and others choose to lead "integration of theology and practice" (ITP) groups for second-year divinity students in connection with their field education experience.

4. Service

Service to the School, to the larger academy, and to the church are important to the mission of the School, and junior and tenured faculty are expected to demonstrate leadership in these areas. Certain service activities, such as student advising, attending faculty meetings, and recruiting students and new faculty members are expected of all faculty. Additional service is also expected, and the opportunities are varied. Some examples, in addition to those mentioned in Section 2.4, include serving on various School, Division of Religious and Theological Studies, and University committees, advising student societies, participation in recruitment activities such as college visits and cooperation with the programs of the School's Development Office, and support of Admissions Office programs. The School also requires, along with the normal course load of four courses per year, additional service in the area of student mentoring in classes such as Pastoral and Spiritual Formation (PSF) and the Integration of Theory and Practice (IPT) programs required of all Master of Divinity students (Master of Theology students can elect to participate in PSF if they so desire). Each professor is expected to take a turn in staffing these programs as part of service to the School.

5. Allocation of Faculty Time for Teaching and Service

5.1 Basic Faculty Time Allocation

The base teaching load for junior and tenured faculty is four courses per academic year. This course load represents 80% of the faculty member's academic-year time. The remaining 20% of a faculty member's time is allocated to service, advising, and administration. To accommodate research, teaching loads may be reduced below the four-course-per-year level by means of buyout from grant funds. In order that Area teaching requirements be given due consideration, requests for course buyouts are not granted automatically; they must be approved by the Areas and the Dean. In some cases and at the discretion of the Area Chair, a faculty member's course load might be reduced without grant buyout, with the equivalent time allocated toward Area-supported research, new course development, the running of

Centers and research programs, of course support for other faculty.

5.2 New Tenure-Track Assistant Professors

Recent recipients of the Ph.D. or Th.D. (typically assistant professors who are hired within one year after receiving the Ph.D. or Th.D. degree) normally teach four courses per year. As is the case for tenured faculty, the number of courses taught per year can be reduced through the use of buyout at 20% AY salary per course. Initial teaching requirements for newly-appointed, but more senior, faculty members will be negotiated with the STH Dean.

6. Promotion and Tenure

6.1 Promotion to Tenured Status

Tenure-track faculty are expected to demonstrate excellence in research and teaching and to carry out the service responsibilities that help to sustain these activities, including appropriate service to their field. At the time of application for tenure, the record of these activities will be reviewed independently by the candidate's Area faculty, by the School's APT Committee, by the Dean of School of Theology, by the University Tenure and Promotion Committee, by the University Provost (Charles River Campus), and by the University President, whose recommendation is voted upon by members of the Boston University Board of Advisees.

A tenure-track faculty member must apply for tenure no later than the spring of the fifth year following initial appointment. A schedule describing the sequence of events following the application is updated annually and is available from the Dean's office.

Tenure track faculty should be familiar with the University's "Guidelines for Preparation of Tenure Dossier and Review Schedule," which can be obtained from their Area Chairs. The preparation of the supporting materials described in the guidelines is crucial to the preparation of a tenure dossier. All relevant materials such as course syllabi, homework, quizzes, and examinations should be retained and catalogued in preparation of the tenure review.

6.2 Promotion to Full Professor Status

To merit promotion to Full Professor status, faculty are expected to demonstrate continued excellence in research, teaching, and service, as judged by the measures mentioned in previous sections, and to be active in the training of students in all appropriate degree programs. Consistent with University guidelines, promotion to Full Professor status in the School of Theology also requires that the candidate be nationally and internationally recognized as a scholar of note in his/her field. Some indicators of international recognition included invited talks at international meetings, editorships of high-quality journals, fellowships in and highly visible awards from professional societies or honorary organizations, service on boards of directors and review panels, office positions in specialized organizations, sustained records of high-impact publication, and external support from competitive, peer-reviewed funding sources. Outstanding, nationally recognized contributions to teaching, service and education are also indicators that a candidate merits

Full Professor status.

No formal schedule for promotion to Full Professor status exists. An application for promotion is initiated by the Area Chair after discussions with the faculty member. Tenured Associate Professors should expect periodic oral or written reviews by the Chair in which the subject of promotion is discussed. External candidates hired at the rank of Full Professor are expected to have met the above standards before being hired at Boston University.

7. Review

This administrative policy will be reviewed periodically and revised when deemed necessary by the Committee on Promotion and Tenure and the Dean.

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